Landas

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Sentire cum Ecclesia: A Festschrift in Honor of Catalino G. Arévalo, S.J.

PART I: BY C. G. ARÉVALO, S.J.

ON THE THEOLOGY OF THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

TOWARDS "DOING THEOLOGY" IN THE PHILIPPINE CONTEXT

SOME PRE-NOTES TO DOING THEOLOGY ON MAN, SOCIETY AND HISTORY IN THE ASIAN CONTEXT

MISSION TODAY IN THE ASIAN CONTEXT: FURTHER REFLECTIONS

"INCULTURATION" AND THE CHURCH: THE ASIAN CONTEXT

THE CHURCH IN ASIA AND MISSION IN THE 1990S

PART II: ON C. G. ARÉVALO'S WORK AND LIFE

BIODATA

FABC SPECIAL CITATION 2009

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Part 1

EDITOR'S PREFACE

How does one do theology in Asia? How does one do a genuinely Asian theological reflection? It is a question that concerns methodology and the fruitfulness of theological reflection. Arévalo's theological reflections provide an educative example of doing theology in Asia, and in that way, he makes an invaluable contribution.

He asserts that what makes theological reflection Asian is its rootedness in the concrete life-situations of Asian peoples. The questions articulated, the imperatives discerned, and the responses chosen all arise from this rootedness.

Himself rooted in the social realities which influence the life of the local churches in the Philippines and in Asia, and steeped in the perspective and orientations of Vatican II documents, papal decrees and the statements of the FABC, Arévalo does theology in a manner which is conscious of methodology and, because of that, is able to provide his readers reflections which are incisive, insightful and point the way to action and further theological reflection.

In terms of methodology, Arévalo identifies the hermeneutical circle, wherein one takes as the starting point for theological reflection the total social reality, then undertakes analysis and evaluation of this reality according to the canons of analysis from the social sciences, faith and religion, and theology, and eventually identifies responses called for, i.e., imperatives discerned including both goals and means. Corollary to his hermeneutical circle,

Arévalo suggests the hypothesis of ecclesiogenesis which holds that "the local church, at this moment in history, [is] moving towards its self-realization within and towards the *catholica unitas* (the true oneness within cultural diversities)."

The theological reflections chosen to be included in this volume cover the years from the mid-1970s to the early 1990s. Because of this span of time, they provide us a privileged vantage point of hindsight and foresight. Hindsight. We can acquaint (or re-acquaint) ourselves with the reflections and orientations that have guided thought and action in the life of the local churches. We can examine which of and to what extent these ideas and orientations have been lived out; we can evaluate how much these ideas and orientations remain true and applicable in our present time. Foresight. Ongoing reflection and action in the local churches can avail of the wisdom afforded by the living out of these ideas and orientations, deepening and if necessary modifying the theological reflections which have arisen from the life of the local churches in Asia.

Central to the theological reflections of Arévalo is the building up and coming-to-be of the local churches. Each local church builds itself within the particular social environment in which it finds itself. In its coming-to-be, the local church undertakes its mission and the task of evangelization and re-evangelization. Inculturation is synonymous with the coming-to-be of the local church. Inculturation is one way of putting the hermeneutic circle to practice. It is to be guided by general principles: incarnation and assumption; judgment, death and the cross; resurrection, pentecost, communion and participation. When these three principles are held together, the local culture is transformed by the Gospel and changed in an organic way.

Inculturation begins with the imperative of the dialogue of life. It has the three major tasks: dialogue with the cultures of peoples, dialogue with the Asian and religious traditions, and dialogue with the poor in their search for development, justice,

brotherhood and peace. Inculturation also has three major concerns: the proclamation of the Gospel as an urgent commitment, the necessary role of prayer and contemplation in the work of mission, and a truly contextualized formation for mission.

Arévalo offers us images of the church which "we should keep before our eyes to 'charge our imagination' in the years ahead": the church as fellow wayfarer, as companion of the journey, as being-with; the church as Suffering Servant, a diaconal community; the church as the community of Jesus, the compassion of God; the church as first fruits; the church as new creation in history. As the local church builds itself continuously in specific communities of people, its coming-to-be is always God's gift and the community's task and achievement.

May Arévalo's clarity of thought, depth of insight, and genuine and passionate love for the local churches stir us, and under the guidance of the Spirit, may we participate responsibly in the coming-to-be of our local churches.

Miguel B. Lambino, S.J.

By C. G. Arévalo, S.J.

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ON THE THEOLOGY OF THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES*

Catalino G. Arévalo, S.J.

Is there a way of doing theology in the Philippines today other than the Theology of the Signs of the Times? A good question, one raised by not a few Christian individuals and groups, among them university students, seminarians and ex-seminarians. A question too that seems to bring home our realization after Vatican II that what we call "the end of the Constantinian period" in the Church marks the end also of a whole period in the history of theology. It presupposes a recognition that, while the medieval synthesis in theology—a synthesis not so much in its elements or its individual parts as precisely in its comprehensive, synthetic view of God, man, and the world—, though perfectly valid for the Middle Ages and for the two or three centuries immediately thereafter, no longer really speaks to us. The Council of Trent, to be sure, as well as concomitant currents of theological thought, had brought it up to date and given it new life during the counter-reformation. With the dawning of the modern period, nevertheless, there emerged in the Church a new kind of theological construct, symbolized in a sense by new literary genres:

*What follows has been taken from a transcript of the first of three recorded conference lectures addressed to the Catholic Broadcasters and to the Catechists of the Christian Communities Program at Mirador, Baguio on February 16, 1972.

the papal encyclical, the "constitutions," pastoral and dogmatic, the declarations and the decrees of the Second Vatican Council. Hence the confusion of the modern world noted in the introductory sections of *Gaudium et Spes*: theologians and Christian communities all over the Church, throughout the world indeed, reflect a sense of the need to raise up a new systematic construct, to articulate a new theological vision, as valid and relevant for us as the theological vision of the *summae* were for the people of the Middle Ages.

By a kind of prophetic inspiration, I think, the Holy Spirit has been leading the recent Popes and, most of all, the Second Vatican Council and the synods that have taken place since the Council to move towards a new direction, a new way of doing "magisterium theology." This way of doing theology has been given the name "The Theology of the Signs of the Times." It might be useful to ask ourselves something of the background (at least) of the name and then of the idea.

The expression, *the signs of the times*, is found in Matthew 16:2–4. Our Lord there uses it in speaking to the Jews. He says:

> In the evening you say, it will be fine; there is a red sky. And in the morning, stormy weather today; the sky is red and overcast. You know how to read the face of the sky, but you cannot read the signs of the times.

Our Lord is speaking about the messianic signs, that is, the miracles and the fulfillment of prophecies which were present in his life. He tells them equivalently that these miracles and these fulfilled prophecies point to himself and to the work that he is doing, of the fulfillment of what God had foretold to His people regarding the coming of the Messiah.

The theological meaning of *the signs of the times* is somewhat different. This was known very well to the special sub-commission—*de signis temporum*—which was created in the Second Vatican Council. Right away the commission tried to arrive at some sort of a new definition that would be used for the Council—an explanation of what was meant by "the signs of the times." In this, of course, they had been preceded by the man who first used the expression in contemporary "magisterium theology": Pope John XXIII. He was the first to bring the category of

the signs of the times formally into the Catholic theology of our age, first in the bull *Humanae Salutis* which convened the Second Vatican Council, but most of all in the encyclical *Pacem in Terris*.

In *Pacem in Terris* every chapter ends with a section entitled (by its editors) "Signs of the Times." The title itself does not appear in the formal document, but some translations use it.

Pope John XXIII enumerates three major signs of the times as important characteristics of our age. *First*, he says, is that workmen all over the world today are increasingly seeking for a share in all the areas of human life. They are no longer willing to be treated as chattel. They are no longer willing to be treated as mere instruments of production. They are asking for some say in the decisions that affect their work and their lives, and are seeking for an access also to the power that will give them some say in political life. They want to participate in decisions pertaining to the general life and culture of their communities. The Pope's first point, therefore, refers to the aspirations of workers for dignity and participation. *Second*, he notes, is that women wish to be treated no longer as mere objects, as appendages in human community and society. They increasingly want a share in all aspects of life, participation in the decisions, in the activity and in the life of their communities. John XXIII sees women increasingly seeking an active role in human society. *Third*, the Pope points out, nations which once were colonies are now bent on shedding any vestiges of dependency on, and any sense of inferiority to, former colonial powers. They insist on genuinely equal status with all other nations in the councils of the world and for meaningful participation in the general running of world society.

In all these the Pope has discerned an emergent leitmotif. Through the rest of *Pacem in Terris* he returns to the idea that throughout human society today there is a growing desire for personalization and for socialization. Personalization, he stresses, on the part as much of individuals as of nations. They all want to come to full development, the individual, to attain to that full personhood whereby he can take his place in the community of men completely as an equal to every other man, and the nation, to arrive at equal rights with all other peoples

within the community of nations. And socialization: men see that in the complexity of human life today the only way that they can accomplish what they want is by joining together in groupings which work towards the achievement of common purposes, and from these groupings emerges an increasingly multilateral network in human society, whereby groups interact with one another towards the safeguarding of particular rights, as well as the formation of common goals, common purposes, common activities, and common achievements.

Pope John sees these concretely (rather than by way of definitions) as examples of some of the major signs of the times and some of the major thrusts by which we are moving towards a certain development of mankind, a certain pushing forward of mankind.

Towards a Definition of the Signs

In 1964, the sub-commission *de signis temporum* came out with a first draft of their document (later to be known as the Ariccia document). Written principally by Father Bernard Haring, it states that *vox enim temporis, vox Dei est* (as is well known, the texts were written in Latin): "For the voice of the time is the voice of God." The commission preferred to soften the expression and explained it by saying that in the great signs of the times which we encounter within the human community in the world, we may see the visible presence of God. We see God's action leading men towards the fulfillment of His designs. In these great *indicia*, therefore, in these great movements and desires, in even the great secular developments that are taking place in history, God's mind and purposes are made manifest to us.

There is a section in the celebrated speech with which Pope John XXIII opened the Second Vatican Council which might be worth our time to touch on, even if briefly. It is the paragraph in which he speaks of the "prophets of gloom." It seems to me one of the more significant texts in all of Pope John's writings.[1]

[1]Walter M. Abbott, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II,* trans. Joseph Gallagher (New York: Guild Press, 1966), 712.

Pope John says, "In the daily exercise of our pastoral office we sometimes have to listen, much to our regret, to the voices of persons who, though burning with zeal, are not endowed with too much sense of discretion or measure." Note this for a moment: he is faulting those people who are burning with zeal but are lacking prudence. Listen to what constitutes this lack of prudence. "In these modern times, they can see nothing but prevarication and ruin." People who see nothing but evil in modern times, he says, are being imprudent. "They say that our era, in comparison with past eras, is getting worse." People, in other words, who see our age as worse than previous ages, are lacking in prudence.

> And they behave as though they have learned nothing from history, which is nonetheless the teacher of life. They behave as though, at the time of former Councils, everything was a full triumph for the Christian idea and life and for proper religious liberty. We feel we must disagree with these prophets of gloom who are always forecasting disaster as though the end of the world were at hand.

The next sentence, I think, is one of the priceless things that should be placed in every biography of Pope John. "In the present order of things, Divine Providence is leading us to a *new order of human relations*." It is this new order of human relations which, the Pope seems to suggest, is leading to the fulfillment of the designs of God in the world. There is a great deal of wisdom and a lot of theology given in this particular insight which, I believe, we are only now beginning to understand.

Pope John's insight, one at once significant and precious, is that what other people might tend to interpret as a constant worsening of the world is really no such thing; that in the very process wherein a lot of people see worsening lies rather the beginning of a new era, a new age where human relations are moving toward new configurations, leading towards the fulfillment of God's designs in the world.

What then is the definition of the "signs of the times?" According to the conciliar sub-commission (two of whose experts were Abbot Canon Francois Houtart,[2] a Belgian sociologist, and Father Marie-

[2]See, for example, Francois Houtart, *The Challenge to Change: The Church Confronts the Future* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1964).

Dominique Chenu,[3] a French Dominican), the signs of the times can be seen as operating on two levels.

First, on the *sociological* level. The sub-commission sees the signs of the times, first of all, starting from the great changes in science and technology, in more complex organization. In the process of socialization, in communications, in transport, in the fact that the world is getting smaller, and that we are able to communicate with each other so much more quickly, in the speeding up of history, in computerization and the unrelenting development of microchips. They have noted the analyses that have been undertaken among the sciences of human society, inquiries made largely in terms of the effects that these changes have had on human consciousness and sensibility, on human knowledge, on man's aspirations and desires, and on the social life. The external changes in themselves do not necessarily constitute the signs of the times; they are, as it were, the *materia ex qua*, the matter from which the signs of the times arise. Pope John, indeed, is careful not to discover the great signs of the times in the facts themselves of technological and scientific change or in the surges of development in industrial society; he draws these signs rather from the human desires and questions that emerge *because* of these changes.

Second, on the *theological* level. The analyses of the human and social sciences in turn have become grist for the theological mill. Theologians have begun to reflect on the direction in which all this innovation is leading man, on the vector human history seems to be acquiring as a consequence of it. They have begun to ask the question of how God's plans are being fulfilled in it. Pope John's perception of its significance looms large amidst all this theologizing: a new order of human relations is leading us toward the fulfillment of the divine design. Here is where theology, the reflection of faith, enters to see just precisely how these developments are advancing the designs of God.

I should point out at the outset that what we are seeing here is the new methodology largely being adopted in the preparation of the

[3]Marie Dominique Chenu, "Les Signes des Temps," *Nouvelle Revue Theologique* (Janvier 1965): 29–39.

Church's documents today. It appears first in *Gaudium et Spes*, the Second Vatican Council's decree on The Church in the Modern World. Paul VI's letter to Cardinal Maurice Roy, *Octogesima Adveniens*, written on the eightieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, reflects the use of this same method, as do the two documents issued by the new Synod of Bishops of 1971: one on the "Ministerial Priesthood," and the other on "Justice in the World." The latter is perhaps the most important document for anyone reflecting on the task of the Christian community today.

The English writer Peter Hebblethwaite[4] points out that there are two major texts of Pope Paul VI which fall along the same lines: *Ecclesiam Suam*, the very first encyclical that he wrote, and *Populorum Progressio*, his encyclical on the development of peoples. Several of the documents that have come out within the last two years also use the same method, that is, first the investigation into empirical reality, its thematization, and then the reflection of faith on findings of that investigation.

The Theology of the Signs of the Times

We have, to this point, seen something in general on the meanings of the signs of the times and the meaning they have in the documents of the Church, something on the history too of the emergence of this idea in magisterial pronouncements, and a few of the documents that have used this particular methodology. It is a good time now to attempt some explanation of the *theology* itself of the signs of the times.

The theology of the signs of the times takes, as the springboard as it were of its reflection, neither scriptural text nor the data of Tradition but "what is going on in the world." We might say that the purpose of reflecting on what is going on in the world is to find out what is *going forward* in the world. For the question, "what is *going forward* in the world?" is for the believer, "what is developing God's plan?" or

[4] *Vid.* Peter Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI: The First Modern Pope* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), especially 380–383, and also his earlier work, *The Runaway Church* (London: Collins, 1975).

"what is pushing forward God's design for the world?" Several bases are apparent in this reflection, in this theology.

I have already referred to the *empirical basis*: it has all to begin with data, the facts that are given to us. There is also the *anthropological* basis, which I would like to take up now.

The theology of the signs of the times takes for granted that its subject is man: man and the history of man. This is where it *starts* its reflection, and it leads hence to finding out what God's mind is on man and on his history. It must, therefore, start with a great deal of attentiveness to what is going on in man. That is why, if you look at the texts not only of the universal magisterium of the Church but also of various Bishops' Conferences, the recurring word, over and over again, is the word "aspirations": the aspirations of men. To cite but a few examples:

> [From the final message of the Asian Bishops' Meeting held in November 1970]: We have made every effort to open up our minds and our hearts to the needs and *aspirations* of our peoples so that we might make these truly our own also, and so that we might bring to them the wisdom that the gospel teaches us. (Para. 3)
>
> [Their conclusion]: We make ours in the most solemn ways, the hopes and *aspirations* of our fellow Asian brothers for a new Asia which shall be worthy of the future that is laid up in the heart of Asian man. (Para. 28)

Paul VI's letter to Cardinal Maurice Roy, *Octogesima Adveniens*, speaks continually of the "aspirations" of people. The whole effort of the Church today must be to locate these aspirations. As a matter of fact, in paragraph 22, which is the summary paragraph in which the Pope nails down one major theme of his letter, after the introduction, he speaks of the two great aspirations that are present within mankind today:

> While scientific and technological progress continues to overturn man's surroundings, his patterns of knowledge, work, consumption and relationships, two aspirations persistently make themselves felt in this new context. And they grow stronger to the extent that he becomes better informed and better educated.

The *aspiration to equality* and the *aspiration to participation*. Two forms of man's dignity and freedom.

There is also the new document on "Justice in the World." The second paragraph states: "scrutinizing the signs of the times and seeking to detect the meaning of emerging history, while at the same time seeking to know and to share the aspirations and questionings of all those who want to build a more human world, we have listened to the Word of God."

The point I am driving at here, in stressing the anthropological dimension, is this: the Church feels that to know what the deepest aspirations of man are at this given moment is to know what God is telling us today. This gives us the place, the locus where Christian action must insert itself to help man to fulfill the divine design. Important, because it gives a whole new focus to the theological task. In other words, there is here an understanding, first, that human history has a purpose and pattern. We have too long, I think, divided human/secular history from divine/religious or salvation history. We have been quite willing to accept that God is working and moving, and has a purpose in religious and salvation history, but we have not seen that secular history itself also fulfills the divine design. As Christians we either admit or deny that God is the Lord of history. If God is the Lord of history, then secular history has a pattern and a purpose from God too. If it is God who has given to secular history a pattern and a purpose, this purpose has to be salvific. For God's purpose in his dealings with men can only be salvific. What is going on in secular history is ultimately salvific because it is God's design, a fulfillment of God's design.

There is an "upward curve" in what we call secular history, and God is moving through that upward curve. Nobody, perhaps, better than Teilhard de Chardin has given us this idea, that there are such things as stages of a developing design within human evolution in history by, and through, which God is leading mankind forward, step by step. Teilhard speaks of critical thresholds, moments in history when human growth, as it were, gathers itself around certain points and breaks through to a new level of consciousness. To get a sense where God is leading this development of history, we should trace the

growth in human consciousness …. It is never very clear or obvious, but, as Christians, we *do* accept that there is a purpose and a plan to God and that, thus, we *do* have growth: something is going forward. Karl Jaspers, the eminent German philosopher, points out, I think, in his *Meaning and End of History*, that there are certain great moments in history when man makes a significant leap forward, again, largely in consciousness, in growth of self-understanding, of awareness of the world, the awareness of man's relationship to the world. The theology we are here dealing with proposes that we identify this thrust forward mainly through the aspirations of man.

Why? We might think of it as follows. God cannot speak to us except in one of two ways: first, by direct, personal or private revelation—as opposed to the revelation of Scriptures which is public revelation; and second, through "what is going on in the world." If the latter, we have to have a means of identifying what he is saying. The means of identifying it lies precisely in the discernment of human aspirations. Do we have a way of establishing the truth of this proposition? Our answer derives from the scholastic notion of *potentia obedientialis*.[5] To the question, "how can we know through natural reasoning that man is called to union with God?" the scholastic theologians replied: through man's innate desire for perfect happiness, the *desiderium naturale Deum videndi*.[6]

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[5] *Potentia obedientialis* [obediential potency]:

> the intrinsic aspect of human nature for self-transcendence and receptivity of God's self-gift of supernatural grace. The "potency" refers to this openness to the divine; the "obedience", highlights the fact that it is God and not the human who must initiate the encounter and freely given self-donation of grace. This concept is important in fundamental theology and in considerations of the possibilities of humans to receive and understand God's revelation as well as to have a certain sense of self-consciousness of oneself and one's relationship to God. (See James T. Bretzke, S.J., *Consecrated Phrases: A Latin Theological Dictionary* [Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998])

[6] *Summa Contra Gentiles* (*SCG*) III, 61: "That by the sight of God one is made partaker of life everlasting,"; 62: "That they who see God will see him forever,"; and 63: "How in that final happiness every desire of man is fulfilled." See also

The reasoning behind it is this. In the statements, "God wills this," or, "God loves Juan," a scholastic thesis will tell you that, if you say, "God loves Juan," some change has to occur in reality that verifies it, that makes that statement true. God, states another thesis in scholastic theology, is unchanging—there can be no change in the reality of God. Therefore there has to be some change in created reality, some contingent modification of created reality, which would make that statement true. The scholastic theologians will say that the presence of the reality called grace in Juan is that reality which makes the statement that "God loves Juan" true. Otherwise, the statement would have no ontological validation. The *potentia obedientialis*,[5] the innate desire of man for perfect happiness, is that which tells us that God is calling this man to perfect happiness. You have to have a desire in man, a desire that can be experienced, that can be felt. This desire verifies that God is calling man to himself. It is the desire, it is the aspiration which is the "proof" that the call of God is genuine, is true.[6]

For those of us in the religious life the call to our vocation offers a fine example too. How do we know that God is calling us to the religious life, or to the priesthood? Basically, by the desire: you have the qualifications—fitness of health, fitness of mental ability, and all the rest are conditioned primarily by the basic desire. You know that God is speaking to you in your desire. The desire is the created reality that verifies the statement, "God is calling me to the priesthood or the religious life."

St. Thomas Aquinas[7] asks somewhere in his treatise on grace: "How do we know the presence of God in any desire or in any plan that we make in our lives?" He says: "In any given moment you cannot say, 'God's grace is here. It's here. God is really calling me.'" He points out nevertheless that "there is a *pattern* of desires that manifests itself

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SCG III, 37: "That the final happiness of man consists in the contemplation of God." See also, for example, *SCG* III, 18, esp. 4: "How God is the end of all things,"; also relevant here is *SCG* III, 53, esp. 3: "That a created intelligence needs some influx of divine light to see God in his essence."

[7] *SCG* III, 155: "Of graces given gratuitously."

through years of our lives, and this *pattern* of desires manifests to us the will of God."

Short of direct revelation, the only way that God speaks to us is through our desires and aspirations. Therefore, the theologian says, if there are great widespread "positive" desires going through mankind, this is (interpretatively) the voice of God, because this is the only other way outside of direct public or private revelation that God can manifest his mind and his will to us. By searching out the great desires of men, therefore, we find out the movement of God's plan.

The Church does not decide for itself, "independently" of God, what it must do at any given moment of history. Its task rather is to find out what God is doing in the world, and to lend all its mind and all its will and all its effort to second the movement of God's doing. One privileged way the Church can find out what its task is then in this given moment of history is to listen attentively to the aspirations of men. Within the voice of men expressing their aspirations the Church can discern the voice of God. If the Church refuses to make the effort at keeping its ear close to the hearts of men, then it is failing in its essential duty.

The document on "Justice in the World," promulgated by the new Roman Synod in 1971, states: "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel." Constitutive, that is, of the Church's mission "for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation." Promoting justice is a constitutive element of preaching the Gospel. Interpreting this very text for the Philippine Bishops, Bishop Labayen declared that if the Church fails to listen to the yearnings of man for justice in these days, it fails in its essential mission of teaching the gospel. This is the direction God is leading mankind today.

This then is the *anthropological* dimension of the theology of the signs of the times: an understanding of the patterns of human history, an understanding of the centrality of man in this developing pattern of human history, and then an understanding that through the aspirations

of man we come into living contact with the plan of God. When God wants to push mankind forward to its next stage, to a new stage of growth and evolution, he makes these desires general.

The theology of the signs of the times possesses a dimension too of the presence of the Holy Spirit, the *pneuma*—Spirit. The Church, in other words, accepts that the Holy Spirit is speaking here on earth not only within itself, the Church, but also from the "world." The Holy Spirit is at work in the world, because ultimately all secular history is a sacred history too. All of secular history is moving according to the plan of God. The Holy Spirit is, therefore, also speaking through secular history. What the theologians have stated is affirmed in *Gaudium et Spes*. In paragraph 26, it is said that in recent times there has been a great spreading of the advocacy of all human rights, and, the Council says, *Spiritus Dei huic evolutioni adest*—the Holy Spirit is present within this development. More and more throughout the world men are becoming aware of, and are fighting for, their rights. Within that movement, the Spirit is discerned as present. The Holy Spirit is moving through this great and widespread secular desire.

It has been asked, in light of this discernment of the Spirit in the world, is the Holy Spirit present too in such an ideological system as Marxism today? It is, after all, a powerful movement agitating the underdeveloped world. John XXIII, in *Mater et Magistra*, and Paul VI, quoting Pope John, in *Octogesima Adveniens*, state that secular movements, no matter how false some of their philosophical presuppositions, may be articulating some of the most legitimate desires of men, and may, indeed, be voicing some of the important values that come from the gospel. Some truths and values which have originated with the Gospel may break away from their moorings and "float free" in currents of contemporary thought and movements, and may, through these, touch men. Speaking somewhere about how salvation may extend to our brothers and sisters in separated Christian Churches, Pius IX's words may have some bearing on our present topic. He explained, in a text written more than a hundred years ago: like a piece of gold-bearing rock cut away from a mountain which itself bears gold, a separated Christian Church that breaks away from the Mother Church and takes

with her the Scriptures and at least some of the Sacraments takes away with her some true means of salvation, and these are what can bring grace and salvation to her adherents.

In paragraph 30 of his celebrated letter to Cardinal Maurice Roy, *Octogesima Adveniens*, Paul VI recalls distinctions made by John XXIII in *Pacem in Terris* about philosophical teachings. Once drawn up and defined, Pope John writes, philosophies remain always the same. Movements, however, tied up as they are with historical situations, tend to develop constantly. They are deeply influenced by their specific contexts and often undergo remarkable sea-change as they are passed on from place and time to place and time. "Besides," John XXIII continues, "who can deny that these movements, in so far as they conform to the dictates of right reason and interpret indeed the lawful aspirations of the human person, contain elements that are positive and deserving of approval?"

It is clear, therefore, that the Holy Spirit can be present within secular movements, even within those which, at first blush, would seem to be wholly antagonistic to the Gospel. Gospel principles and values, whatever the media through which they eventually reach us, derive still from God. It follows that dialogue with the world is not just useful for the Church; it is necessary, because, through the world too, the Holy Spirit does speak to us.

We have now seen two dimensions of the theology of the signs of the times: the *anthropological*, in the aspirations of men which can be indicators of the purpose of history, and the *pneumatological*, in our discernment of the Holy Spirit as speaking to us through the world. There is a third: the *christological*, expressed most succinctly and, perhaps, most pithily, by St. John in the prologue to his gospel: all things were made by him and without him was made nothing that was made.

Father Andre Feuillet,[8] the Sulpician exegete in Paris, perhaps one of the preeminent living interpreters of St. Paul, says that in the

[8]Andre Feuillet, *Le Christ, Sagesse de Dieu d'apres les epitres pauliniennes* (Paris: Gabalda, 1966), especially 163–273. Also by Andre Feuillet: *Études johanniques* (Paris-Bruges: 1962).

Wisdom texts of the Johannine gospel and the Pauline letters, John and Paul, when speaking of wisdom as present in the world, do not refer to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity as envisaged *before* the Incarnation. They refer rather to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity portrayed as *already* incarnate. Christ is at the beginning of creation. All creation, indeed, was founded in him. St. Paul's letter to the Colossians (1:15–20) expresses it well: there God the Father is pictured as creating the world, keeping before him as his model the incarnate Word. The Son incarnate. God fashions the world according to what he sees. This is the vision of Colossians 1:1–20. What is going on in the world, therefore, has ultimately a Christic shape and a Christic pattern. St. Paul here says that the whole world fits together now in this moment of history; the whole creation stands together in Christ. It is summed up in him. Its movement is a movement in Christ and it moves toward a purpose which is Christ. It has fulfillment of its whole being in Christ.

Father Claude Tresmontant,[9] in his book on the theology of St. Paul, equivalently tells us that we did not need Teilhard de Chardin to remind us of all this. It was St. Paul who first told us clearly of this Christic finalization of all the universe. It could not be clearer in Paul, in the letter to the Romans or in Colossians. The whole purpose of created reality is to be fulfilled in Christ. The world, as it exists today, already has a Christic pattern, and has present within it its ultimate thrust toward Christ. God cannot be defeated. The ultimate purpose for which the universe was created, which is hidden as a seed in the heart of the world, will be fulfilled. Unerringly, no matter what man tries to do to frustrate it. All of human history, all of secular history is leading toward Christ.

Is, therefore, everything that man desires to be fulfilled in Christ's design? Is, therefore, the clamor of men and secular movements, is all this the voice of God? Is everything that is taking place in this world designed in the pattern of Christ?

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[9]Cf. Claude Tresmontant, *St. Paul and the Mystery of Christ* (New York: Harper Bros., 1957). See also Claude Tresmontant, *Introducción al Pensamiento de Teilhard de Chardin* (Madrid: Taurus Ediciones, 1958).

Simply, *No!* And in our answer lies the reason—one major reason —for the Church. For it the Church exists in the world. Three grand truths articulate it best.

First, in the Incarnation God has once said his "Yes" to the world and to man. Karl Rahner expressed it well in his beautiful Christmas meditation:[10] the Child in our arms on Christmas Day is God's "Yes," his final and definite and irrevocable "Yes" to the world and all humanity. God has, in Christ, re-accepted the whole reality of the world, the whole reality of history, the whole reality of man. He has assumed it all in himself. St. Paul, in Second Corinthians 1:19–20, writes that Jesus is the "Yes" of God to all the promises made by the Father. Jesus is the irrevocable "Yes" that the Father speaks, his response of salvation. This is the first truth. We accept that the whole movement of this history has already been assumed in Christ.

Second, as Christian doctrine affirms, it is part of being a Christian that one accepts the reality of sin in the world. All attempts to deny the reality of sin are simply and totally wide off the mark. Sin, ultimately, is selfishness and egoism; it frustrates God's plan for the world. Sin is a reality out there.

Third, where sin did once abound, grace now abounds much more. Only the Christian believes this. Although sin is tremendously visible in the world—an almost self-evident fact, as Cardinal Newman said not long ago—the unfaltering affirmation of the Christian is not the reality of sin as present through all mankind but the reality of Christ as having conquered sin. The presence of grace in the world is stronger than the presence of sin. Grace is infinitely more powerful than sin, and we, as Christians, believe this.

To bear witness to these three truths—because of these indeed—the Church has to be present in the world. Some theologians have

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[10]See Karl Rahner, "The Birth of the Lord," in *The Content of Faith: The Best of Karl Rahner's Theological Writings,* eds. Karl Lehmann, Albert Raffelt & Harvey D. Egan (New York: Crossroads, 1999), 286–289. The selection reproduced by Lehmann, et al., in their volume is from Karl Rahner, *Spiritual Exercises*, trans. Kenneth Baker, S.J. (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965), 146–150.

lately defined the Church as a hermeneutical community, a community that discerns. The new synodal text on "Justice in the World" says it explicitly. The purpose of the Church is to discern first what is going on in the world, where God is doing his work, so that it can say its "Yes" continually to that. We have said that, in the first movement in the Incarnation, God said his "Yes" once and for all in the Word. The Church is present so that it can say, "This is where God is saying his 'Yes' to the world." The Church is, moreover, needed in the world so that it can say its "No" to where God is saying "No" to the world. Wherever human selfishness and egoism are trying to thwart the purposes of God, the Church has the duty to say "No"—"No" in the name of God and "No" in the name of the Gospel. And, finally, wherever it sees grace overcoming sin, the Church is present to put all its forces, all of its energy, its whole direction, toward advancing the purposes of grace in the world. This is why the Church exists.

The Church exists as a discerning community, therefore, as a prophetic community, and as a saving community. *Discerning*, so that it may say its "Yes," its echo to where God is saying "Yes." *Prophetic*, so that it may say "No" as an echo to where God is saying "No." *Saving*, so that it may marshal all its purposes, all its efforts, all its initiative, to push forward the victory that grace—God's work—is already winning in the world.

By Way of Final Summary

The theology of the signs of the times is not a theology for the man at the desk. It is a theology that is meant to lead directly to action. It is a reflection that begins not from above but from what is going on "below." Its first task is to listen to the aspirations of men, to listen to what men are longing for, so that it may hear where God is calling it. It is a theology that derives from reality, from what is going on in the world, and it has to bring its truth into emergence in its own consciousness, in the consciousness of the Church. *Secondly*, it is a theology that discerns: a theology that is constantly seeking where to say the Church's "yes," where to say "No," where to offer its

service. Once having answered "Yes" or "No," it is a theology that drives immediately into action. It demands action because grace is at work and the task of the Church is to be at work with grace, to press forward with it and beneath it and exercise itself totally in the realm that grace creates.

The theology of the signs of the times is eminently a theology for men of action, for the layman above all whose task is to actualize Christian presence in the world. It is a theology that must constantly be operative and at work. It cannot accept the findings of fifty years ago simply as applicable today. It must renew its hermeneutic in prayer every day, in contemplation, in dialogue, so that it can steadfastly move forward there where God himself is moving among men.

Is there any other way of teaching and doing theology today? It is difficult to say if there is. All the work of traditional theology is a preliminary to this. Everything else we have heard about revelation from the Scriptures, about tradition from Christian history, is only made to prepare us to *do our thing* in the world. For the Christian believes that, ultimately, what his *thing* is is his obedience to God's *thing*. What is God doing in the world? I must obey what God is doing, and *that* I must try to do myself.

Where is God doing his *thing*? In the Church? In the world? Our answer, normally, would be, in the Church. The theology of the signs of the times would say, No. God is doing his *thing* first of all in the world. The task of the Church is thus to enter into the world to find out where God is doing his *thing*, so that it too may do its *thing* in obedience to the Lord.

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TOWARDS "DOING THEOLOGY" IN THE PHILIPPINE CONTEXT*

Catalino G. Arévalo, S.J.

The Second Vatican Council's decree *Ad Gentes,* on the Church's missionary activity, has a well-known passage on the "inculturation" of the faith and of Christian life which (even if it is in fact cited in the course of this book) should serve as a lapidary text introducing Father Leonardo Mercado's new work.

> The seed which is the word of God sprouts from the good ground watered by divine dew. From this ground the seed draws nourishing elements which it transforms and assimilates into itself. Finally, it bears much fruit. Thus, in imitation of the plan of the Incarnation, the young Churches rooted in Christ and built up on the foundation of the apostles, take to themselves in a wonderful exchange all the riches of the nations which were given to Christ as an inheritance (cf. Ps. 2:8). From the customs and traditions of their people, from their wisdom and their learning, from their arts and sciences, these Churches borrow all those things which can contribute to the glory of their Creator, the revelation of the Savior's grace; or the proper arrangement of Christian Life.

*This article first appeared in print as the "Foreword" in Leonardo N. Mercado's *Elements of Filipino Theology* (Tacloban City: Divine Word University, 1975), 251 pp.

> If this goal is to be achieved, theological investigation must necessarily be stirred up in each major socio-cultural area, as it is called. In this way, under the light of the tradition of the universal Church, a fresh scrutiny will be brought to bear on the deeds and words which God has made known, which have been consigned to sacred Scripture, and which have been unfolded by the Church Fathers and the teaching authority of the Church.
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> Thus it will be more clearly seen in what ways faith can seek for understanding in the philosophy and wisdom of these peoples. A better view will be gained of how their customs, outlook on life, and social order can be reconciled with the manner of living taught by divine revelation. As a result, avenues will be opened for a more profound adaptation in the whole area of Christian life. Thanks to such a procedure, every appearance of syncretism and of false particularism can be excluded, and Christian life can be accommodated to the genius and the dispositions of each culture.
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> Particular traditions, together with the individual patrimony of each family of nations, can be illumined by the light of the gospel, and then be taken up into Catholic unity. Finally, the individual young Churches, adorned with their own traditions, will have their own place in the ecclesiastical communion, without prejudice to the primacy of Peter's See, which presides over the entire assembly of charity (Vatican II, *Ad Gentes* 22).

It is within the context of this and other similar—and very clear—expressions of "the mind of the Church" that we can perhaps collocate the very intense interest in "indigenizing theology" which is present today in Christian communities, both Protestant and Catholic, in Africa, Asia and (in a somewhat different way) in Latin America.

This is not the place to multiply citations, but we should—coming closer to home—note that the two meetings of Asian Bishops (in Manila, 1970, and in Taipei, 1974) have urged strongly that "the construction of a genuinely Asian theological reflection must be given a special priority."[1]

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[1]These notes are somewhat lengthy, as their purpose is to refer the reader to some current issues connected with the discussion on "doing theology" in the Philippine context. It is hoped that the references to analogous work being done in Africa (especially), Latin America, India, and in various Christian Churches may open other perspectives on efforts at "doing theology' for Christian communities in the Philippines.

Anyone who follows contemporary writing on "missions" knows how alive this issue is in current periodicals and how much it is discussed in national and regional meetings of theologians, bishops, and lay Christian groups in the continents of the "Third World." While working on this note, I ran into this item from *Study Encounter* XI/2 (1975)—an article by Henri Mottu, a Swiss theologian, Director of the *Centre de Rencontres de Cartigny* in Geneva, on the World Council of Churches' Faith and Order Commission meeting in Accra:

> The choice of the city of Accra, symbol of the search for pan-African unity and the independence of African countries, was characteristic of the WCC's desire to acknowledge the fact that, both geographically and culturally, the centre of Christianity today has changed. Europe is no more then a province: more and more secularized, cynical and irreligious, with no longer any hope of a global command of the situation. She is being put in her place by the very nations she attempted to colonize and exploit. In the year 2000, there will doubtless be more Christians in Africa than on any other continent. The future of Christianity will be acted out there, and the Africans know it. At Bangkok, the Third World brought its cultural, economic and politica1 problems to the fore; at Accra, the Third World simply asserted itself and declared itself a theological partner.
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> (On 24 July) Seth Nomeny … introduced the concerns of African theology …. For him, the problem is simple: since the Christianity they "received" was imported by missionaries and was conceived "neither

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Evangelization in Modern Day Asia, Office of the Secretary-General, FABC (Manila/Hongkong), par. 33. Already the Message and Resolutions of the 1970 Asian Bishops Meeting in Manila had urged the development of local theological reflection, especially on development questions. The FABC papers in connection with the Third General Synod of Bishops (Rome: 1974), now being published by the Office of the Secretary-General, FABC, give further expression to this widely-felt desire for "a genuinely Asian theological reflection."

In Asia, Christian theologians of India are engaged in much pioneering work. *Vidyajyoti* (formerly *The Clergy Monthly*), published by the Vidyajyoti Theological Faculty, Delhi (Catholic Press, Ranchi, India 834 001) and *Jeevadhara*, Theology Centre (Alleppey, Kerala, India 688 001) are only two of the Catholic periodicals. The work of Fr. D.S. Amalorpavadass, who was one of the two official Theological Secretaries at the 1974 Synod of Bishops, Rome, deserves to be better known in this country (NBCL Centre, Bangalore, India, 560005).

> by them nor for them," the message has to be re-transcribed in the African context. Instead of destroying the African's religious vision of the world and accusing him of being pagan, Christ has to be integrated. Since this is exactly what European theology did in (European) culture, why do we make such a song and dance about it when the blacks do the same in their own culture? Would there, by any chance, be a double standard? The problem now, said Seth, is that "Christian spirituality is turning out to be inferior to traditional African spirituality." We must begin right now to catch up on the delay.[2]

Simply to take up the latest catalogue of Orbis Books, Maryknoll's publishing house, brings one in small compass a cross-section of writing in philosophy and theology from Africa, Latin America, India and, in a more modest measure, from East Asia (SCM and Orbis have recently published Dr. Kosuke Koyama's engaging book, *Waterbuffalo Theology*, which one can unhesitatingly recommend to anyone interested in an "Asian theology").[3]

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[2]*Vid.* Henri Mottu, "Africans as Theological Partners," in *Study Encounter* SE/76, Vol. XI, No. 2 (1976): 7–10. Mottu's paper is introduced with these words: "It must be quite a traumatic experience for a European theologian to be confronted bluntly with third world theologians who try to do theology in their own ways without being bound by norms and rubrics developed out of the long traditions of theology in Europe" (7).

[3]Speaking of East Asia, especially Southeast Asia: here theological production has been rather minimal. One might ask why. At a recent workshop, a theologian from the region ventured the opinion that Southeast Asia has the most tradition-bound and the most dependent local churches—dependent especially culturally. One hopes that that situation is rapidly coming to its end. Hopefully one glimpses some kind of theological awakening in the Philippines and in Indonesia. But this awakening is taking place not primarily in our theological colleges and seminaries, which are still largely bound to what their European and North American counterparts consider "important," but rather where committed Christian groups and communities—at the "grassroots"—are trying to work out the presence of the Gospel and the Church in the concrete "frontier situations" where Christian life is to be lived and Christian action deployed. Ian Fraser, in a recent article in the *Ecumenical Review*, has some very good things to say regarding the kind of theological effort which is demanded by the Christian communities today.

Last year, our theological school put together some articles on contextualizing theology, mainly from the "Third World" countries—just a few challenging items. The collection evoked a great deal of interest which was larger and more intense than many of us expected. In the last few months, moving among groups of (for want of a better

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Ian Fraser, "A Wish Towards Nairobi," *Ecumenical Review* (July 1975): 240–249. Let me cite one paragraph, to give a sample of the challenges Fraser places before those engaged in theological reflection in situations like ours:

> Skills acquired professionally represent a very important supplementary provision to test and check theological thinking, and to put it in the perspective of history. But the pursuit of scholarship extracts you, to the extent that you do your work thoroughly, from the thick of things. Most professional theologians are very substantially extracted. So there is little access to the gifts lay people have and the calling to perceive the action of God right in the main stream of living. A *good* proportion of ordained people in the Protestant churches in Cuba are now earning their living in secular employment, using the rest of their time to undertake pastoral duties or theological teaching. A powerful incentive to do this has come from the young people in their churches, who say: "You do not know what you are talking about. You are not where your words can be tested out." Theology must no longer be treated as an abstruse discipline for which you need a special mentality and a special language. The touch-stone of its quality is its perceptiveness about God's engagement with his world. Theology is essentially not a deductive or logical work but a work of perception.
>
> The shattering thing is this: properly understood, the Church's theological tasks simply cannot be tackled by professional theologians. They are not where it matters. They do not have what it takes. Their part is an important but supplementary one. For any significant theological task which the church is to tackle, professional theologians and ordained ecclesiastics might be needed in the proportion of, say, one to ten. When trained theologians get together on their own—or with a token leavening of lay people who can be trusted to accept the usual language and not to question the usual assumptions—the community of faith knows what to do with the chunks of flinty statement which are thrown in their direction. They take avoiding action as soldiers dodge stones hurled at them in Belfast. (Fraser, "A Wish Towards Nairobi," 240–249, esp. 248)

name) "concerned Christians" in the Philippines, I have realized more how widespread and how keen the desire is "to reflect within faith" on the moment of history through which our people and the Church in our country are going.[4]

What theology is and how we do it cannot be a matter of minor concern to those of us who have either been asked to dedicate ourselves to the tasks of theological education or who have taken up the teaching of theology as our own work. "How does one contextualize theological education?" is a variant posing of the same question, from a more academic perspective.[5]

And surely the answers to these questions in the concrete are not easy to come by. The very objectives of "encouraging theological reflection in each major socio-cultural area" are formulated very differently by theologians, are envisioned diversely in different

[4]There are a number of these groups of "committed Christians" engaged, in ways they are themselves working out, in "Christian reflection" in the Christian communities in our country today. The proliferation of seminars and even prayer-groups at the "grass roots" (to use again an over-worked phrase) which have brought the word of God in the Scriptures to "the ordinary people" has created an atmosphere which prepares the ground for reflection, and (despite obvious difficulties and problems) we can only rejoice that this "movement" is taking place in our midst. The experience of listening, for two good hours, to ordinary farmers, some of them illiterate, reflecting on a passage of the Gospel of John and bringing it to bear on their lives with a self-effacing parish priest creating the climate and gently nudging the reflection along has been really enlightening for me. Sometimes I have wished that some classroom discussions I have attended were half as rooted in real problems as that particular session was. In some workshops of "committed Christians", the quality of question and reflection on the part of lay people who were really wrestling with the challenges their commitment and activity posed to their faith and Church-belonging was of a very high order: truly, we will be obliged to "do" living theology only when we have faith rubbing against "evangelization at frontiers"—where Christians are moving into "new ground," ground where the future is being created.

[5]*Vide*, for example, *Ministry in Context*, The Third Mandate Program of the Theological Education Fund (1970–1977), written and edited by the TEF (Bromley, Kent, England: Theological Education Fund, 1972).

contexts. The well-known African theologian, Dr. John Mbiti,[6] not long ago published in *Worldview* (August 1973) a rather thoughtful paper on this large diversity of objectives and purposes in the working-out of an "indigenous theology."

John Mbiti points out some of the expectations which have been voiced, with regard to African theology:

- that it should reinterpret Christ and the Gospel in terms that are "relevant and essential to African experience;"
- that it should challenge the patterns of Church life brought by missions and missionaries from Europe and America;
- that it should have as content "the points of contact between Christianity and the African background, including mythological, conceptual, ethical, emotive and ritual;"
- that it should be a theology rooted in African life and culture, and that its insights "will be a blessing and enrichment to the world Church;"
- that it should be a searching investigation into the content of traditional religious thought-forms with a view to erecting bridgeheads by which the Christian Gospel could be effectively translated to the African peoples;
- that it should be a systematic reflection on African traditional experience of God;
- that it should be the adaptation of Christian doctrine to the mentality and needs of people in a particular time and place;
- that it should "challenge" established Christianity to engage in dialogue with the Black People, who feel that theology has not taken them into consideration; it should thus be an instrument to make the world aware of African existence and humanity;

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[6]Dr. Mbiti is head of the Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy at Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, and has lectured in the United States and Europe.

- that it should be "a liberation theology: the situation in Africa being such that personal liberation from unfree attitudes, complexes, mindsets, is needed, as well as social, political, economic liberation in relation to other men and to social structures, and religious liberation in relation to God …;"

Mbiti has drawn this litany of objectives from a whole catalogue of authors writing on African theology. With most of them he himself disagrees, at least to this extent: he believes some of these objectives are entirely unacceptable, and that not one of them can, by itself, constitute the total task of an African theology.

For Mbiti, African theology should be seen in the broadest possible terms, as "the theological perception of God by African Christians … the understanding of the Christian Faith by African theologians and other African Christians":

> … understanding it in their own terms, according to their own insights, and in ways that are meaningful to their time and situation. This understanding will surely take account of the commonality of human understanding, on the one hand, and the particularity of African peoples, on the other. It embraces something out of Christian heritage, even if that heritage has come to Africa largely through Western experience of, and reflection on, the Christian Faith. At the same time, whether we want it or not, this understanding is colored by our African heritage and the contemporary situation of our living. Therefore, African theology has to particularize its understanding of the Faith according to the total situation of our peoples—historical, cultural, contemporary and anticipated or possible future.
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> African theology understands first, and then interprets, the Faith. Interpretation cannot be carried out unless there is understanding first. Therefore, those expatriate and African writers who tell us that African theology has to interpret are simply jumping the queue and short-circuiting theology. One interprets that which one understands. And interpretation involves two sides, with the interpreter between them, not to separate but to bridge them. Therefore, while the Christian Faith is the substance of the interpretative work of theology, and African Christians are the recipients as well as the agents of that interpretation, African theology has also to understand them.

Thus African theology probes into African experience and reflection of life—the long historical heritage which has made us be what we are today, and the contemporary situation in which we are what we are or are being made to be what we are, as well as what we will be. African theology cannot be done by outsiders, since they cannot obtain the personal experience, wide-angle view of the peoples of Africa who assimilate the Faith and for whom theology makes sense of the Christian Faith. Man's experience and understanding of God are intimately bound up with man's own understanding of himself. African theology has to come to terms with this twofold task: to understand Africans as it understands and illuminates God to them in the Christian context of things …

We may say, thus, that African theology has a perception that sweeps over all the 360 degrees of the entire circule [*sic*] of the Christian Faith. There is nothing in it of a mystique for which people ask when they say that African theology can teach "us" this or that. It poses neither as a teacher of wider Christendom nor as the answer to all the theological questions that have been missed, ignored, abandoned or left unanswered throughout the centuries of Christian history. We should not expect something out of it, or in it, but rather it is done, it grows, it evolves, it moves on as theology. It may contribute something fresh to Christian stream of thought, we do not know; it may reveal too much so as to embarrass some people or other theological systems, we do not know. But these possibilities, in any case, are not its major concern. When we look African theology in the face, we will see that it is no single man's creation or property. It is created, it is not dreamt about, and it is created by the people of God both as individuals and as the corporate body of Christ, the Church in Africa.

In its task of understanding God in the Christian revelation, making that understanding known to African peoples as well as understanding them, African theology is in a state of self-creating, shaping, molding. In order to do this properly, African theology has to be freed from outside pressures of suggestive questions, criticisms, expectations, artificial comparisons, misinterpretations and advice on what it should be or do. Only in that way will it be true to itself, without being bulldozed into what others want it to be or to do. African theology shall not, and must not, be a puppet theology of the West, the East or the North.

The supreme task of African theology, as it is evolving, is to explore and exploit what the Gospel is and where it may focus its attention. The emphases that it will lay will, obviously, be determined by both

> local and regional situations. Some of these situations will concern the personal appropriation of the Gospel and the Christian Faith; others will put emphasis on wider concerns like liberation from foreign and internal oppression, dialogue between the Gospel and traditional cultural and religious heritage as well as Islam, and the bearing of the Gospel upon national development and concerns. It may be summed up that African theology looks into the relationship between Gospel and survival—personal, communal, national and human survival in all its complexities, dimensions and demands.[7]

Thus far John Mbiti. I have cited him at length, not because I agree with every sentence in the foregoing paragraphs, but because I believe that the *basic thesis* he develops here is, *mutatis mutandis,* applicable to the question of working out a "Filipino theology."

The question, then—increasingly—demands an answer.

Perhaps the simplest answer to this question is the hardest one of all: within the believing community, to engage in this task of "reflecting within faith" and to give some (at least inchoately systematic) expression to that reflection. When one speaks, for instance, of Latin American theology, one need not remain in an abstract discussion of expectations, objectives and possible methodology. Instead one takes up the work of Gustavo Gutierrez, Juan Luis Segundo, Hugo Assman, Rubem Alves,

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[7]John Mbiti, "On African Theology," *Worldview* (August 1973): 33–39, esp. 38–39. It is deliberately that I have chosen to cite an African theologian at length, because the awareness among African theologians of the need of "contextualizing" theology to the churches in Africa seems to me more developed and more articulate than it is in Asia at the moment. A conversation with Mr. Philip Scharper of Orbis Books last winter, in Rome, confirmed this guess. Leafing through recent issues of *After* (African Ecclesiastical Review, Gaba Pastoral Institute, Kampala, Uganda, East Africa) brings this out even more vividly.

On the December 1974 Consultation on African and Black Theology, Accra, see the paper by D.E.W. Fashole-Luke, "The Quest for An African Christian Theology," *Ecumenical Review* (July 1975): 259–269.

With regard to Latin American theology, the works of Gustavo Gutierrez and Juan Luis Segundo are already well-known. A good introduction to "critical reflection" in Latin America is José Miguez Bonino's *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), and the review *Vispera* (Montevideo, Uruguay) which, unfortunately, has ceased publication.

Lucio Gera, Segundo Galilea and others, and wrestles with them in study and discussion, to learn where they are leading us into Christian commitment and Christian action. The thing for us now is to "do theology"—not just to skirt its edges, talking *about* doing it.[8]

Father Mercado has chosen "the better way" and we are all indebted to him. As this is being written, I must admit to only a first—and rather hurried—reading of this work, and thus I will not attempt a critical evaluation now. The really important thing is that Father Mercado has tried his hand at theological reflection from within the life of the Christian community in the Philippines—perhaps more accurately, from within at least one setting of the Church in the Philippines (I am aware of the fact that there are some theological students among us who believe that another setting, another perspective provides *the essential* thematic for theology in the Philippines today). For his pioneering effort, he deserves our most sincere encouragement and the support of a careful and critical appreciation of his work. I am sure it is his own hope that his readers will enter upon a dialogue with him, for he is—and we are—at the beginnings of an important endeavor.

A friend of mine, a teacher of philosophy, after having read Father Mercado's earlier book, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy,* said, "I am glad it

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[8]It might be indicated—merely indicated—in the first place that the FABC Taipei statement, in par. 33, gives one basic *conditio-sine-qua-non* for Asian theological reflection: "living contact with concrete Asian realities is necessary, and thus the collaboration of the entire local church, in dialogic process, is called for." Not a pro forma nod in the direction of greater "participation"; one might point out that the Taipei workshop from which this paragraph came worked with a brief but thoughtful text from Antonio B. Lambino, on "Asian Theological Reflection"—to which Father Mercado's readers are referred. Fr. Lambino's article adds a second condition, which builds on the first, and bears repeating here:

> Only the experience of reality can lead to further valid theological reflection …. The conclusion is clear. It is time to act. Otherwise the imperatives become self-perpetuating, and no foundation is provided for further meaningful theological reflection. It is only in transforming reality (to borrow from Marx) that one can interpret it. There is such a thing as "the paralysis of analysis." (*Evangelization in Asia Today* I [Manila: Cardinal Bea Institute, 1975], 113)

was he who has first come out with a work in this line." This is my own first reaction to the present book. I think we can be glad that Father Mercado has been the first to open this particular door for us. I intend to re-read this book with his earlier volume at hand, as my first reading indicates that certain key points which he simply assumes here are developed more fully in the earlier work. Too, I would like to study the methodology which he employs: this inquiry into method is an exercise of some importance, as it will surely bring up questions of fundamental interest to all of us who are trying to "do theological reflection" also.

Above all, we hope that others will be stimulated by Father Mercado's effort to continue what he has begun, and thus render a truly indispensable service to the Church in our country—a service all the more necessary because there is almost nobody around to render it, at a moment when its rendering has become imperative.

Postscript (7 October 1975)

Just as these pages were to be mailed to Father Mercado, I received from Mr. Philip Scharper of Orbis Books (Maryknoll, New York 10545) the first proofs of a new book edited by Dr. Gerald H. Anderson, *Asian Voices in Christian Theology*—with an introduction by Dr. Anderson, "The Task of Theology in the Asian Churches," nine contributions by Asian Christian Theologians (Roman Catholic authors are not represented) and two appendices: Selected Creeds, Confessions and Theological Statements of Churches in Asia, and A Selected Bibliography in Western Languages. One greets the book with expectation and joy, and hopes that it may only be the first of such collections. When may the first-collection of theological writing from Roman Catholic Filipino theologians be expected?

Appendix: On Pope Paul VI's Closing Address at the Third General Synod of Bishops (Rome, 1974)

A final—lengthy—note might be in order with regard to the reservations expressed by Pope Paul VI on diversified theologies and

pluralism in theology at the conclusion of the Third General Synod of Bishops (Rome, 1974).

It is known that many Synodal delegates, especially from Africa, had spoken of the desirability and need of developing theologies in various countries, regions, continents: evangelization today, if it is to be effective, if it is "to reach people where they are," has need of such pluralism in theology. In the Pope's closing address, however, he said that "it would be dangerous to speak of the need for diversified theologies according to continents and cultures." The reason, in his mind, was this: "either the content of faith is Catholic or it vanishes."

There is hardly need to note, I think, that the Bishops who were and are urging the development of "local theologies" would certainly have no desire that theologians should work out theologies whose content is not Catholic, that is, whose content would be at variance with Catholic belief. Rather, their desire is to enrich our one and common Faith by its understanding and expression as developed in different cultural situations—fuller *catholicizing of* Christian theology.

As a helpful comment on the Pope's text, we here cite a section from an excellent article by Fr. James Dupuis, a Belgian theologian teaching in India, a theological consultant of the Asian Bishops at the Third General Synod, and one of those who acted as translators at that synod. Fr. Dupuis' article, "The Synod of Bishops 1974," appeared in the Catholic clergy magazine *Vidyajyod* (Ranchi: April 1975).

> The Pope's negative verdict on diversified theologies was disturbing for more than one reason. It seemed to imply that theological pluralism necessarily endangers the unity of faith the content of which "either is Catholic or vanishes." The distinction between the content of faith and its expression and theological elaboration—for which the recent Declaration *Mysterium Ecclesiae* (1973) of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith had paved the way in a new manner—seemed overlooked. More puzzling still was the fact that the Pope's reservations did not seem to tally with what, six days earlier (October 20), he had said in his address to The Synodal Fathers during the reception organized at the Propaganda Pontifical University. On that occasion the Pope, alluding to the work of the Synod, had seemed to rejoice at "the undisputed identity of the faith which in an apostolic and missionary

> language gives rise to and invents flexible forms, truly incarnated in the most diverse ethnic and historical realities." Perhaps theological forms were not directly in the Pope's mind when he spoke those words. But in the apostolic exhortation *Paterna cum benevolentia* on reconciliation in the Church, which, soon after the close of the Synod, he addressed to the Church in immediate preparation for the celebration in Rome of the Holy Year, the Pope's considerations on theological pluralism seemed to cancel the reservations expressed in the concluding speech at the Synod. The Pope expressed himself as follows:
>
> "We recognize that pluralism of research and thought, which in various ways investigates and expounds dogma but without disintegrating its identical objective meaning, has a legitimate right of citizenship in the Church, as a natural component part of her catholicity, and as a sign of the cultural richness and personal commitment of all who belong to her … indeed we admit that a certain theological pluralism finds its roots in the mystery of Christ, the inscrutable richness whereof (cf. Eph. 3:8) transcend[s] the capacities of expression of all ages and cultures. Thus the doctrine of faith which necessarily derives from that mystery—since, in the order of salvation, 'the mystery of God is none other than Christ'—calls for constant fresh research …."

In the same document the Pope went on to stress the need of every expression of the faith to be faithful to the revealed message, to remain in touch with tradition and subject to the Church's teaching authority. The theological pluralism advocated at the Synod meant to respect those criteria; it does not seem in any way different from that to which the Pope himself recognizes legitimate right of citizenship in the Church. The reservations on theological pluralism made in the closing speech of the Synod thus remain puzzling and raise disturbing questions as to the influences which may have entered into its composition. This and other factors besides those mentioned here above explains why the Pope's address left the Synodal Fathers disquieted and disturbed.

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SOME PRE-NOTES TO DOING THEOLOGY ON MAN, SOCIETY AND HISTORY IN THE ASIAN CONTEXT*

Catalino G. Arévalo, S.J.

By way of a rather personal contribution to your deliberations, I would like simply to make a few seemingly disparate points which, though they take some tentative positions, have no pretensions to being anything but points of departure for discussion. "Seemingly disparate:" I believe that when seen together they do converge and have a certain coherence.

First, some remarks along methodological lines:

1. In a note, well-known to many of you, which he wrote "On 'Asian Theological Reflection'," contemplating "the task of constructing an Asian theology," Father Antonio Lambino begins with the point that "it will not be achieved … through the direct formulation of theological principles 'in the Asian way'."[1] Applying the current

*This article is constituted of excerpts from a paper given at the consultation on Theological Education for Christian Ministry in Asia, Association of Theological Schools in South East Asia, Manila, March 13–21, 1977, published later under the title, "Some Prenotes to 'Doing Theology' on Man, Society and History in the Asian Context," in *Loyola Papers* 9 (1977): 123–139.

[1]Antonio B. Lambino, "On 'Asian Theological Reflection'," in *Approaches to Christian Decision, Loyola Papers* 4 (Quezon City, Metro Manila: Loyola School of Theology, 1976), 71–75, especially 72.

distinction between theological principles and theological imperatives, he proposes that what the "urgency" of the present moment in Asian theological reflection calls for is the formulation of imperatives rather than principles. "An imperative," he writes,

> is born of the interaction between principle and the actual human situation. The imperative is characterized by a greater "contingency" of "modifiability" because of its closer dependence on the sociological, economic, political, etc. factors of the concrete historical situation. When these contingent factors change, the imperative also changes with them.

Though the language of "principles" and "imperatives" seems to be especially related to the field of Christian ethics, the point is applicable on a broader scale. The question it raises, I think, is whether we embark on too ambitious (too imperial?) a project when we try to bring into being a full-grown Asian theology (or Asian theologies) with some large framework or scheme of reflection as the principal objective of the construct, or work instead "from the ground up" by formulating imperatives, one by one, in the face of the concrete demands of a situation.

This would seem to be especially relevant in reflecting theologically on the themes which emerge under the general rubric, *Man in Society and History*. I believe there are major frameworks already drawn up (political theologies, the theology of hope, the various development and/or liberation theologies and the like) from other—even First World—contexts. It is not necessarily being too dependent on "foreign constructs" to accept such previous frameworks, *by way of working hypothesis*, and by asking very concrete questions raised from within real situations Asian Christians and Christian communities face, in order to allow our own larger themes (and our own major framework) to emerge little by little.

Edicio de la Torre, S.V.D., who gave what was considered the main paper in the *Theology in Action Workshop*[2] here in Manila some years

[2]"The Christian Participation in the Struggle for Liberation," in Jae Shik & John England, eds., *Theology in Action*, A Workshop Report, Manila, September 1–12, 1972 (Tokyo: EACC, 1972), 33–39.

ago, used to speak of "guerrilla-style" theology, one which does not immediately look for a larger and "finished" theological construct, but is willing to take a piece-meal (even a "hit and run") approach, thus building more realistically, less academically but ultimately more solidly, in trying to create an Asian theology.

2. The second point I raise grows out from the first. I cannot be rid of the feeling (if that is all it is) that the main focus of Asian theological reflection in our present age—for most of post-colonial Asia, at any rate—will be found in the general area of the theologies of development and (especially) "liberation." Certainly the joint Dar-es-Salaam statement of Third World theologians is a piece of liberation theology, even if liberation theology "with a vengeance," spanning now three entire continents. A cursory reading of theological journals from Latin America, Africa and various sections of Asia will suffice to show the predominance of this theme.[3]

It will cause no surprise when we note that liberation theologians especially in Argentina[3] have developed, over some five or six years, an approach to the theology of liberation through the theme of *el pueblo*, the people, which bears remarkable similarities to the Asian approaches of both Dr. C. S. Song and Dr. D. Preman Niles.[4] This in no way reflects on the originality of the suggestions put forward by the Asian theologians just cited; in fact, for me anyway, it is a remarkable point of convergence—which is a source rather of rejoicing, for obvious reasons. After all, the Christian heart of an Asian and a Latin American will, despite large dissimilarities, when placed in similar human predicaments, register basic "coincidences," be moved by similar reactions, seek somewhat similar responses, articulate similar

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[3]José Miguez Bonino, "The Theology of Liberation," in *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 65–69 (chap. 4). "The Church does not offer a model which it has itself invented; it does not impose a system from above, but it accompanies the people, communicating the liberating contents derived from the kerygma" (68).

[4]D. Preman Niles, "Toward a Framework for Doing Theology in Asia," Background Paper I, CTECMA, March 1977. See also Choan-seng Song, "The New China and Salvation History: A Methodological Inquiry," *South East Asia Journal of Theology* XV/2 (1974): 55ff.

aspirations and yearnings. They will recognize these in some major symbols and themes in the Bible and the Christian theological tradition, because these furnish us with our common Christian horizon.

But what then shall be *Asian* in this theology? One might sound facetious by saying simply: "its rootedness in the concrete Asian situations." That nevertheless would in fact be the true answer. It would seem to me that the questions should be articulated precisely as they arise (with the language and image and all the emotional overtones) out of the Asian experience, and that the imperatives which are discerned should be expressed as people who are the subjects of this experience in fact believe their Christian faith should be expressed in deed and life: as their Christian faith commits them to respond to this experience and the reflection and discernment which follow from the experience. To me the operative words here are "just as they arise out of their experience" and "as they in fact believe their Christian faith commits them."

You will see that I am not asking anything very different from what the Theology in Action Workshops asked, from what Ian Fraser asks in his (to me quite stimulating) book, *The Fire Runs*,[5] which is something of a *summula* on this "close to the ground" approach. I would only ask insistently that Asian Christians be allowed to experience and to respond to the realities they encounter without being decisively programmed to a response already worked out for them by some ideological or theological construct coming from Euro-American, Latin-American or African contexts, but as much as possible, the response should arise from their own struggling with the Scriptures and their reflections on pertinent data from Christian history and experience (Tradition).[6]

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[5]Ian M. Fraser, *The Fire Runs: God's People Participating in Change* (London: SCM Press, 1975).

[6]This *freedom*, on the part of "indigenous theological projects, to pick and to choose" seems to me an essential element in the whole matter of creating indigenous theologies. One cannot eliminate existing horizons of Christian theology in other parts of the world, in other areas of the Church's existence and life. But one may not allow them to dictate one's own concerns, approaches,

A large order, and some might think a naïve and impossible one. For want it or not, the "programming apparatus" (mainly ideological and theological constructs) is already very much in operation, no matter which way we turn. Yet must not the effort be made? Would any genuinely Asian theology (of liberation or any other concern) be possible without such an effort? Here I think we possibly have one cardinal and highly neuralgic point for discussion, which it might be quite profitable to take.

3. Experience is indispensable in the effort to construct a genuinely Asian theology of liberation. We cannot insist on this sufficiently. This is the first condition for "contextualization," and perhaps many among us have failed to get onto the first solid step of a genuinely contextualized theology precisely because we have not been able to allow this experience to enter significantly into our lives. A merely token experience ("two weeks in the squatter areas") will not do; what is called for is something that *internalizes* the lot of people caught in situations of poverty and hopelessness, growing in the consciousness of the total reality in which their life-situation is inserted, and facing it (both the darker and lighter sides of it), trying to cope with it in some measure, trying to do something about changing it, "struggling for liberation."

In our Christian communities in the Philippines at this moment, there exists among a not insignificant segment of "church people" an effort, which we cannot sufficiently praise and encourage, to enter truly into this world of the poor, the suffering, the deprived. The 1974 FABC statement speaks of those "who have a special call from God to identify with the poor" and to share in their struggle for a new and more human society.[7] Surely the summons of the Spirit of God lies behind these efforts at solidarity with the poor and inspires these

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bases of perception, sensibility, imagery, etc. John Mbiti says pretty much the same thing in several essays, e.g., in the paper which I quoted at length in my foreword to Leonardo Mercado's book, *Elements of Filipino Theology* (Tacloban City, Philippines: Divine Word University, 1975), xii–xiv.

[7]Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), *Evangelization in Modern Day Asia*, Statements of the First Plenary Assembly, Taipei, 1974 (Office of the Secretary-General, FABC, P. O. Box 1160, Manila, Philippines).

vocations in the Church. For who of us will doubt that this effort at solidarity and even identification with the poor is *one very genuine expression* of living out the Gospel for our time and our place?

Granting all this, we must say however that sheer experience is not enough, certainly not enough for the theological enterprise and those whose task is to engage in it. There has to be a moment which follows after this, at least in the "theological community." Not simply the moment of understanding or even conceptualization, but the moment of discernment and of judgment which precedes responsible decision and commitment.[8]

Is there too much (at present anyway) of unexamined acceptance and support of ideological perspectives out of either a sense of "being established" or, on the other hand, out of a sense of moral outrage, but not enough of the really difficult effort of hard-nosed multidisciplinary research, analysis, step-by-step planning, as well as the exercise of "utopian imagination" in all this? Can we learn from the (admittedly rather paralyzing) investigation done by, as well as the lines of further study proposed by, the sociologist Peter Berger in his book, *Pyramids of Sacrifice*?[9]

The examination of ideological analyses and constructs (mostly of Marxist provenance) which we so readily assume into contemporary theologies of liberation has to be undertaken with all possible seriousness, and it has to be not only a mesmerized study of the concepts there given, but a study too of their verification or non-verification in our concrete situations.

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[8]Cf. the remarks of Father Lambino, "Doing Theology in the Philippine Context," *Loyola Papers* 9 (Quezon City, Metro Manila: Loyola School of Theology, 1977).

[9]Peter Berger, *Pyramids of Sacrifice: Political Ethics and Social Change* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin, 1974). Cf. Horacio de la Costa, Antonio B. Lambino & Catalino G. Arévalo, *Faith, Ideologies and Christian Options*, *Loyola Papers* 7/8 (Quezon City, Metro Manila: Loyola School of Theology, 1976), 16–17, 88–90.

Moreover, we have to have the sufficient sense of theological responsibility to see what is biblical language and Christian "consequence-drawing" from Christian teaching, and what is ideological language and concept—and the possibly over-facile transition from one to the other, the possibly uncritical assumption that one set of words means the same realities, equivalently, as the *other* set of words. That, for instance, the Gospel theme of God being on the side of the poor, the widow and the orphan means the same thing as "God being in favor of the class struggle."[10]

May I suggest that this is perhaps the most demanding and most crucial area for the theological reflection on "man, history and society" in Asia today? I might point out in passing that, at least among the more "left-ward activist" but also in many ways the more genuinely committed segments of Christian communities in our country, this suggestion of a more sustained and empirically hard-nosed probing is taken as a sign of non-involvement, of bourgeois vacillation, of ivory-tower academicism, and even a heartless betrayal of the cries and anguish of our people? Yet, unless we wish to yield to irresponsibility, must this kind of reflection not be done as our grave responsibility, as theologians and as ministers to our Christian people, lest we be as blind men passionately leading the blind?

But note that this effort of study and reflection cuts both ways. We have to apply critically the questions raised by people like Juan Luis Segundo in his *Liberation of Theology*[11] to our reigning and operative theological constructions also. As Segundo does, we must project the questions Marxism asks, and we must take these questions with utter seriousness. We must undertake the equally hard-nosed effort to make our reading of the Scriptures and Christianity, to see the

[10]A question: is there at least a semi-conscious "glissement of vocabularies" operative in the dialogue between Marxism-Maoism and Christian liberation theology? Or is this "glissement" really logical and justifiable, as Juan Luis Segundo's work argues?

[11]Juan Luis Segundo, *The Liberation of Theology*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1976).

(liberalist) "ideological infiltrations" it has suffered and to see how our conscious or unconscious ideological stances and commitments have influenced (even vitiated) our own understanding of and living out of the Christian faith.[12]

The missionary enterprise in Asia, carried out by churches linked with the colonizing powers, the Church structures and theologies brought into our countries by that enterprise, the continuing influence (someone spoke of domination) of the church communities of the First World in our local milieux—their language, their mind set and concerns, even their life styles—all of this needs deeper probing and questioning, more courageous evaluation by the kind of theological reflection which few have pursued with the seriousness and courage demanded by the task.

4. The question of the necessity of involvement and praxis (even, say the liberation theologians, the *inevitably conflictive praxis* that "being on the side of the poor" thrusts one into) for the very possibility of "doing theology" must be considered also. The Dar-es-Salaam statement "rejects as irrelevant an academic type of theology which is divorced from action." It summons us to "a theology which engages in critical reflection on praxis in the reality of the Third World." Here we touch *the new epistemology of praxis* (which the liberation theologians "prolong" from Marxist Maoist thought) and the question of commitment to the struggle of the poor and oppressed which (so the liberation theologians argue with great power—take Segundo as an example) is and must be genetically *prior* to the task of doing theology itself.

This is perhaps the strongest challenge which theological education among us must meet and answer one way or the other: that theology must be functional to orthopraxis. This is the theological transposition of the Marxist norm that primacy must be given to the transformation of society and history over theoretical constructions: one is not there to contemplate reality, one seeks rather to change it. The theological norm would then be: the primacy goes to *the praxis of evangelical love*

[12]Alfred T. Hennelly, "The Challenge of Juan Luis Segundo," *Theological Studies* 28 (1977): 125–135.

within history over the merely correct *affirmations of faith* and the constructions of theology; *orthopraxis over orthodoxy*. Theology and doctrine are functional to the praxis of effective love, and this praxis (for instance in our concrete Philippine situation) is involvement in the social and political, on the side of the majority, who are poor and oppressed, as they strive to bring into being (as the very meaning of history) a more human world.

It is a challenge that has been thrown increasingly at theologians of seminary and university in this country. It is a challenge not to the theologian in "Teutonic captivity" only; it poses rather a crisis of identity for the entire Church, her pastoral activity, her structures, her presence in the world.

We are all familiar with the almost complete inversion of perspectives that is demanded. On the premise that the modern world sees knowledge as functional to the control and transformation of natural and social processes, on the Marxist premise that social practice primes theoretical knowledge, these affirmations are made:[13]

I. God reveals himself to us and through his Word. But his Word is not first of all "words" (Scripture) but an historical praxis—his action which liberates man and through man all of creation. The real locus of divine revelation is God's liberating *action* in history.

II. This self-revelation of God in act summons from man the response of faith which is not a notional understanding of the nature of God and his relationship with the world, but rather a response that is a praxis (of social and political liberation in history) which seconds God's own *doing* in the world.

III. When men engage themselves in this liberating action they realize God's own doing in history. For the liberation which God works consists above all in enabling men to

[13]Luis Alberto Restrepo, "Teologia y practica politica," in *Fe y Justicia*, Theologica Xavieriana 4 (Bogota: 1976), 453–469, especially 463–469 ("Algunas Tesis").

make themselves free. Thus this historico-social praxis is both the doing of God and the doing of man.

IV. Faith, when it is taken to be intellectual knowledge—vehicled by words (the Scriptures, the texts of tradition, the writings of theology)—is and must be subordinate to praxis. It takes its origin from the *doing* of God in the world and must terminate in the *doing* of men transforming humanity, freeing themselves within history.

V. The liberating praxis of God, mediated in history in and through the liberative praxis of men, is solidarity with the poor and the oppressed in any given society. Hence the praxis of solidarity with the poor and the oppressed is the privileged "space" where the summons of God and his revelation of himself can be met today. The historical praxis of social and political liberation is the privileged encounter with the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A good number of consequences flow from these theses. Those who espouse them hold that the entire theological enterprise must have concrete praxis not only as the privileged locus for its verification but as the only guarantee of its authenticity. Faith and its concepts are evangelically authentic, and Christian theology is similarly authentic, only when they begin with commitment to and struggle for the poor and oppressed and only when they flow back into it.

Thus the effort to elaborate intellectual constructions and theological systems, spelling out in academic discourse one's understanding of God and his relationship with the world is contrary to that evangelical authenticity toward which theology itself must strive. Theological faculties and schools cannot exist for this kind of work. If they do, they run counter to what the Gospel asks of them. The truth of God's word is found only when the believer submits to it in its project and movement in history. The Minister of the

> Gospel is not authentic because he can speak learnedly of the Scriptures, but because he can show in his life and in his sharing in the struggle for liberation that his love for his brother is effective and obedient to God's word.[14]

This position which I have just enlarged on is not mine. But it has been raised most insistently before people like ourselves (if perhaps not with all this explicitness of expression) again of late. It poses the most serious questions to our entire theological education if it seeks in fact to be an education in involvement and for involvement in the creation of a new world of justice among men. We are told that it is only when this perspective is adopted that theology can be really liberated so that men can liberate themselves.

The points I have made so far are primarily methodological. You might regard them as outside the scope of the theme assigned to me. But I believe these issues must be faced, in the effort to create an Asian theology.

5. A last point, which might be called methodological also. In a recent talk to the 1977 National Convention of Students of Roman Catholic Seminaries,[15] Father Lambino summed up the task of theological formation for the Church in the Philippines today as striving for a) a theology *na marunong lumakad* (knows how to walk): a theology whose first component is experience, a true sharing of the experience of our people, especially the masses of the poor, of their suffering, their joys as well as their aspirations and struggle for a more human life; b) a theology *na marunong umupo* (knows how to sit), which does not shirk the agony of prolonged and disciplined study, multi-disciplinary research, sustained reflection and responsible judgment of issues—an ability "to sit down" which is of such crucial importance

[14]These theses are drawn, for the most part, from Restrepo, "Teologia y practica politica." See also Jose I. Gonzales Faus, *La Teologia de Cada Dia* (Salamanca: Sigueme, 1976), 283–292.

[15]Unpublished talk to the 1977 National Convention, Inter-Seminary Forum of the Philippines, February 29, 1977.

since theology is not a search for knowledge only, but at base a search also for the Kingdom of God; lastly, c) a theology *na marunong lumuhod* (knows how to kneel) (Hans Urs von Balthasar's *betende Theologie*), a theology which is finally born in the fire of prayer, enlightened and purified by prayer, by living contact with the Word of God and the presence of God in our lives.

Father Lambino insisted that there is finally no theological integration without worship, prayer and obedience to the will of God discerned in prayerful reflection and in the stillness of adoration which is the noblest act of our human freedom.

This point terminates in another demand: that our theological education for participation in the transformation of society be, in a way, a *formation in a spirituality for the ministry* of our time—a formation of the kind of men and women who can participate in responsibility for the world *as Christians*, who are able to integrate presence-and-action in the secular and often conflictive areas of social and political action with their vision of faith, their grasp of the presence of God in the love of persons as its privileged context.

This may sound like a cop-out on the task assigned to me, but if what we need first of all at the present time in Asia are not so much theoretical systems but efforts in the line of authentic spiritualities of participation in responsibility for our brothers, should not theological education for this participation be geared explicitly to foster *an authentic spirituality for ministry*?

A colleague of mine likes to say that the Marxist-Maoist challenge is first of all not on the level of theory (although surely it is that too) but on the level of commitment and deeds, hence in that area of lived theology which Christian tradition calls spirituality. I have read recently of not a few seminaries in Europe and the United States wherein what is called spiritual formation has come to know a significant revival. May I be bold enough to suggest that this area deserves a certain priority under the rubric not of personal formation only, but precisely in the area of social and political action.

For this part of this paper I would like to indicate some themes which I believe our theological work must touch or investigate in the effort to apply "the critical Asian principle" to the theology of man in history and society.[16]

1. It is a commonplace now to remark (I believe) that there is the need of a phenomenology of the religious consciousness of Asians as they are caught up in the transition from the traditional to the modern in the shapes and textures of Asian societies. May I hazard the impression that our social scientists, philosophers and historians of culture have not done us the needed service of giving us this kind of phenomenological description because their work remains excessively specialized (So much of the lack of dialogue between social scientist and philosopher or theologian stems from the different "sizes" of field of interest; apparently there are no Max Webers writing in Asia today)? I speak, admittedly, from the necessarily limited viewpoint of the Filipino Roman Catholic community, where I believe thinking and writing in this area have not yet developed a solid body of research and reflection. There have been conferences and workshops which have revolved around this theme, but at least in the Roman Catholic community no comprehensive synthetic effort has yet been made to see the entire process in such a perspective and with sufficient courage to draw the "large picture" that theology might fruitfully mesh with it. This is, of course, as much the fault of theologians as the social scientists, because the kind of dialogue that might motivate social scientists to do this kind of work has not been significant so far.

Latin American liberation theology, for instance, has created a typology of Christians and Christian groups face to face with movements of social change and/or social revolution which is quite revealing and which poses challenging questions for theological reflection—attitudes of the "official Church," a "class-list typology" of religious stances,

[16]On the "critical Asian principle," cf. Dr. Gerald Anderson's introduction to *Asian Voices in Christian Theology*, ed. G. H. A. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1976), 3–9.

varieties of responses, and the like.[17] In the Philippines we have not even done the spadework for such a typological picture.

2. There is an area of our "social and political theology" which cannot, however, await the frequently retrospective scholarship of social science. I refer to the area of *the defense of human dignity and human rights* in our countries today. In situations where what has been called the "ideology of national security"[18] so readily sacrifices human rights and human dignity, and so readily labels as subversive even the defense of the most basic rights of men and women, the Church must seek to form Christians—and above all, it would seem, Christian ministers—truly sensitive to human rights and their violation, and ready to take stands in these matters, in the witness of Christian hope and love.

We do not speak of adolescent postures and sensation-seeking stances. We do not even rule out the acceptance of what has been called "developmental evil" and "*de facto* evil" in limited measure,[19] at a period such as the present, when it seems that national development can only take place under strong and decisive governments which cannot assume the "free and open" features of relatively affluent western democracies. But we must surely be awake, within our theological enclaves, to the reality of the ideology of "national security" constructed with equal passion by rightist and leftist authoritarian states today. We must be aware of how

[17]For instance, cf. Cesar Aguiar, "Currents and Tendencies in Contemporary Latin American Catholicism," CICOP Position Paper, V/pe/70; Emmanuel de Kadt, "Church and Society in Latin America," *Clergy Review* (October 1971): 755–771, and *Clergy Review* (November 1971): 843–866. Also Enrique Dussel, *History and the Theology of Liberation: A Latin American Perspective*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1976), 183–189 (bibliography of considerable interest). Dussel has an even more recent volume, *Historia de la Iglesia en America Latina, 1492–1973* (Barcelona: Nova Terra, 1974).

[18]On "National Security Doctrine," I-DOC *Monthly Bulletin*, New Series, January–February 1977 (articles by Joseph Comblin on the ideology of national security); 17–22 (bibliography).

[19]Cf. Edmundo M. Martinez's articles in *Loyola Papers* 9 (Quezon City, Metro Manila: Loyola School of Theology, 1977).

within the perimeters of the influence of this ideology, blindness can so easily afflict us in our classrooms and seminaries, the blindness born of timidity or fear. In many ways the "specifically Christian contribution" to the effort of national development or liberation, a contribution which need not await scholarly definition, is that of never allowing strong-arm governments to forget that in all the effort to construct a new society and a new humanity, the freedom and dignity of the human person is the supreme value which cannot be set aside.

3. In spite of what I said earlier in the paper regarding a certain distrust of constructing too early a large framework for Asian theology, I believe that some such hypothesis as that offered by Dr. D. Preman Niles (and Dr. C. S. Song before him) would provide an admirable base for an Asian theology. The history of a people as assumed into God's plan of creation and the history (patient of the truly new) which derives from it, or as assumed into salvation history, seems to me a very fruitful "story" which can serve as a guideline for an Asian theology, or for each of our peoples. Such a structure would integrate within it the reality, the development, the significance of the religions of our peoples, and the histories and traditions which have been largely shaped by them. Such a structure would open our present moment of history to the movement of God's redeeming work in the world, point out where we believe the line of meaning ought to be leading, try to trace where the *de facto* historical line fails to coincide with the "ought line," i.e., where sin and the structures of sin are most present in our societies, as we perceive this in our reflection on the word of God and under the light of its judgment.

4. Much has been written of late on the models of the Church, on paradigms for the Christian community. Avery Dulles' well-known book[20] deals successively with the Church as institution, as mystical communion, as sacrament, as herald, as servant. For the Asian situation it has been suggested that the Church as *first-fruits* is especially meaningful (It was Dr. Masao Takenaka from whom I first heard the development of this theme). In recent years now my own search for a privileged image

[20]Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1974).

or model of the Church for our Philippine context has focused on the Church as *Suffering Servant*. In the last few months I have felt that the two biblical names of Jesus, *Son* and *Servant*, taken as point and counterpoint, would be a particularly fruitful combination of models for the Church in the Philippines and the description of its mission.

5. The theme "Son and Servant" leads to the theme of a "Filipino Christology" underpinning our social-political theology of the Church as "Son and Servant." A Christology for liberation, but in a Philippine setting, would be a necessary prelude. This is not a minor enterprise, surely. We are not without first essays on this, first essays of interest and value (Dr. Elwood's book is an example),[21] in our various countries. But here, in the context of Asian liberation theologies, a new and creative effort must be made.

Surely one need not argue the conviction that all Christian theology returns sooner or later to Christ as to its center, its hold on reality. It is when faced with the reality of Jesus that "out of many hearts, thoughts are revealed." Our Christian presence in the social and political will be primed by our Christology and our Jesuology: who Jesus is for us, who Christ is for us, finally tells us who we are, what we are sent for, what we must do. The choice of the names of Jesus, the ascending or descending Christologies we select—these determine our ecclesiology as well as the shape and quality of our Christian life and action.

> Some Latin American theologians today opt for an historical Jesus whom one of them[22] seeks "beneath" all his biblical names and titles, an historical Jesus who can only be truly known in the praxis of following him, a Jesus who in the course of his life completely revises his understanding of God when he sees the suffering and oppression all around him, when he is rejected by the established people and powers of his time; a Jesus who begins by being wholly orthodox in his concept of God and religion, but it ends up by seeing that the only authentic response to the one true God is not the religious one, but to

[21]Douglas J. Elwood and Patricia I. Magdamo, *Christ in the Philippine Context* (Manila: New Day Publishers, CLSP, 1971).

[22]Jon Sobrino, *Cristologia desde America Latina* (Mexico: Ediciones CRT, 1976).

> struggle on the side of the poor and the oppressed for the coming of the Kingdom of God. Surely here we have a Christology "from below" (with a vengeance) which is almost wholly functional to liberation theology and liberation spirituality as well.[23]

A Christology of "Son and Servant," we have said the name "Servant," linked with the notion of the Suffering Servant is especially meaningful for most Asian Christians today. The Suffering Servant limns the task of servanthood which the Christian community is called to fulfill in Asian societies today:[24] the willingness, the readiness to share in God's suffering love; the self-effacingness and seeming failure of his endeavors and the shipwreck of his mission; the total self-gift, in love and obedience, for others, in bearing witness to what God is doing for his people.

But the name "Son" should at least be equally significant for us. Sonship retains a meaning in traditional as well as present Asian society which it has lost in much of the modern world (Western and socialist). I have often wondered what a fully-developed "theology of sonship" would be, written in an Asian cultural context; so much nearer in spirit to the original biblical context, but nonetheless with its own particular ethos. "Son" would also underline the aspects in the Christian vocation which speaks of what "*is already*," not only of the "*not yet*"—the relationship with the Father, the rootedness in his acceptance and his love, the sense of being from him, sent by him, into one's mission, the confidence of being always with him, the conviction that in one's fidelity to the Father one remains in him, even now. These are aspects of biblical Christology (and Christian celebration also) which tend to receive short shrift today, when the search is for a human Jesus seen through the prism of social conflict, the human Jesus who lies even "beneath" the biblical names (or should the names

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[23]To cite only one title, José Miguez Bonino, Leonardo Boff, et al., *Jesus: Ni Véncido Ni Monarca Celestial* (Buenos Aires: Tierra Nueva, 1977), cf. 269–272 (the bibliography). This book appeared in an English translation (by Robert R. Barr) edited by Jose Miguez Bonino under the title *Faces of Jesus: Latin American Christologies* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1994).

[24]Niles, "Toward a Framework for Doing Theology in Asia."

and titles be used, a unilateral and rather narrow choice among the senses of "servant"—servanthood in social history, in passion and struggles, in social conflict).

A Christology of "Son and Servant" would provide a thematic for Asian theology which could greatly enrich our social and political theologies.

6. The final theme I would like to bring up could have taken up this entire paper, and I apologize for the inadequate treatment here. It has been said that "the effort to re-interpret Christianity today in such a fashion that can lay claim to the ethical and moral vacuum found both in science and revolution is certainly the most momentous spiritual struggle of our time." This task is far from completed. The Synod of Bishops of 1971 affirmed that

> action in behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us a constitutive dimension in the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.[25]

Action on behalf of justice, the Bishops are saying, action in the transformation of society toward a more human and more just world is integral to the proclamation of God's Word.

The Christian Churches have increasingly affirmed this in the last few years. Yet if Christian theology must motivate and summon men more decisively, even more passionately to the task of doing all they can do for the poor and powerless in society and for the changing of social structures which institutionalize injustice, it must also constantly remind them that the coming of the Kingdom of God is not identical to the forward thrust of any economic, social or political movement in the world. If it will teach Christians that responsibility for history and participation in the building up of a just society are integral to the presence and action of Gospel and Church in the world, it must yet recall to them that the fulfillment and realization of the age to come

[25]Synod of Bishops, "Introduction," *Justice in the World* (Rome: 1971).

belong to the freedom and power of the Lord, and will come in the time and season hidden in his counsels.

This is the burden of Pope Paul VI's most recent *summula* on evangelization, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, and one senses in it the struggle to give the project of "this worldly" liberation its rightful place in the mission of the Church yet to be clear that it must open out to "something more" in the realms of the spirit, of the sacredness of each person, of eternal life if it is not to betray other basic elements in the Christian message, and the more abundant life which is the Lord's gift for us.[26]

An adequate "theology of history" or a "theology of responsibility for the world" is far from being an accomplished task in Christian theology—in Asian theology, but in western theology too for that matter. Today the efforts are many but lined up along lines of ideological polarization which seems to await upon events for its resolution. At the moment we are at one pole of the swing of the pendulum, but the last word has surely not been said yet, for we wait perhaps for a greater commitment of Christians to their work in the world before we adequately formulate its theology. Will an Asian Christian theology of liberation, drawing also the reserves of ancient Asian wisdoms, have something by way of original contribution "to what is the most momentous spiritual struggle of our time?"[27]

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[26]Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Apostolic Exhortation (December 8, 1975). Cf. de la Costa, et al., *Faith, Ideologies and Christian Options*, 38–60; 42 (references to Philippe Delhaye's commentary).

[27]James V. Schall, "From Catholic 'Social Doctrine' to the 'Kingdom of Christ' on Earth," *Communio: International Catholic Review* III/4 (1976): 293.

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MISSION TODAY IN THE ASIAN CONTEXT*

Further Reflections

Catalino G. Arévalo, S.J.

In this paper, I intend merely to provide a "reading companion": an easy and quick *vade mecum* for a careful reading of some texts from statements made by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC). What I hope to accomplish is indicate some "milestones" along the road, lest they be missed amidst the flurry of lectures, seminars, and conferences that have filled our days in these times of transition and change.

This is what I try to do in Part III, by drawing out and underscoring some of the more important declarations on mission issued by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) between 1970 and 1978, but not without first providing, in Part II, an appropriate context of relevant conciliar and papal statements, principally, *Ad Gentes* of Vatican II and *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of Pope Paul VI.

With Part IV I offer something of a summary within what, I hope, is a somewhat coherent framework. This summary, it is hoped again,

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can form *the basis for discussion toward some consensus paper* on the Theology of Mission in the Asian Context today.

In Part V, for lack of time unfortunately, I present in outline a few suggestions, by way of appendix, a few headings for some brief personal reflections toward properly theological reflection on mission in Asia today.

I. Pre-Notes

I here hope to accomplish two objectives: first, give a hasty overview of an at least inchoate theology of evangelization found in the Asian Bishops' texts listed below, and second, lay the groundwork for some consensus in the course of this Congress. Obviously, all we can do within the limits we have is to trace broad lines and to give clear indications of current and foreseeable orientations and directions which might be taken.

I should say at the outset that any discussion of the concerns of Christian Mission should be preceded by a careful description of the situation in which the Gospel must be proclaimed and the mission realized. There should be a serious attempt at analysis too of the situation(s) so described. Such an analysis should *not* merely be sociological (not even if it is constructed by good practitioners of the sociology of religion). It should *also be an analysis worked out within the perspective of faith.* Such an analysis would then serve as a point of departure for lining up the challenges which confront the evangelizing action of the Church and of Christians, as they respond in obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit speaking in (to use an already much-abused phrase) "the signs of the times."

While acknowledging the validity and desirability of such a procedure, we must *beg not* to have to enter into this effort in any statement which we make—at least not in any great length. Previous statements of Asian Bishops in assembly have done this already, time and time and time again, in the last ten years. There may be need to review with care what has already been affirmed. There is no need,

I believe, to repeat it, especially since these texts are readily at hand, and some of them speak with exemplary clarity and force.

Neither do we wish to enter into the theology of mission *ab ovo*, but should (more realistically) build on and expand on the statements and declarations already made.

In continuity with the Second Vatican Council's *Ad Gentes* (*AG*) and, even more closely, with the apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*EN*) of Pope Paul VI, we will try to bring our understanding of mission in line with what we have shared, discussed with each other, discerned and resolved to do in *this* meeting on Evangelization, the first of its kind in Asia, as far as the Roman Catholic communion is concerned.

With this paper I am attempting an essay in a genre not perhaps too highly favored today, that of "magisterium theology." This was what most of our seminary teachers used to do in our theology classrooms when we gave *glossae* on Denzinger. But I may be pardoned for returning to an older manner of discourse, because I believe we have perhaps not yet made our own—in some more synthetic way—the developing lines of a theology of mission which our own Asian bishops have drawn in the last fifteen years. There will be some interpretation of course; every attempt at understanding yields a given line of interpretation. Listeners and readers will have to judge for themselves if the interpreter is faithful, and if the understanding is a valid one.

Let me list now the pertinent texts, with the expectation that participants in this Congress know them well, and that we can try to trace interconnecting lines linking together "places" they have been in before, themes that by dint of familiarity with these texts they will have already reflected on and made their own.

1. ABM/1970. The Asian Bishops' meeting (Manila, 1970) on the occasion of the visit of Pope Paul VI. Complete official text in *His Gospel To Our Peoples* Vol. II: Taipei (Manila: Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Secretariat, 1976), pp. 349–355.
2. FABC I/1974. *Evangelization in Modern Day Asia*, the First Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops'

Conferences (Taipei, Taiwan, Republic of China, April 22–27, 1974). Statement and recommendations of the Assembly (Manila, Philippines: Office of the Secretary-General, FABC, 1974).

3. ACMC/1977. Pedro S. de Achutegui, S.J., ed., *Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church*, Hong Kong, February 27–March 5, 1977 (Manila, Philippines: Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences [FABC], 1977).
4. B1SA/1978. Bishop Julio X. Labayen, OCD, et al., *The Bishops' Institutes For Social Action*, FABC Papers, Hong Kong, 1978.
5. FABC II/1978. *Prayer—The Life of The Church of Asia*, the Second Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (Calcutta, India, November 19–25, 1978). Statement and recommendations of the Assembly (Manila, Philippines: Office of the Secretary-General, FABC, 1979).
6. BIMA I/1978. The First Bishops' Institute for Missionary Apostolate, The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, July 19–27, 1978. FABC Papers, Hong Kong, No. 19 (FABC General Secretariat, 1979). Published among the papers in the present work.

We will of course presuppose, as a "standing base" of reference, the decree *Ad Gentes* of the Second Vatican Council, and the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, wherein, in a comprehensive way,—even if some elements seem to us insufficiently developed—the Holy Father attempted to construct a *summula* on evangelization for our time, a text of indubitable value both as a wide-ranging review of the Synod of 1974 and a look-forward into the challenges of the future.

My task has been made infinitely lighter because Bishop Patrick D'Souza's keynote address and position paper touched practically all the important bases of the theology of mission in Asia today. This reflection

can consequently focus on the Asian Bishops' texts, and hopefully limn in bold strokes the directions which these texts point out to us.

II. Some Fundamental Points: *Ad Gentes* and *Evangelii Nuntiandi*

Commentators on *Ad Gentes* have told us that, among the several new themes this decree puts its attention to, one of the most important is its emphasis on "the local church," especially the young church as local church—an indication that there is a decisive historical dimension to the theology of mission. The period preceding that of Vatican II was, in the area of political history, a period of the emergence of the newly independent "young nations," and, within the young nations, the emergence of the "young churches" which up to that time were called the "foreign missions."

Perhaps the most salient phenomenon on the horizon of Christian mission in the mid-1960s was this emergence of the *novellae ecclesiae*. Their development was henceforth to be seen as holding the center of Christian mission today. The future of mission was more and more in the hands of these "younger" Christian communities. What this meant, and means, is roughly what Wahlbert Buhlmann has tried to spell out in his controversial and uneven (but, sales-wise, very successful) book, *The Coming of the Third Church* (St. Paul Publications, Makati, Metro Manila: 1977). Even a reviewer critical of many specific points in this study has pointed out that Buhlmann's core thesis can hardly be disputed by anyone cognizant of the realities of the situation of Christian mission today.

The second emphasis which derives from *Ad Gentes* and *Lumen Gentium*, and which is generally accepted as of major importance, is the theme that every (local) church is a missionary church, that, properly speaking, the Christian communities throughout the world are no longer to be divided into the mission-sending and mission-receiving churches. Both the vocabulary and the theology behind this vocabulary are increasingly out of date. That the whole Church is on

mission means that every local church is on mission; henceforth there is no "one-way one-direction mission." Every local church has to be "sign and sacrament" of salvation for the surrounding milieu. For the young churches this, of course, poses a challenge they must meet as their very missionary vocation. They must awaken to a creativity in mission which, up to the immediate past, they did not even begin to understand. It is only now, in fact, nearly twenty years later, that the meaning of this is beginning to be grasped.

Two points need to be made. First, the "young church" (hitherto the "mission" or "missions") has emerged as the new growing point of mission-thinking and mission-activity. Second, the young church, as "local church," is missionary, must be—as sign and instrument of Christ's redemption—missionary to its surrounding milieu and, indeed, to the whole world (which explains the slogan, "mission on six continents!").

Evangelii Nuntiandi (*EN*) is the document issued by Pope Paul VI as a summary of, and reflection on, the 1974 Synod of Bishops on Evangelization. It really constitutes an apostolic exhortation that covers a vast area of both theology and missionary action. For our present purpose, however, I would single out one facet only. *Evangelii Nuntiandi* has made it mandatory (at least for Catholic mission thinking) that the Catholic/Christian understanding of evangelization be "holistic," i.e., integral. It must be truly comprehensive: to understand mission only partially is to distort its meaning, to mutilate its range of action and life. "Any partial and fragmentary definition which attempts to render the reality of evangelization in all its richness, complexity and dynamism does so only at the risk of impoverishing it and even of distorting it" (*EN* 17).

Pope Paul VI is explicit that a more comprehensive grasp of what evangelization involves was what precisely emerged from the sharing of experience and insight which the Synod of 1974 proved to be.

> We must see each component in the total context wherein all of them are inserted. This was the merit of the recent Synod of Bishops. It was so strongly urged there that all these elements were not to be opposed to each other, but rather made to mesh in with each other …. So that

> there might emerge a full understanding of the work of proclaiming the Gospel which is the task of the Church (*EN* 24).

Transposing the terms somewhat: basically, this means that in evangelization word cannot but be joined to witness, and witness must be joined to word—at least if evangelization is to be complete (Proclamation of "linguistic meaning" completes proclamation in and through "incarnate meaning." The obverse is also true.). To explain a bit: by *word* we mean the explicit preaching of the Gospel: *kerygma*, catechesis, the gradual formation of the church community and its development as a community of explicit faith, hope and love, with its ministry, the sacramental life, pastoral activity, and explicitly ecclesial presence and action. By *witness*, i.e., the presence and action of the Gospel "incarnately," we mean the living out, in life and action, of what the Gospel teaches (meanings, values) and what it commands (imperatives, deeds) mainly through *diakonia*, service—*diakonia* in the world and to the world in the world's own structures and spheres of concern and activity.

EN (18–21) enumerates with care and in some detail the elements of evangelization. The Gospel must transform humanity from within, make new its values, its interests, its aspirations, its models of life. Evangelization reaches into all spheres of human life and culture. The Gospel is meant to permeate them all, even to their very roots. Evangelization is—amongst men and women in our time—sharing, witness, solidarity, service. It is good (and importantly) explicit preaching, formation of the Christian community, its structures and ministries, adherence to the life of the Church in its doctrinal and sacramental fullness, apostolic and missionary initiative and labor.

There is a second point from *Evangelii Nuntiandi* which we should deal with here. It was a central issue in the Synod of 1974, and in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* as well: the relationship between evangelization, salvation, and intra-historical liberation, especially in the socio-economic and political areas. No one needs to be told how much this problem concerns all of us in Asia today, how present it is whenever we reflect on the meaning of the Gospel in our lands, in our time, for our peoples.

Pope John Paul II, in his well-known address inaugurating CELAM III (the Latin American Bishops' continent-wide pastoral council on evangelization) at Puebla in Mexico, summarized and reiterated *EN*'s teaching on the issue of human liberation. A few sentences, recalling his words there, will have to suffice here:

> If the Church makes herself present in the defense, or in the advancement, of man, she does so in line with her mission, which, although it is religious and not social or political, cannot fail to consider man in the entirety of his being. The Lord outlines in the parable of the Good Samaritan the model of attention to all human needs (cf. Lk. 10:29ff.), and he said that in the final analysis he will identify himself with the disinherited—the sick, the imprisoned, the hungry, the lonely—who have been given a helping hand (Mt. 25:31ff.). The Church has learned in these and other pages of the Gospel (cf. Mk. 6:35–44) that her evangelizing mission has, as an essential part, action for justice and the tasks of the advancement of man, and that between evangelization and human advancement there are very strong links of the orders of anthropology, theology and love (*EN* 31); so that "evangelization would not be complete if it did not take into account the unceasing interplay of the Gospel and man's concrete life, both personal and social."
>
> It is therefore not through opportunism or thirst for novelty that the Church, "the expert in humanity," defends human rights. It is through a true evangelical commitment, which, as happened with Christ, is a commitment to the most needy. In fidelity to this commitment, the Church wishes to stay free with regard to the competing ideological systems, in order to opt only for man. Whatever the miseries or sufferings that afflict man, it is not through violence, the interplay of power and political systems, but through the truth concerning man, that he journeys towards a better future.

In summary still, Pope Paul's teaching in *EN* goes on to spell out the "correct Christian idea of liberation." It is "liberation from everything which oppresses man, but, … above all, liberation from sin and the Evil One, in the joy of knowing God and being known by him." It includes reconciliation, forgiveness, the recognition that every human heart can be transformed by God's love. Liberation, which has definite economic, political, social and cultural dimensions, but is not reduced to them. Liberation, whose fuller Christian sense is "not sacrificed to the

demands of any strategy, practice or short-term solution." The Christian understanding of liberation is integrally evangelical and evangelically integral. It derives from the Gospel; it is part of the proclamation and the realization of the message of the Gospel.

Hence if preaching the Gospel today must include liberation in both teaching and praxis, conversely the Christian's understanding and praxis of liberation cannot remain Christian if the Gospel is not an integral and intrinsic part of it.

From *EN*, then, we have placed two points in relief: the comprehensive understanding of evangelization which integrally includes both *Word* and *Witness*, and the equally integral Christian understanding of liberation as deriving from the Gospel and inseparable from it, evangelization realizing itself in human liberation, but human liberation with genuinely evangelical dimensions (liberating evangelization).

What else will be said in this paper necessarily presupposes our complete adherence to the understanding of evangelization given us in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. It is our permanent and ongoing point of reference. Let this be clearly and unambiguously understood. All this forms the basis and prelude of any "theology and theological reflection on mission" which the International Congress on Mission undertakes.

III. Orientations from Asian Bishops' Texts (1970–1978)

Do the declarations of the Asian Bishops, which I have listed above, offer us any more specific Asian orientations for theological thinking on mission, at least since the Second Vatican Council? To simplify our work somewhat toward finding the answer to our question, I have limited this survey only to texts from the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), first, because they have an across-Asia dimension, something which statements from national conferences of bishops do not always possess, and second, because we believe it is only right and reasonable that FABC assemblies and their conclusions should feed into our present deliberations. The texts represent serious

discussion and some areas of consensus already achieved. In these assemblies there has always been a genuine effort to call on the Holy Spirit for guidance and light, just as we have done and continue to do, in this present meeting. To gather the harvest from the meetings which have preceded this one seems an appropriate act of gratitude to the Asian bishops who gave time and labor to their previous gatherings, and an act of gratitude too to the Holy Spirit for his guidance.

ABM/1970. The overall topic chosen for discussion in the first meeting of Asian Bishops was *Populorum Progressio* and its meaning for peoples and churches of Asia. Within this given framework, the final statement of this meeting focused on the poverty and suffering of the Asian masses, on the youthfulness (percentage-wise) of Asian peoples, on the diversity of Asian cultures, on the post-colonial re-awakening and the emergence of a new consciousness and a new self-understanding, of which an aspect is an assertive nationalism, on the Asian peoples' recognition and desire for a life more truly worthy of their humanity, on the refusal of the youth to accept the status quo, on their clamor for reform and "bold transformations" in the economic conditions and political structures in their countries, and on the "coming to birth" in Asia of a "true community of peoples."

The Asian Bishops consequently saw their first task as the "renewal of ourselves in the light of Christ," the deepening "in ourselves" of the spirit of servant-hood, a commitment "to whatever concerns the dignity of man." They recognized that "it is far from true" that our commitment to Christ diverts us from "the duties and tasks of this earth."

To be more truly "the Church of the poor" was the first of their resolves. They also expressed determination to "speak out for the rights of the disadvantaged and powerless against all forms of injustice, and committed themselves to a concern for the total development of the peoples of Asia." The Bishops resolved too to become the "Church of the young."

The Asian Bishops also reached out to other Christian churches and communities in Asia, to collaborate with them towards the development of their peoples, and seek the just ending of strife and

warfare in Asia. Reaching out too to all men of good will and resolving to uphold and promote the realization of human rights, they expressed resolve to seek the equitable distribution, and socially responsible use, of land and other resources; to impress on all the duty of responsible parenthood. In the context of their recognition of international aid programmes for countries of Asia and the rest of the Third World, they urged structural and real aid in terms of more equitable trade relations, the greater openness of markets to fruits of Asian labor, for example, and justice in international commodity prices. The Asian Bishops voiced support in the struggle against atheistic communism and against imperialism of every kind; cooperation between government and religious and civic bodies in development work; the effective implementation of aid to developing countries, particularly the realization of the goal of providing aid in the amount of 1% of the affluent nations' GNP. Surely these are not "narrow ecclesiastical concerns" which the Bishops saw as part of the Church's authentic concern in Asia.

But there were also more specific "home tasks":

- the construction of a theology of development with reflection on the role of conflict, and the clarification of the roles of priest, religious and laity in the concerns of development;
- the resolve to enter more resolutely into inter-religious dialogue;
- the development of indigenous theology and the work of inculturation of Christian faith and life;
- greater attention to, and recognition of, the importance of students in the tasks of transforming and building up Asian societies;
- greater emphasis on education for total human development;
- more unified practical action in areas of media—radio, television, press and film, the establishment of an Asian news agency, etc.

Here again, the task of mission is seen in a broad view, from as broad a perspective as that which characterizes *Gaudium et Spes* and

other relatively recent Vatican II documents. Reflection on the nearly ten years which have followed on these recommendations will reveal, I think, a certain prophetic discernment of where the roads to the future were leading. One is pleasantly surprised, reading them today, how much they speak to us of our current concerns and purposes.

FABC 1/1974. The FABC had its ground-lines laid down in Manila in 1970 and in Hong Kong in early 1971. With the First Plenary Assembly, held in Taipei in April 1974, it became "fully real." The assembly met to consider the task of evangelization, in preparation for the Bishops' Synod of 1974. It was a historic gathering, and its deliberations (we believe) were a notable *prise de conscience* for the local churches in Asia, which proved far more significant than its participants realized in the course of the meeting itself. Its final text, on *Evangelizaton in Modern Day Asia*, in its official FABC secretariat edition alone, has gone into about a dozen printings up to this time. Surely this testifies to wide distribution and use, especially in Asia.

I shall refrain from commenting on this text at length. First, because the document is in everyone's hands and because the FABC Secretary-General, Bishop Mariano Gaviola, presented the statement with a commentary clearly underlining its major thrusts and indicating its points of focus. And second, because it is a text which has already "had a history." Many local communities and groups of priests, religious and lay people have said that they have been "educated on the text" as part of a program of orientation and action. Together with the Synod of 1971's "Justice in the World" and more recently Pope Paul's *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, it has provided a framework for an expanded and renewed understanding of evangelization in the Asian context today, a broadening of perspectives which *EN* was, in its own measure, to make its own. One commentator has said that the impact it has had in many places is a proof of the deep and wide-reaching influence a programmatic episcopal statement can in fact have, when it articulates with clarity the felt needs and aspirations of their own local churches after these have passed through the process of the Bishops' own "prophetic discernment."

As the first and second volumes of *His Gospel to Our Peoples* abundantly substantiate, the statement and resolutions of the First FABC Plenary derive from the Asian churches and their Bishops—from statements made by various episcopates, e.g., from India (the 1974 CBCI texts), from Vietnam (one might read the papers given in 1970 and 1974 by Bishop Nguyen van Thuan), from the Philippines and from other conferences and bishops, and as the Taipei proceedings show, from somewhat hurried, but fruitful, discussion in the assembly work groups.

FABC/1974 places the local churches in Asia at the center of focus. The primordial "mission-now" assignment for the Church in Asia is the building up of the local church. This can be seen as in basic continuity with *Ad Gentes* in Vatican II. But the accents here are more markedly placed on the tasks of the local church in order to become, one might say, *more authentically the local church.*

> The primary focus of our task of evangelization, then, at this time in our history is the building up of a truly local church. (9)
>
> For the local church is the realization and the enfleshment of the body of Christ in a given place and time. (10)
>
> [The local church] is not a community in isolation from other communities of the Church one and catholic. Rather it seeks communion with all of them. With them it professes the one faith, shares the one Spirit and the one sacramental life. In a special way it rejoices in its communion and filial oneness with the See of Peter, which presides over the universal Church in love. (11)
>
> The local church is a church incarnate in a people, a church indigenous and inculturated. And this means concretely a Church in continuous, humble and loving dialogue with the living traditions, the cultures, the religions—in brief, with all the life-realities of the people in whose midst it has sunk its roots deeply and whose history and life it gladly makes its own. It seeks to share in whatever truly belongs to that people: its meanings and its values, its aspirations, its thoughts and its language, its songs and its artistry. Even its frailties and failings it assumes, so that they too may be healed. For so did God's Son assume the totality of our fallen human condition (save only for sin) so that He might make it truly His own, and redeem it in His paschal mystery. (12)

This paragraph from the final statement of the First Plenary Assembly of the Asian Bishops' Conferences has often been cited as much in Europe as in Asia as the "classic description" of what inculturation means.

Dialogue too is put forward as imperative: a "dialogue of life"—a life-sharing—*within* the experience of the great majorities of Asian peoples who, from their poverty, undernourishment and illnesses, their suffering and enduring, seek a fuller human life, an affirmation in life and praxis of the dignity and rights of every human person, a striving for the liberation of man toward a fuller humanity, the existence of children of the heavenly Father.

In July 1978 the first FABC Bishops' Institute for Missionary Apostolate (Baguio City) had this to say, at the end of the first day of brain-storming on the common concerns of evangelization in Asia:

> Synthesizing the results of the brainstorming sessions, the assembly came to the conclusion, surprising for some, that we had, without intending it, actually followed in the footsteps of the Taipei meeting of 1974. This meeting had clearly stated the building up of the local church as the goal of all missionary activity, a goal that can be reached only by a … genuine dialogue.

These few remarks will have to suffice. FABC 1/1974 does not pretend to give a complete theology of evangelization, but it does lay down "an agenda for churches in Asia"—an agenda which in fact implies a theology of mission sketched only by suggestion in the last paragraphs (par 43–49) of the text.

ACMC/1977. The Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church took up a vast range of themes and problems (one admires the hardihood of the participants). The six question-points the colloquium enumerated are often cited, as is the lineup of new (especially lay) ministries in the church. Bishop D'Souza has reproduced "the situational challenges to the Christian Church in Asia" in his keynote address.

1. *In religious matters* the question is: how to preach the good news of Jesus to our brethren so that the Church may be, and appear to be, the sacrament of salvation and a community of love.

2. *In relation to the world religions:* how to enrich its own Christian identity and life by opening itself to the great religious traditions of Asia in inter-religious dialogue, and together with them, how to practice religion, and promote moral and religious values, in a way that will contribute to the total human development of our peoples.
3. *In economics:* how to contribute to the eradication of stark poverty, by an authentic dialogue of life with the poor of *Asia,* without fostering materialism.
4. *In social life*: how to preserve the authentic values of personalism and family life in the face of urbanization and technological progress.
5. *In political matters*: how to help our people find an Asian style of authentic participative leadership in government at all levels.
6. *In cultural matters:* how to find their own national and Asian identity, by blending ancient and modern values in face of the future ahead. (ACMC No. 12, p. 22)

One way perhaps of evaluating the basic thrust of ACMC is to say that the colloquium was a sustained effort to draw-up a preliminary set of rough sketches for adapting the structures, ministries, and methods of evangelization of the Asian churches to bring these into gear with the mission as truly meeting the "situational challenges" indicated. We might cite this sentence from BIMA I as reflecting the same realization:

> Deeply challenged by these fundamental issues, the participants felt how inadequate our present structures are to realize this our mission in Asia, starting from the central mission organization of the church right down to the local level. The discussion also revealed the inadequacy of many of our present day mission methods.

It is at this point, I believe, that the *theme of the Basic Christian Communities* (BCC) emerges, and with it the new understanding of ministries,—especially lay ministries—which derives from the "realization" (the coming-to-be) of the grass-roots level ecclesial units.

Unless we are mistaken, from this point on the BCCs begin more and more to take up "front and center" on the Asian Church scene (Your own experience, in various countries, will be greatly helpful in evaluating developments in this area. One effect of Pope Paul's *EN* was the genuine, if guarded, welcome and "right to the city" it gave to BCCs.). To more and more—as in our recent Manila Archdiocesan Synod (October 1979)—the BCC structure and processes seem to provide a privileged (and providential) way of realizing, especially on the levels where it really counts, the purposes the Asian churches have, for some time now, been setting for themselves.

> We will refer the issues which surface here to the Workshop on this topic. Perhaps it is not an accident that when the first responses of participants-to-be for this conference began to come in, Workshop VI was by far the most "popular" of the discussion-and-study groups. The topic, it would seem, has come to its hour in the local communities of the Church in Asia.

FABC II/1978. FABC II took up the theme of "Prayer, the Life of the Church of Asia." Bishop Gaviola, in his presentation of the text, notes with some insistence that the reflection on prayer was in no way envisioned—by anyone who planned the assembly or participated in it—as a backward step from the commitments solemnly taken up by the Asian Bishops in 1970 and 1974. On the contrary, it was seen as a step forward, a step of more explicit integration of commitment/action with the "depth dimension" of Christian life and mission: the dialogue with the Lord in the depths of the heart, in the depths of many hearts. The deep levels of Christian and Asian spirituality were in intent and purpose being *explicitly linked up* with the efforts toward inculturation, inter-religious dialogue, and toward the true development and liberation of persons and societies in Asia. FABC II was thus an attempt to complete the circle: to link mission and dialogue with prayer and contemplation, to affirm that all Christian involvement needs prayer-roots if it is to remain Christian and if it is to grow as true commitment to human persons, to the totality of persons and societies.

We do not need to point out that the FABC II/1978 was an exercise in inculturation and in dialogue with (some aspects at least of) the religious traditions and prayer-ways of other Asian religions. It was, in fact, programmed to be just as much "prayer exercise" (and in this sense a praxis, though not in the Marxist sense) as reflection and discussion. It was also an attempt in practice to link up the prayer dimension of the Christian life with the action/praxis pole.

Bishop Gaviola's comment on the text places some emphasis on this latter intent. He cites three significant paragraphs to illustrate his point (pp. 4–5). We may be allowed after him to reproduce the same paragraphs here.

> We renew our commitment … to the tasks which the gospel and the Spirit speaking in "the signs of the times" have given to us and our communities. These tasks call us to shared responsibility for justice and brotherhood among men and peoples, to the solidarity with the men and women of our time, especially when they are poor and voiceless, marginalized and oppressed, deprived of their rights and their human dignity. (42)
>
> It is thus our resolve to "allow Jesus to pray to the Father and live for the Father in our hearts and lives" ever more fully, and in freedom to receive and make ours the gifts of Faith, Hope and Love which the Lord gives to men for their liberation from sin and its consequences in society, for the fulfillment of their earthly tasks and their pilgrimage to the Kingdom of God. (43)
>
> Our faith teaches us that liberation from oppressions which weigh upon our peoples will not be wrought, nor the pain and injustice of the world removed from it except through our sharing, in prayer and self-gift, in the mystery of the Cross. (44)
>
> We believe that finally the power of God's love is the only force that can truly renew the world. This force is the power of the Spirit; it is given to us by the Lord through prayer. (45)

BIMA I/1978. Though BIMA I/1978 (Baguio City, July 1978) preceded Calcutta, for our purposes we have preferred to take it up in last place. In a sense the present meeting is an extension and widening of BIMA I, not least because BIMA I pursued a purpose practically identical with ours: it can be seen as a preliminary to this assembly.

When its participants began by formulating their common concerns, "another vital need surfaced: the creation of an integral mission theology suited for Asian conditions." In large measure this objective is high on our agenda also. I can only urge—with insistence, if I may—that our participants read the few pages with which BIMA I speaks to us. Again, if I may, I would like to highlight a few themes:

> From our experience of dialogue (the whole spirit and method of that conference was a sharing of experience and insights, joined to reflection and prayer) emerged the conviction that dialogue was the key we sought,—not dialogue in the superficial sense in which it is often understood, but as a witnessing to Christ in word and deed, by reaching out to people in the concrete reality of their daily lives.
>
> We were happily surprised to see that our spontaneous sharing led to the same conclusions as those of the First Plenary Assembly of FABC, Taipei 1974, namely, that the areas to be explored were those of inculturation of the Christian faith, the encounter with Asian religions, and the challenge posed to the Church by the poverty of the vast majority of our people.
>
> In the context of dialogue we tried to penetrate the meaning of the uniqueness of Christ—in our own inner experience, in our contact with others, in the very plan of God to bring all things to fulfillment in Christ as head. We realized … that our actual presentation of Christ does not correspond to what we have learnt about the divine economy of salvation. There is also much in the Church that must change—in ways of thinking and in structures—to make room for Christ to expand to the full dimensions envisaged by St. Paul. We feel that the Christian experience in contact with the age-old religious experience of Asia has much to contribute to the growth and transformation in outlook and appearance of the Universal Church.

The centerpiece, when everything is said, is *dialogue*: dialogue in the inner heart with Christ to grasp a little of his meaning for us, dialogue with one another within the community of Christian faith, hope and love, dialogue in the three wide realms described by FABC I/1974 and confirmed by the spontaneous reflection and discussion of BIMA I itself, dialogue with our people in their own concrete historical and cultural situations (dialogue with cultures), dialogue with the religious

experience of Asian spirituality and prayer, the dialogue which must create "the poor Church of the Servant" within our own lives.

Some *practical imperatives* flow from this cluster of interlocking perspectives:

- the increasing involvement of bishops and other leaders of our communities in this climate and movement of dialogue;
- the attentive listening to "the signs of the times" in the great variety of constantly changing situations that have to be taken account of, and boldly ventured into;
- the creation, activation, fostering of authentic Christian communities;
- the growing realization in ideal, life and lifestyle, of "the image of the poor Church conformed to the pattern of the Suffering Servant of Yahweh—for it is such a Church which can effectively bring Christ to Asia";
- the opening up and renewal, the intensification of the role of prayer and contemplation, so important in the religious quest of Asia, in our evangelizing effort;
- the attention which must be paid to adequate formation for mission.

IV. Summing Up: Towards a Consensus

The foregoing exercise has been a rather tedious and unfortunately repetitive attempt to do exegesis of texts, and we now need to draw the strings together into some sort of coherent pattern.

1. It would seem that there is no need of substantially new orientations. The overall vision and thrusts seen in these past Asian Bishops' assemblies and workshops seem to remain essentially valid for the '80s. The discerned "signs of the times" remain the same:

> Our people, in their hearts, are reaching out to God. They are searching for deep spiritual values, in a world dominated by commerce and

> industry. They are not only hungry for food; they are hungry for freedom, for dignity, for a life that is human.

The "good news" of the Gospel must consequently be preached to the peoples of Asia. And to do this there is need for the building up of a local church.

2. A local church is, though one with the universal Church, with the See of Peter, incarnate in the people. It is a church that springs out of local culture, one that reverences traditions and customs, uses local languages, speaks of immortal truths in images easily understood and loved by the common folk.

3. In the Asian context, it remains an imperative for the local church to engage in dialogue with the religious traditions of the region, which have been the peoples' "doorway to God." There could be mutual grace in such a dialogue: as it can shed some light on the truths themselves of Christ's Gospel, it can also bring to these ancient traditions a new understanding of man, an eternal vision revealing to the peoples of Asia new dimensions of love, the family, and life itself.

4. The same need to identify with the poor remains too, which finds an element of holiness in the practice of justice. To dialogue with the poor is to experience poverty in its stark reality so that one ends up working not so much *for* them as *with* them.

Hence, the same need too for renewal, involving some genuine re-forming, re-sharing, re-structuring: renewal, through the discernment and recognition of new forms and shapes of ministry, especially of lay ministries in our local churches (*vid.* ACMC, Hong Kong, 1977).

5. Here we will bring up some points which call for discussion and reflection (*vid.* papers of Father Amaladoss, the Korean Bishops/ Bishop McNaughton, BIMA I).

The building up of the local church ("evangelization today")—is not the task only or even primarily of the (clerical) leadership, or of an elite or chosen few, but of *all the people of God*, hence the importance of the role of the faithful, the *laity in the Church*.

5.A. Building up the local church means building up a truly human and truly Christian community. It is a community involved in the concrete ongoing life of its milieu, aware of its mission as church, faithful to authentic Christian identity (hence the role of the Tradition and the magisterium), open "prophetically" to the future, creatively expressing through its life and action the good news of the Reigning of God among men in freedom, fellowship, justice and love.

5.B. Building up the local church means evolving and developing structures of participation and co-responsibility at every level, in a spirit conducive to an atmosphere of authentic freedom, initiative, courage and creativity which fosters genuine involvement of the community and its members in the total (socio-political-cultural) life of the people of one's country and region.

5.C. Building up a local church means building up too of a "church of the people." This term is not to be taken in either a political/ideological sense, or in a populist/"anti-hierarchical" sense (*vide* Pope John Paul II, Opening Address at CELAM III, Puebla, Mexico), but in the sense of:

> church truly renewed in and through groups and communities of Christians, especially those formed with and among the poor, truly committed to conversion and commitment to the Gospel, truly given to the service and the true liberation in full evangelical sense (given in *EN*) of the poor and the powerless among our peoples, truly dedicated to a presence, witness and self-giving which proclaims in life the Gospel in the midst of the world.

6. Renewal and *re-evangelization*. Re-evangelization in the sense called for, once again, by Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. A renewed immersion, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in the Gospel, its meanings, its values, its commitments, its imperatives, its "life within" our hearts and spirits. Renewal in the Gospel of individuals and communities of faith, hope and love, in authentic prayer and authentic spirituality first of all (FABC II/1978), in the experiential and "mystical dimension" of the Christian existence:

- very importantly, for Asia above all, of Christian family life;

- in *catechesis*: a renewal of the "words and gestures" of Faith, so that these communicate the Gospel and its message anew, without "ideologization," in a way that makes it intelligible, meaningful, prophetic and operative in the concrete life-and-society situations of our times and our peoples;
- in theological reflection and teaching, so that it is much more in touch with the core of the Gospel message, and much more in touch with the situations, the suffering, the needs, aspirations and movements of the diverse milieux in which the Christian faith and life must be inserted and made "leaven and spirit";
- in the formation and life-styles of all "agents of evangelization," according to the options and desires repeatedly expressed in the statements given above (1, 6).

7. The overall "slogan" then, which sums up the orientations indicated here, would be: "*A Renewed Christian Community, For A Renewed Mission!*"

8. "*Renewed mission*": what does this involve?

Here we can do no better than draw from the reflections of the First Bishops' Institute for Missionary Activity (BIMA I) held by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences in Baguio, 1978.

The Church's evangelizing effort, its mission, must respond to the challenges Asia places before the Christian faith and the Christian community, concretely, in our time:

- the challenge of poverty, of our suffering multitudes;
- the challenge of the great religious traditions and the "ways of faith" of our non-Christian peoples;
- the challenge of inculturation, of making the Asian peoples and cultures "truly at home" in the household of the Christian faith and in the Church of Jesus Christ: truly catholic, truly for all peoples.

9. Finally, all this: both the re-evangelization of our Christian communities and the working-out of the tasks of mission send us back to Christ. In inwardness, in prayer, in re-discovering the Crucified and

Risen Christ in our own lives, in the midst of our communities, as well as in the midst of our brethren in poverty, suffering and need. But recognizing Christ means *re-cognizing* one we have known and loved in the depths of our inner experience, in silence and contemplation.

Here, rather than say more of my own words, I would like simply to refer our participants to the section "Who is Christ?" in the reflections of BIMA I.

> Especially over the last few decades, the missionary in Asia, foreign and native alike, has acquired a definite image. Whether he is rejected and hated, or welcomed and loved, his "missionary" zeal has become a byword all over the continent. He is seen as a pioneer in social action, in medicine, in education, even in such secular activities as building village roads and clearing slums. But he is hardly seen as the "man of God," as a man with a deep experience of God, a man of silence and prayer, as the *guru* capable of showing the other pilgrims the way to their final liberation from a world that is not their ultimate home. In short, few will recognize him as *the Christ* that is walking on Asia's byways and highways. A sample survey made in India showed that 75% of educated Hindus regarded mission work not as a religious activity but as a humanitarian affair, like that of the Peace Corps workers. What is wrong with this type of missionary that he is not recognized as a messenger of Christ, and that, therefore, his message is likely to be rejected as a political interference or cultural aggression?
>
> The participants, therefore, retired for a quiet day of reflection, prayer and shared experiences in small groups. The challenging question, consoling and disturbing at the same time, that was put to them was: "Who is Christ for you? How do you see Christ present and at work in other religions? How do you understand Christ as the sacrament, the Eschatological Christ—the Cosmic Christ? How do you share this vision with other missionaries in the field?" The ensuing sharing in small workshops was one of the most rewarding experiences many had in this seminar. It was almost tangible that it was the Spirit of Jesus present in our midst who *fortiter suaviterque* put the Risen Christ and His on-going mission back into the very center of our "mission work," which not rarely had been to a large extent externalized. While sharing insights and experiences with each other, many felt the urgent need of re-educating missionaries in the field, as well as educating those who are preparing for "the mission," by giving them an integrated formation

> that unites organically a vision as large as St. Paul's with a theology that articulates that vision, and a spirituality that lives it.

In the end, any Theology of Mission must link up with Christ again, the Crucified and Risen Lord. Pope John Paul's encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* tells us that all the roads of the Church pass through man. But they are finally roads of encounter with Christ. The ways of the Church pass through the heart and the life of man. But the heart and the life of man are all "Christ-lands." In the end and in the depths they lead to Jesus Christ, *in quo est salus, spes et resurrectio nostra.*

V. Some Reflections

1. Most of what has preceded is simply an exercise in "textual analysis." I had hoped to complete this paper with a few personal reflections on "some perspectives on mission in Asia today … and tomorrow."

2. Some themes I would like to develop as especially relevant to mission in Asia would be:

2.A. *the primacy of dialogue*, of a "new style" of dialogue which mission in Asia has to develop more and more. We have to work out in practice the relationship between proclamation and dialogue which (we all agree, I believe) are not contraries, but complementary aspects of the announcing of God's Word among men. But we have to speak of dialogue from experience, not from concepts;

2.B. *the true understanding of the Catholicity of the Church*: much remains to be "re-understood" here, once again, not from concepts alone, but from the "searching" and dialogue which must be the inner spirit and method of the practice of inculturation;

2.C. "*missionary experience*" within involvement and engagement in the world, life and struggles of the poor and the powerless (of the "little ones") in our Asian societies (the themes of the theology of liberation enter here). Once again the understanding must derive, in large measure, from (to use that much-abused word) *praxis*, and *faith-rooted reflection* on praxis;

2.D. the *experience of basic ecclesial communities*;

2.E. finally, what Pierre Schouver calls "*mission as a mystic itinerary*."

Unfortunately there is no time now to write these out, and I will have to content myself with a few headings. Perhaps I can refer our participants to Pierre Schouver's *L'Eglise et la Mission* (Coll. "Croire et comprendre," Paris: Le Centurion, 1977). His closing reflections in Chapter 7, "La mission aujourd 'hui'," I have found excellent, perhaps because in large measure I agree with them (Here I summarize his last section, begging your indulgence for not assimilating these thoughts first and re-expressing them in a way that shall have made them my own.).

Mission as a "mystic itinerary" [more or less from Pierre Schouver].

> Ultimately, mission is a "theological affair," i.e., its final purpose is not the survival, expansion or glorification of the Church, but rather the ever fuller revelation of God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in his design for the salvation of all men.
>
> We are not "possessors of God;" all our lives long we remain seekers of God. This does not contradict the certainty of faith (we know this!), but it does underline the fact that God's revelation remains ever his free gift. If it is given to us by his mercy, we are yet never allowed to set ourselves above others. The Christian relies only on God's grace, not on himself. That grace summons him to faith and hope, to prayer, to the service of his brothers.
>
> In a very broad sense, one can say that today the search of God is in the line of the "mystical tradition" rather than in that of the "theological tradition" (i.e., not the theological tradition precisely as divorced from the mystical). That is, today it is the sense of God as mystery, beyond our concepts and formulations, *rooted in the personal experience of faith*, which characterizes the quest for the divine. Not that one by-passes or belittles the traditional expressions of faith and theology as found in the Church, but there is a search for God which seeks him beyond these formulae and institutional expressions, as the hidden God.
>
> Face to face with the "other religions," their beliefs, their ways of contemplation and prayer, we are driven back to the personal and community experiences of faith, back to the Church's *experience* of God, our quest for God is renewed: the God whom we "seek anew," even if our search is truly guided by the Christian tradition.

And yet this search for "the hidden God" is not for God in some platonic empyrean, a search undertaken by some spiritual elite which lives in privileged separation from the world. No, instead God is sought in his hiddenness in our day to day experience, in the contradictions and difficulties of our ordinary existence, in the common ways and prosaic lives of men and women today. The true mystical search today is not "outside all critical control." It still bears the mark of a certain "foolishness" vis-a-vis the values of he world. But it is the foolishness of charity, of the Cross, which has its own demands, and whose fruits one can discern.

When the Church on mission goes beyond her own frontiers, she gives witness of her faith in the Lord who is greater than she is. The Lord she seeks, she seeks *not* "outside the world," but within history. The mystery of the God who is Love is *there* revealed where Christians, under the leading of the Spirit, let themselves "lose their lives" in opening themselves to others, in giving themselves over to their service. For it is always in the pattern and logic of the Paschal Mystery that the fulfillment of the Promise of the Father is truly found.

The *hidden God is the God of the Cross of Jesus*. He reveals himself as our Liberator when we live out in our lives that dying through which others can find life. Missionary spirituality has always placed its accent on the spirit of sacrifice, of total self-gift. Today it is not so much the "secondary sacrifices" (connected with climate, distance from home, food, lodging. etc.) we speak of, but of that fundamental and daily self-gift which dedication to and involvement with the poor, the suffering, the broken and powerless in this world demand, which an unfailing respect, reverence and patience for "the other" (the stranger, above all) asks of us.

It is through this "daily dying" that the missionary shares in the dying of Christ (Col. 1:24; 2 Cor. 4, 10), "so that the more grace is multiplied among people, the more thanksgiving there will be, to the glory of God" (2 Cor. 4, 5).

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"INCULTURATION" AND THE CHURCH

The Asian Context*

Catalino G. Arévalo, S.J.

Our first purpose in preparing this paper is to "present a report" of some theological thinking and writing being done in Asia "toward a relevant ecclesiology"—a report, we would stress, without explicit critique or evaluation. Hence, *Section 1* is an attempt merely to give a somewhat analytic exposition of three different texts issued by as many recent theological conferences held in Asia, texts explicitly engaged in "the search for an ecclesiology in the Asian contexts."

Section II is a summary presentation of how declarations of several Asian Bishops' assemblies (Roman Catholic), from 1970–1984, have sketched the mission of the Church in Asia. Once again it is a report, drawn up in more synthetic form, of pastoral and missionary reflection. An analysis of these texts has yielded a more balanced formulation of concrete imperatives for the Church in Asia, discerned as its pastoral leaders face the concrete challenges of rapidly changing societies, the context wherein the proclamation of Jesus and the Gospel, and the building up of the Church, must today be realized.

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In *Section III*, more by way of positing a set of interconnected questions than by formulating answers, the "principles of inculturation" seen as "building up the local church" are (somewhat tentatively) laid down; the methodology of the "hermeneutical circle" is summarized, and some urgent questions posed in its regard, and lastly, a sort of "field theory"—the hypothesis of ecclesiogenesis—is drawn from some contemporary authors for discussion and evaluation.

We hope that by thus presenting our paper we will, in some measure, attain our second purpose, to "thematize the issues" with some clarity, so that they may be fruitfully addressed. We would be presumptuous if we pretended that in a paper of this sort (merely a survey), we could do more than place in the hands of others a compendium (long enough as it is) of what is being said, of questions that are being asked with some urgency, and some seemingly promising lines of reflection on, and perspectives for, discernment regarding ecclesiological developments in the Asian (as well as other "ex-mission") churches.

We will have accomplished our objectives if this paper primed such reflections, discussion, and discernment in the service of the Church and its mission.

Section I: Some Ecclesiological "Projects"

1. Introduction

All that can be attempted in a "survey-type paper" like this present one is to indicate the principal elements for reflection on the theme we are addressing, the lining up of the principal questions which are being asked. Rather than attempt definitive solutions (which would, of course, be premature!), we would do a better service in these pages by setting up the questions with some care and sharpness, so that they may be discussed more fruitfully.

By way of introduction, it seems that a convenient way of replying to the question "*qu'est-ce qui est passe dans la conscience et vie de l'Eglise*?" as far as the Church in Asia—or perhaps better, "the local churches in

Asia"—is concerned is to turn to a few statements,[1] relatively recent, wherein (hopefully!) responsible church bodies in Asia have tried to articulate in some detail their reflection on the mission of the Church in Asia, or even more pointedly, their "project" for an ecclesiology for the Asian Church or for the local churches in Asia.

ITA/1983. The first is the statement "Searching for an Indian Ecclesiology," issued by the Indian Theological Association (Roman Catholic theologians and professors of theology; forty in number) at the conclusion of their annual conference (St. Charles Seminary, Nagpur: October 21–23, 1983).[2]

CTC-CCA/1982. The second is the official report written by D. Preman Niles from the Commission on Theological Concerns of the Christian Conference of Asia (Singapore) which sums up the discussions of an exploratory meeting held in Kandy, Sri Lanka, from August 23–27, 1982, on "our understanding of the Church or the Doctrine of the Church [ecclesiology] and the various patterns of the Church life and worship [ecclesial models] that we have inherited."[3]

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[1]There are a good number of statements as well as collective works from Asian sources which in recent years have essayed theological (and ecclesiological) "projects." For example, M. Amaladoss, T. K. John, & G. Gispert-Sauch, eds., *Theologizing in India: Essays and Research* (Bangalore: Bishops' Conference [CBCI] Commission on Seminaries/Theological Publications in India, 1981), 445 pp. The work of Fr. D. S. Amalorpavadass, until recently director of the National Biblical, Liturgical, and Catechetical Centre at Bangalore, is well-known throughout Asia (cf. the book by Anto Karokaran, referred to in Section II). Also Robert Hardawirjana, *Building the Church of Christ in a Pluricultural Situation* (Yogyakarta: 1982). The three texts analyzed here were chosen because they are somewhat more manageable for the purpose of a summary study.

[2]For a report on the conference, *vid.* S. Arulsamy, "Searching for an Indian Ecclesiology," News and Comments: *Indian Theological Studies* 20/4 (December 1983): 348–356. The complete final statement itself appears in *Vidyajyoti*, Delhi (February 1984): 99–107.

[3]*Tradition and Innovation: A Search for a Relevant Ecclesiology in Asia* (Singapore: Commission on Theological Concerns, Christian Conference of Asia, 1983). CTC-CCA is an ecumenical body, in a way analogous to the World Council of

EATWOT/1981. The third is a cluster of statements rather than a single document, the statements of Conferences sponsored by the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT). We will limit ourselves to the last conference held in Asia at New Delhi (August 17–29, 1981).[4]

FABC/1970–1983. Lastly, there is another cluster: the official and non-official statements of the (Roman Catholic) Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (1970–1984).[5] Here we will consider especially the Declaration of the First Asian Bishops' Meeting (Manila: 1970), on the occasion of the first visit of Pope Paul VI to Asia and Australia, and the three Plenary Assemblies of the FABC (Taipei: 1974; Calcutta: 1978; Bangkok: 1982), where the basic elements of an "ecclesiology of mission for Asia" appear with sufficient explicitness.

These documents will be studied a) to derive the common questions and orientations which have emerged in the last fifteen years or so after the Second Vatican Council, and b) to ask if there are some fundamental ecclesiological questions and orientations which can be brought into clearer relief—for our consideration and reflection (Section 2).

Churches, for Asia. The consultation at Kandy, Sri Lanka, was also ecumenical (largely Protestant) in composition. Bishop Leo Nanayakara, O.S.B., the only Roman Catholic who had been asked to participate, died three months before the conference was actually held.

[4]V. Fabella & S. Torres, eds., *Irruption of the Third World: Challenge to Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1983). In the organizing committees and in the actual conference, Roman Catholics played an important, perhaps the principal, role (the editors of the proceedings are a Filipina Maryknoll Sister and a Chilean priest).

[5]Cf. the series of booklets published by the Office of the Secretary General, Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), Hong Kong. Many of the more important texts have now been gathered together in *For All the Peoples of Asia: The Church in Asia: Asian Bishops' Statements on Mission, Community and Ministry, 1970–1984, Volume I: Texts and Documents* (Manila: I. M. C. Publications, 1984), hereafter referred to as FAPA. For an excellent overall commentary, with much relevant information, cf. Marcello Zago, *La Chiesa in Asia Oggi: Situazione e Prospettive*, "La Missione" 4 (Bologna: E. M. I., 1983).

These analyses, except for the reflection on the FABC statements, will be kept brief; the constraints of space forbid anything more developed than a few paragraphs. Our effort will be to disengage the main lines of questions and orientation—the lines especially which move toward convergence (more exact and more detailed analysis has to be set aside for another time and another setting). What these texts (*ITA/1983*; *CTC-CCA/1982*, et al.) say will be set down *without evaluation or criticism*, positive or negative, in this part. The first two sections of the present study will thus be primarily "informational," a sort of exercise in data-processing.

ITA/1983 and *CTC-CCA/1982*.[6] The two programmatic statements (*ITA/1983* and *CTC-CCA/1982*) show sufficient convergence, I believe, to be taken together, at least for our present purposes.

2. "The Burden of the Past"

There is the first issue, "the burden of the past." We might, in passing, note that this is no longer (in the 1980's) treated with over-heavy a hand. In fact, the *CTC-CCA/1982* statement explicitly says that "little purpose is served in analyzing and categorizing models of church life in Asia so that so called 'western' elements may be identified and jettisoned while the so-called 'authentically Asian' and 'biblical' may be preserved."

> Instead of seeing the search for an ecclesiology in Asia essentially as a negative process of discarding the "foreign and inherited" as opposed to the "authentically Asian" and "biblical," the search was seen in the imagery of continuing journey—"a journey in search of our identity in the contemporary situation." (*CTC-CCA*, 13)

The *ITA/1983* statement is somewhat more negative than this with regard to the "burden of the past."

> Offering the past as a paradigm for the future easily prevents people from creatively responding to the challenges that shape their destiny.

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[6]Since what we are, at the moment, emphasizing is "what is different," the points brought into relief will of course be somewhat negative: what needs changing, so that the ecclesiology will be relevant for the Asian contexts.

> The past, however, has to make its contribution, but should not become a dead weight on the life and activity of the Church. (*ITA/1983*, 17)

Some concrete embodiments of this "burden of the past" which were explicitly mentioned—sometimes without further clarification (which clarification we have tried to add in the briefest way possible)—in these texts are:

- ecclesiologies originating from outside the area ("western/Roman," with basic elements deriving from "western institutions, Roman law and political order" and the like), imposed *en bloc* on our Asian contexts;
- similarly, inherited structures and institutions (e.g., the concrete forms and ordering of ministries, power-distributions in the Church, hierarchy-clergy vis-à-vis laity relationships);
- influences of western-feudal ordering of society, as reflected in the Church, in the colonial period and in contemporary vestiges; the bourgeois-mentality, once again imported from the West, present as inner-consciousness and determinant mindset within the Church, even today;
- the continuing remnants of the "colonialist connection," and of the often syntonic collaboration of the missionary endeavor (in some respects at least) with colonialist policies and strategies;
- alienation from indigenous cultures (meanings, values, symbolic worlds) and thus ordinarily, distancing from the poor classes and milieux in our Asian societies;
- in general, a mentality which identifies the Church *simpliciter* with the sum total of theologies, structures and institutions, formulations of teaching, etc., which *de facto* are "simply inherited western forms," with no differentiation between what are authentically "trans-cultural" and irreversible non-negotiable Gospel meanings and values and what are their variable and changeable inculturated expressions.

3. "Status Quo" Petrified in Our Churches

The second issue is "the fixity of the *status quo* in our churches." This would be, for a fact, merely the carrying over and the imposition of the "burden of the past" onto our present "cult, code, creed"—perhaps more clearly onto our existing "cannons, customs, clerisy."[7]

- Lack of structures, processes and activities which generate authentic sharing of gifts and responsibilities within the Church, and which enable genuine co-responsibility especially with regard to lay people, women, and youth.
- Lack of a genuine desire to "open out," to reach out to urgent secular tasks of the surrounding human milieux; to participate in the transformation of Asian societies, moving toward construction of just and human communities; to take part in the "redemption of the histories of our peoples," and to find the meaning and implications of our faith in the context of this endeavor and the struggles it necessarily implies.
- Lack of genuine openness to (a climate of superiority? a form of the counter-reform ghetto mentality?) and dialogue with the cultural and religious traditions of our Asian peoples and the contemporary social currents which are most active in our countries.

4. The Call to Renewal

The third issue also flows out of the two preceding ones: there must be a return to the faith-experience, in the Spirit, of the Risen Lord.

There must be an "opening out of the Church" to the totality of the human reality which surrounds her; her endeavor must reach out to the "realization" of the Kingdom.

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[7]"Canons, customs, clerisy": *Customs* is here taken to mean usages, rites, symbols, patterns of behavior, et al. *Canons* = legal prescriptions, liturgical regulations, and the like. "*Clerisy*" = structures in community and ecclesiastical society, inter-relationships between hierarchy/clergy and the laity, especially with regard to sharing in ministerial tasks and functions, in power and participation in consultative and deliberative processes and the like.

There must be the realization within the Church of communion and participation: a genuine sharing of gifts, of rights, of responsibilities and tasks toward the construction of "communities of faith for the building up of the Kingdom."

Participation within the Church's life, ministry, and action must be "inclusive," being especially sensitive to the place and role of women.

Thus, communion and participation both *ad intra* and *ad extra*; *ad intra*, in the structures and life of Christian communities; *ad extra*, participation in the action for the transformation of human society toward justice and brotherhood.

Thus, there has to be a renewal of ministerial structures toward communion and toward this twofold participation: in processes of selection, formation, accountability (responsibility) to the "people of God" vis-à-vis exercise and duration of ministries.

There must be an openness of the Church to the living cultural and religious traditions in the places where she is present, in turn to make Christ and the Gospel present.

5. Methodology

The methodology of the two documents being considered here show lines of convergence:

A. starting point for *theological reflection*: the total social reality (sociopolitical, economic, cultural, religious) as context, as experienced, and as thematized by Christian consciousness from experience and praxis;

B. *analysis and evaluation*: analyzed and evaluated according to given canons of analysis, some deriving from social and human sciences, others deriving from faith and religion, from theology;

C. responses called for: imperatives discerned, as to goals and *as to means*: responses discerned: responses of Christian faith, hope and love; personal and ecclesial responses; imperatives, goals and means defined vis-à-vis given

situations and contexts; constant and mandatory reference given to Christian faith-experience within the contexts, accompanying praxis;

- Reference to contextual belief and value systems (culture, religion, ideology);
- Reference to contextual livelihood and power systems (economic and socio-political realities), and to the Kingdom of God (rather than just the Church) as ultimate point of reference.

For any "search for a valid and relevant ecclesiology in Asia," the reflection and praxis (in hermeneutic circle) must move within these parameters and realities and be unfailingly referred to them.[8]

6. The EATWOT New Delhi 1981: Perspectives

Those familiar with EATWOT documents will know their general orientation and their predominant "ideological thrust." They will be familiar also with EATWOT's use of the tools of Marxist analysis, as generally participants in EATWOT conferences are "agreed about the continuing relevance of Marxist analysis" and agreed too on commitment to searching and working out "viable forms of socialism that would bring about economic development, as well as respect [for] the religions, cultures and human freedom [of Third World countries]" (Fabella/Torres, 196–197).

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[8]The matter of methodology is crucial, and this paper will return to it at greater length both in Section II and in Section III, below. A comparison with the methodology used in documents from the Holy See and also by the Second Vatican Council, on "the signs of the times," would be both necessary and instructive. Cf. Angel Anton, "Abierta a los 'signos de los tiempos'," in *La Iglesia de Cristo: El Israel de la Vieja y de la Nueva Alianza* (Madrid: B. A. C., 1977), 773–782, and Paul Valadier, "Signes des temps, signes de Dieu?" *Etudes* 335 (1971): 261–279. "(Valadier) no esconde su preocupacion ante un recurso facil, y prevalentemente sociologico o fideista, a la nocion de signos de los tiempos con el peligro de hacer de Dios un *Deus ex machina* y de presentar, en vez de una teologia de los signos de los tiempos, un antropomorfismo camuflado" (Anton, "Abierta a los 'signos de los tiempos'," 780).

The New Delhi EATWOT statement is thus—as expected—very strong on presenting situations of massive "poverty and oppression of the Asian peoples" as starting point and framework for "doing theology" in Asian contexts; on insisting that all relevant theology—and thus all relevant ecclesiology—in the Third World and Asian situations must begin with commitment to the struggles of the poor and oppressed and with the "liberated consciousness" which understands the meaning of these struggles within the history of salvation.

> The starting point for Third World theologies is the struggle of the poor and oppressed against all forms of injustice and domination. The committed involvement of Christians in this struggle provides a new *locus* for theological reflection. Their participation is faith in action and the manifestation of Christian commitment, which constitutes the first act of theology. (Fabella/Torres, 199)

Thus, for EATWOT theology, any ecclesiology relevant for Asian contexts must be a "liberation ecclesiology," and participation in the struggles of the poor and oppressed for their own liberation is the beginning as well as baseline for "doing ecclesiology" in the local churches in Asia.

As I have indicated above, re: the first two statements presented, a careful evaluation of "liberationist ecclesiology" is not in order here. What I would like to draw attention to, in the New Delhi EATWOT statement, is the attempt to explicitly spell out what are considered necessary factors for a valid methodology in service of a relevant ecclesiology (Fabella/Torres, 198–199).

The elements are:

> (#39) Commitment to the people's struggle for social justice and the contemplation of God within this involvement—"both form the essential matrix of theology."
>
> (#40) The poor and oppressed, Christians at the grassroots, as they reflect on "their own liberating praxis" are doing their own theological thinking, to which they have *in faith* a right.
>
> (#41) "The faith-based life interpretations of the masses, expressed in their cultural idioms, liturgies, workshops, storytelling, drama, songs, and poems, constitute genuine theology." The "more formal"

> method of theological reflection "requiring technical and academic competence"—is relevant only if [it stems] from involvement and a liberated consciousness.
>
> (#42) The principles of contemporary hermeneutics affirm that interpreting the Bible "from the underside of history" is a valid way of reading the Scriptures, as all reading of the Scriptures is partial and conditioned by the historical experience and particular perspectives of the reader/interpreter. No single reading of the text thus exhausts its total meaning.
>
> (#43) "Social analysis is an indispensable mediation and basic equipment for a liberating theology …. Without an adequate understanding of our societies, theologians cannot interpret the will of God for our societies and our times."
>
> (#44) Such social analysis must necessarily investigate both "religio-cultural and socio-economic aspects of people's lives" as part of the task of "doing theology" in Third World contexts. (Fabella/Torres, 198–199)

Insistence on these elements as necessary for any "valid and relevant ecclesiology" for Third World contexts is characteristic of EATWOT theological approaches. In many ways, they are also the decisive features of this "theological school."

In the EATWOT perspectives, any ecclesiology within the Asian contexts must thus prime the commitment to the struggles of the poor and the oppressed, for integral human liberation is "the essential matter" for theological reflection. It will regard as constitutive of the Church's mission in Third World countries participation in such struggles, seeing them as at least partial realizations of the effort of the redemption of human society and human history, moving toward the Kingdom of God. The methodology of such an ecclesiology would then move within the hermeneutical circle of commitment to struggle, liberative action and praxis, reflection on action and praxis, etc.

7. Conclusion

The content of this first section has been for the most part merely a "report of sorts." It has attempted to draw up (with some analysis, inevitably) the "lines of force" sketched in efforts to "search for an

ecclesiology relevant to Asian contexts." The presentation, it is hoped, is reasonably objective.

By way of personal conclusion, I will note that while most points of these ecclesiological essays deserve attention, their overall content and methodology call for comprehensive critique: much is ambiguous; much needs questioning and thus clarifying; presuppositions have to be examined; balancing-off of various factors is required. This (it seems to us) goes without saying! But they are *de facto* essays at "relevant Asian ecclesiologies." As they stand, they are "first drafts" in need of thoroughgoing discussion, and where called for, correction and modification.

Section II: Asian Bishops' Reflection on the Church's Mission

1. Pre-Note

In Section II, a "more serene" presentation of a pastoral and missionary ecclesiology will be given, drawn from statements of meetings and assemblies of pastoral leaders—for the most part Bishops—of the (Roman) Catholic Church in Asia. We move from "somewhat high-pressure theological congresses" to pastoral conferences and assemblies of bishops and their immediate collaborators. It is disputed today whether these are "statements of the Magisterium" in the technical sense.

> However, one would have to be quite blind and deaf to reality if he denied that the statements of episcopal conferences do have an effective impact on the pastoral life of local dioceses and beyond.[9]

The topic assigned for this paper was Church/ecclesiology and cultures; "inculturation." The foregoing considerations were necessary to discover what, *de facto*, in the perceptions and perspectives of pastoral

[9]Francis A. Sullivan, *Magisterium*: *Teaching Authority in the Catholic Church* (New York: Ramsey, 1983), 121. Remarks of Archbishop William Hickey (Collegeville: June 1982).

leaders and theologians in the churches in Asia, is the generally received meaning of "inculturation" (This is necessary, so that we do not impose meanings as given by others *from outside* these contexts, but recognize the meanings actually accepted and in possession).

2. Inculturation: Building-up the Local Church

At the outset, it is important to distinguish between two understandings of inculturation in the theological/ecclesial milieux of the Asian churches—a wider and more comprehensive sense, and a narrower, more limited one.

The two paragraphs of "identity of the Church," in the two common declarations we have dealt with above, lead us to the "wider, more comprehensive meaning" indicated.

> *The identity of the Indian Church.* It has to be conceived as the mystery incarnate in the particular conditions of the local community, gathered around the celebration of the Eucharist. It is also found in the dynamism of the believing group which not only prays together and suffers together, but also fights together against evils of all kinds. A church that identifies itself with the joys and sorrows, struggles and endeavors of a human community, is liable to become conscious of the conditions of being dominated. When it begins to say "*No*" to what impedes its liberation, a genuinely dynamic Church is born …. Involvement in people's struggles will help the Church to realize its own identity more authentically and transform its own structures in a healthy renewal of itself. (ITA/1983, #25)

> *The identity of the (Asian) Church.* The identity of the Church, in one sense, is given by its ever-present Lord. In another sense, that identity will only be found as our churches discover their place within the wider religious life, among the diverse cultures of Asia, and amidst the social struggles.
>
> We recall the One who established his identity by entering fully into the condition of others (incarnation), and by giving himself in self-emptying love for all (*kenosis*). Ecclesial identity, too, will be found through incarnation and *kenosis*. These have powerful implications for how churches shape their efforts at evangelism and church growth, as well as the way in which they use their human and material resources. (TCT-CCA/1982, II, #3)

These texts are good samplings of the literature. Here, the inculturation of the Church is seen as a total project (hence, "towards a relevant ecclesiology"), and it means the "building up of a truly local church." In this sense, though the term is *not much-used as yet* in Asian contexts, the more comprehensive sense of inculturation is that of "ecclesio-genesis," *the realization of the Church in a given place, a given time, within a given people and culture*.

To cite just one individual theologian in support of what has just been said: D. S. Amalorpavadass, who has had considerable influence on Asian thinking and writing on this theme, says that "indigenization or inculturation of the Church in India means the actualization of her mystery through an incarnation in the life-situation in India."[10]

> The local church is precisely that realization by which the full mystery of the Church will be incarnated in each place, time and people …. The local church is a dynamic process by which the Christian community shares its Christian experience with its contemporaries from within, fully integrated into their socio-cultural-religious milieu. (Karokaran, 159)

Summing up Amalorpavadass' thought on inculturation, Anto Karokaran writes:

> The Church does not become universal just because the Gospel is preached to all men and when all of them are saved, but when the spread of the Gospel permeates, purifies and perfects all the realities of the temporal order, when each Christian community becomes an "event," gets incarnated in its soil, enters into the mainstream of its national life … and offers its *diakonia* through full solidarity and genuine involvement.
>
> This makes necessary the entry of the local church into the dynamism and adventure of human history with all that they imply, and in all that they demand: problems of hunger and disease, ignorance and illiteracy, unemployment and frustration, struggles of men for liberation from all the forces of oppression and injustice. (Karokaran, 160)

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[10]Anto Karokaran, *Evangelization and Diakonia: A Study in the Indian Perspective* (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1978), 159. Also D. S. Amalorpavadass, *Gospel and Culture: Evangelization and Inculturation*, *Mission Theology of Our Times* 11 (Bangalore: National Biblical and Liturgical Centre, 1978).

3. A key Text from FABC I

Hence, the paragraph on "the local church" in the final statement of the First Plenary Assembly of the Asian Bishops' Conferences, so frequently cited in Asian Church documents (as well as in European writing on inculturation), may be said to be a "classic description" of the meaning of inculturation, *sensu latiore* but also *magis usitato*, in the thought of the "local churches in Asia."

Because of its importance in our present discussion, it is here given in full:[11]

> 9. To preach the gospel in Asia today we must make the message and life of Christ truly incarnate in the minds and lives of our peoples. The primary focus of our task of evangelization then, at this time in our history, is the building up of a truly local church.
>
> 10. For the local church is the realization and the enfleshment of the Body of Christ in a given people, a given place and time.
>
> 11. It is not a community in isolation from other communities of the Church one and catholic. Rather it seeks communion with all of them. With them it professes the one faith, shares the one Spirit and the one sacramental life. In a special way it rejoices in its communion and filial oneness with the See of Peter, which presides over the universal Church in love.
>
> 12. The local church is a church incarnate in a people, a church indigenous and inculturated. And this means concretely a Church in continuous, humble and loving dialogue with the living traditions, the cultures, the religions—in brief, with all the life-realities of the people in whose midst it has sunk its root deeply and whose history and life it gladly makes its own. It seeks to share in whatever truly belongs to that people: its meanings and its values, its aspirations, its thoughts and its language, its songs and its artistry.—Even its frailties and failings it assumes, so that they too may be healed. For so did

[11]From "Evangelization in Modern Day Asia," Statement of the First Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), Taipei, Taiwan: April 22–27, 1974, in FAPA, 123–133.

> God's Son assume the totality of our fallen human condition (save only for sin) so that He might make it truly His own, and redeem it in His paschal mystery.

4. "Two Senses" of Inculturation

To conclude this point: as concretely understood in the Asian churches today and in most Asian theological writings on this issue, *the primary meaning of inculturation* is the building up of the local church. Since, as we shall see immediately, the subject—acting subject—of this endeavor of inculturation is itself the local church, inculturation can be equated with "the self-realization of the local church"[12] or its *Selbstvollzug, "l'Eglise se realise en un lieu."*[13]

A secondary, narrower sense is what is taken up below as "dialogue with the cultures"—culture then understood in a more restricted sense. *Tentatively*, we might say that if the wider sense includes *both* the elements in the "beliefs and values systems" *and* the "livelihood and power systems,"[14] the narrower sense addresses rather the "beliefs

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[12]Joseph A. Komonchak, "The Church and Religious Education in the 1980's," *The Living Light* (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference) 19 (Fall 1982): 200–210. Also Joseph A. Komonchak, "The Church Universal as the Communion of Local Churches," *Concilium: Where Does the Church Stand?* (June 1981): 30–35; Joseph A. Komonchak, "Ministry and the Local Church," *Proceedings* (Catholic Theological Society of America) 36 (1981): 56–82.

[13]Hervé Legrand, "La Realisation de l'Eglise en un Lieu," in *Initiation a la Pratique de la Theologie*, Tome III: Dogmatique 2, contr. B. Lauret & F. Refoule (Cerf, 1986), 145–345. Cf. Bibliography, "Realisation locale de l'Eglise," 331–332.

[14]There is a rather broad convergence among church leaders and theologians that inculturation in Asia (and other Third World contexts) generally must include the areas of economics and political life in its purview. Cf. Section I, above, and the discussions in Virginia Fabella, ed., *Asia's Struggle for Full Humanity*, Asian Theological Conference, January 7–20, 1979 (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1980), 3–15. "In analyzing their context, [Asians in the theological conference] found that the cultural-religious dimensions must go hand-in-hand with the socio-economic ones" (12). See also the report of the Fifth International Conference of the EATWOT as referred to in Section I of the present paper.

and values systems or factors" in their varied expressions. These factors would of course denote outwardly observable and describable phenomena, the traditional/historical manifestations in customs, institutions, language, myth, symbol, artistic forms, and the like. The more comprehensive sense of culture would stress the inclusion of the total present societal context, explicitly including areas of economic patterns and political relationships (In passing, we might note that this distinction is not without importance when one considers the Asian disputes, in the EATWOT conferences, on the "matter" of Third World theological reflection).

5. The Local Church as Subject of Inculturation

It is affirmed in the FABC I statement just cited that the local church is a "church in continuous, humble and living dialogue with the living traditions, the cultures, religions." The local church is the *acting subject* of its own up-building, of its own effort of inculturation.

Antonio Scarin remarks in his book on the African churches, *Chiesa locale, incarnazione e missione*,[15] citing precisely the FABC I paragraph *in re*:

> *Canale eminente e fondamentale dell'inculturazione del messaggio cristiano, e la Chiesa locale, lo quale, anzi, e gia incarnazione in atto "del Corpo di Cristo in un determinado popolo, luogo e tempo," come si desume chiaramente da una dichiarazione dei vescovi dell'Asia.* (Scarin, 141)

What is meant here by "local church"? In the texts of the Asian bishops we refer to preferentially in this paper, it would seem there is a certain overlapping and *glissement* with regard to the two possible

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Cf. *L'Actualité Religieuse* (Paris) 12 (Mai 15, 1984): 23, "Theologie: Recontre Euro-Africaine a Yaounde," Avril 4–10, 1984:

> Au sujet de l'inculturation qui, comme on pouvait s'attendre, a tenu une place de choix dans les debats, le rapport adopté par les participants précise: "Il est apparu clairement que la mission ne peut affronter le défi de l'inculturation sans prendre au sérieux l'appel a la libération dans tous les domaines: politique, economique, culturel et spirituel."

[15]Antonio Scarin, *Chiesa Locale Incarnazione e Missione* (Bologna: EMI, 1981), 141.

senses: "diocese" and "local = socio-cultural grouping," as e.g., present in *Lumen Gentium* 13 and *Ad Gentes* 4, 10, 15, 22 and *al.* Hervé Legrand's remark might be cited as pertinent here: "*la perception de Vatican II, selon laquelle la 'particularite socio-culturelle* (*AG*, 22) *fait partie de la definition theologique d'une Eglise locale, est donc d'une grande portee.*"[16]

Local church in the texts referred to often has the meaning of a group of dioceses in a more or less unified (homogeneous) area (a region, a nation as occupied by a given people with its culture) bound by the boundaries of a national or regional episcopal conference. We might add, however, that this "definition" is (as far as I can gather) never made formally. There is, as in most post-Vatican II literature on this matter, a certain indetermination of usage.

The FABC I citation given above would prime the "definition" given in the preceding paragraph, although one could say, with another author:

> To avoid clumsiness, … I will regularly speak of the "local" church, hoping that the context will make clear whether I am speaking of small eucharistic communities, dioceses, larger groupings of churches, or even all three at once.
>
> More important than the Council's vocabulary are its major theological concerns in its statements about the local churches. These seem to me to be twofold: first, the assertion that the distinctive and constitutive principles of the Church's existence are realized in the local church, and second, the desire to stress that it is in the local churches that the Church's catholicity is concretely realized.[17]

The Consensus Paper of the second workshop in the Manila International Congress on Mission notes in its first recommendation that

> … The episcopal conference in each country should give positive encouragement to initiatives and programs of inculturation in

[16]Legrand, "La Realisation de l'Eglise en un Lieu," 153–154. A reflection on *Ad Gentes* 22.

[17]Komonchak, "Ministry and the Local Church," 56–57.

> consonance with the spirit and directives of Vatican II, … *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and the documents of the FABC.[18]

To this resolution we could add the grounding given by Robert Schreiter in the SEDOS 1981 seminar.

> Inculturation is not merely an option for the local church, but an imperative. The local church cannot be true to its Lord or its mission without attending to the dynamics of what constitutes the enactment of the Word of God, the questions of identity and social change, of understanding religion in its cultural setting.[19]

6. Towards a Definition of Inculturation

Having come to this point it might be useful to advance some sort of definition of the process of inculturation, presupposing that a general understanding can now be presumed, and also some delineation of its methodology.

In the summer of 1983, the Pontifical Gregorian University's Centre "Cultures et Religions" sponsored a workshop on "Christ and Cultures" at Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The participants, mostly theology professors, took advantage of the studies already undertaken on inculturation to formulate some tentative positions which are as useful as any available to us at present.[20]

> (*Definition*). Inculturation is a process by which an ecclesial community lives its Christian faith and experience within a given cultural context, in such a way that these not only find their expression in elements

[18]FAPA I, 230, #17.

[19]Robert Schreiter, "A Framework for a Discussion of Inculturation," in M. Motte & J. Lang, eds., *Mission in Dialogue: The SEDOS Research Seminar on the Future of Missions*, Rome: March 8–19, 1981 (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1982), 544–553, at p. 552: an excellent article providing a brief overview of the process of inculturation and its broad trajectory.

[20]Seminar on "Christ and Cultures," sponsored by the Centre "Cultures and Religions," Pontifical Gregorian University. Reflections and perspectives at the conclusion of the seminar (Yogyakarta: June 23–July 2, 1983), 6 pp.

> of a local culture, but also become a force that animates, reshapes and profoundly renews that culture, so as to create new patterns of communion and communication within that culture and beyond it.
>
> … [The] process of inculturation is an ongoing one, because of the dynamic character of each living culture; and because of the "ever-newness" of the Christian experience, every local Church is continuously involved in various inculturative processes. We believe that the main task of inculturation is not to salvage cultures of the past, but through a proper appropriation of past gains, to prepare Christians to live out their faith in a cultural context which is continuously changing.[21]

These descriptions of the process leave out some elements that, from some perspectives, would call for special emphasis, but as general guidelines, they will be of service. Sometimes a "rougher definition," as, e.g., that

> … inculturation is the dynamic relation between the Christian message and culture or cultures; an insertion of the Christian life into a culture; an ongoing process of reciprocal and critical interaction and assimilation between them …[22]

can prove more suggestive and more inclusive of the varied dimensions of the endeavor and tasks called for.

7. Towards a Methodology for Inculturation

Presuming that the reader is familiar with the "hermeneutical or pastoral cycle" in general (as made use of by contemporary pastoral theology, and in some measure, by recent documents of the *Magisterium*), we might, with Peter Schineller, see the process of inculturation as one way of putting the "hermeneutical circle" in practice.

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[21]Cf. Seminar on "Christ and Cultures," first page.

[22]Marcello de Carvalho Azevedo, *Inculturation and the Challenges of Modernity*, Inculturation, Working Papers on Living Faith and Cultures I (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, Centre "Cultures and Religions," 1982), 26. Cf. the study of the terminology, 1–10, and the valuable Chapter I, "The Christian Message and the Cultures," 11–29. The Bibliography is one of the best to orientate initial work on the theme (57–63).

> … it is putting into operation the hermeneutical or pastoral circle …. The pastoral agent or minister or theologian immersed or inserted into the situation listens, studies that situation, with its problems and possibilities, facilitates the self-understanding of those in the situation, engages the resources of the social sciences, and then brings to bear "the Christian" (*intellige*: meanings, values, experience, life, symbols, et al.) upon that situation or culture/context. The comfort or challenge of the Christian message leads to action that confirms the good and challenges the evil of the situation. Movement around the circle is in both directions: elements of the solution (*semina verbi*) are already/always found in the situation; the pastoral agent functions as facilitator or catalyst to those persons in the situation.[23]

The description of the hermeneutical circle thus given is quite general, and perhaps not immediately geared to the "symbolic elements/dimensions" which are of importance (maybe first importance) in the inculturation process. But as a general description it is applicable and usable.

With that "definition" and "process-description" in mind, it is easy to understand why, in the Asian Bishops' FABC I text, the building up of the local church is said especially to "involve a dialogue with … all the life-realities of the people in whose midst the local church has sunk its roots deeply and whose history and life it gladly makes its own." The methodology of inculturation begins with the imperative for dialogue, especially what in Asian contexts has been simply given the shorthand name "dialogue of life."

Incidentally, one might point out that a deeper understanding, arrived at through life-experience, of this "dialogue of life" can only help toward the clarification of the "evangelism-vs-dialogue" controversy, which often turns into a vivisection of concepts rather than an understanding which arises from life-experience.

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[23]Peter Schineller, "Ten Summary Statements on the Meaning, Challenge and Significance of Inculturation," in *On Being Church in a Modern Society* (Rome: Gregorian University, Centre "Cultures and Religions," 1983), 55–56. Cf. also Peter Schineller, "A Method for Christian Ministry," *Emmanuel* 87 (March 1981): 137–144, and J. Holland & P. Henriot, *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1983).

8. "The Three Dialogues"

The FABC I statement lines up the three major "dialogue-tasks" in this way:

- Dialogue with the cultures of our peoples;
- dialogue with the Asian religious traditions;
- and dialogue with the poor in their search for development, justice, brotherhood and peace.[24]

The theme of these three dialogues occurs again and again in practically every major statement of the Asian bishops and pastoral leaders in the 1974–1984 period. An editorial writer, commenting on the 1979 Manila International Mission Congress, even found the recurrence of this cluster of themes a tiring, because over-repeated, refrain.

Three other major concerns, presupposed in the 1974 statement, but made more explicit in later texts, were:

- Proclamation of the Gospel as an urgent commitment (the ongoing necessity of "first evangelization" in Asia);
- The necessary role of prayer and contemplation within the endeavor of mission in Asia (special relevance of this dimension in Asia);
- A truly contextualized formation for mission.[25]

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[24]FAPA I, 26, 29–33. See also Archbishop Gaviola's introduction, 2–4, and the Letter of Participants in the First Bishops' Institute for Missionary Apostolate (BIMA I), FAPA I, 157–158. Cf. *East Asian Pastoral Review/EAPR* 1 (1980): 3–4:

> … the Church here needs to start one major dialogue and three minor ones: the major dialogue is with the millions of unevangelized peoples in Asia; and within it, dialogues with the cultures, with the religious traditions … and a soul-searching dialogue with the poor. These ideas are not new; they have been recurring themes in the documents of the Asian Bishops for some time.

[25]Cf. FAPA, in Archbishop Gaviola's introduction, 1–4. The International Congress on Mission (Manila: December 2–7, 1979) was a massive reaffirmation of the necessity of ongoing "first evangelization" in Asia. The BIMA's, one after the

Finally, the "restructuring of the Christian community in the local churches of Asia," calling for creative reflection and action *on ministries*, *especially lay ministries* for our Asian contexts, and on the emerging reality of the "*grassroots ecclesial communities*" has been increasingly addressed because of the growing importance of these realities in the ongoing life of the Church in Asia—as, in fact, in other parts of the world.[26]

9. Dialogue with the Cultures of Our Peoples

There is no need, after the foregoing discussion, to develop the topic of this first dialogue, with inculturation understood in our second sense (cf. above). It will suffice to list summarily some areas for inculturation.

We might begin with a reference to *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, nos. 62/63[27] where Pope Paul VI lists "liturgical expression, catechesis, theological formulation, secondary ecclesial structures and ministries." To these we might add this attempt at a more comprehensive enumeration: catechesis, theological education, forms of popular piety, liturgy, artistic expression as used, e.g., in worship, in teaching, architecture, music, crafts, use of materials; spirituality, e.g., methods and styles of recollection and prayer; life-styles in religious communities and seminaries; ministries as responding to given local needs; formation for community leadership; etc.

In all this there will be, explicitly or implicitly, directly or indirectly, some attempt at "transposing Christianity into indigenous terms/forms." Pope Paul VI adds that "the transposition of the essence of the Gospel" is to be carried out "with all the discernment, care,

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other, have insisted on this task also. FABC II (Calcutta: November 1978) addressed the theme "Prayer—The Life of the Church of Asia" (FAPA, 49–66).

[26]Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church (ACMC), in FAPA, 111–151, and FABC III on "The Church: A Community of Faith in Asia," 83–102.

[27]Cf. Desmond F. Crowe, "Consultation on Inculturation," *East Asian Pastoral Review*, Manila, 18 (1981): #2 (145–152) and #3 (203–299), with an extensive bibliography (295–299).

respect and competence it demands." In an important clarification, he says: "The term 'language' should be understood here more in the anthropological and cultural sense than in the semantic and literary one" (*EN*, 63).

We may simply note that *popular piety* or *popular religiosity* is probably the single most important area for the study and practice of inculturation. It is often in this area that the "ordinary people" express most readily the imperative, felt in their own Christian lives, for inculturation. It is also in the popular "practice" of devotion, faith and moral and social behavior that the study and reflection on inculturation can find fruitful ground. The Puebla documents of CELAM III have said some things, prudent and perceptive, on the realities of popular piety. It would take us too far afield to dwell on this topic now.[28]

10. Dialogue with Other Religious Traditions in Asia

This is the second major dialogue which has been addressed as integral to the mission of the Church in Asia. It has been called "the particular Asian concern," since Asia is "the birthplace of the major religions of mankind," and since there are just about three percent (3%) of the two-and-a-half-billion people in Asia who are Christians. Less than a hundred million Christians; less than 65 million Catholics, of whom 45 to 47 million are in the Philippines (We limit ourselves to the Asia "covered" by the boundaries of the FABC).

Accurate figures on religious affiliation are hard to come by for Asia, but recent estimates yield this set of data:

> The number of Chinese to whom evangelization, as we understand it, is not possible, 827 millions; the number of Hindus and other non-Christians in the Indian subcontinent, 425 millions; those who are numbered as Muslims, more or less, in "Asia", 664 millions; others

[28]Pope Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi* had already given special attention to "Popular Piety" in par. 48. CELAM III at Puebla, *Conclusions: Evangelization at Present and in the Future of Latin America*, 910–915, 935–937, 959–963, 461–468, etc., provides an overall orientation and guidelines which are useful for other contexts also.

belonging to other Asian religions or to animistic religious groups, 403 millions—totaling 2,396 million = circa 2 billion, 400 millions.[29]

The "classic text" on the necessity of dialogue with the religious traditions is found in FABC I. Some points made:

- Acceptance of them "as significant and positive elements in the economy of God's design of salvation … [with] profound spiritual and ethical meanings and values … over many centuries they have been the treasury of the religious experience of our ancestors … the noblest longings of their hearts, and the home of their contemplation and prayer." (par. 14)
- "They have helped to give shape to the histories and cultures of our nations." (par. 14)
- In "dialogue with these religions … we discover the seeds of the Word of God" (*Ad Gentes* I, 9), and "we [discover] many riches in our own faith." This dialogue teaches us "what our faith in Christ leads us to receive from these religious traditions, and what must be purified in them, healed and made whole, in the light of God's Word." (par. 16–17) (FAPA I, 30)

A much deeper and more nuanced knowledge and understanding of the contemporary realities of other religions in Asia today, plus a thorough grounding in *dialogue*: its authentic meaning, especially in the area of religious beliefs, its theological basis in the renewed "theology of other religious traditions," its "anthropological and sociological presuppositions," its particular Asian characteristics—given the specifics of Asian cultures—all these elements have been singled out

[29]Figures given by Jaime Cardinal Sin in an address at Vienna (October 11, 1981). "The Church in the Philippines and its Role in Asia Today," in *The City on the Hill* (Archbishop's Chancery: Manila, 1981), 6. Cf. also *Let the Earth Hear His Voice* (Lausanne: World Wide Publications, 1975), 288ff., and the chart "Hidden Peoples 1980: The World in Missionary Perspective" (Pasadena, CA: 1980).

in the Asian bishops' statements as necessary themes for research, study, reflection, discernment, policy.[30]

Constantly stressed, more insistently of late, is the "dialogue of life," as a necessary preliminary and accompanying dimension of all other ways of dialogue with those "of other faiths." It is, incidentally, notable and corroborative of the FABC insistence that the new document from the Secretariat for Non-Christians, "The attitude of the Church toward followers of other religions," (10 June 1984) gives considerable importance to this factor.[31]

11. Dialogue "with Our Peoples, Especially the Poor"

> Even the most cursory survey of Asia, [Parig Digan writes in his recent *Churches in Contestation*] brings us quickly to one truly characteristic feature: its poverty. The continent that gave the world its cradle of civilization is today linked by its overall poverty with the underdeveloped continents …. It needs little reflection to see the explosive implications of a continental situation in which more than three-quarters of the world's poor, representing more than half the world's people, and concentrated on less than a quarter of the world's usable land, are systematically deprived of control of much of the little they had.[32]

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[30]Cf. FAPA; again the Asian Bishops' statements return to this "most Asian of mission concerns." The section in FABC I which deals with the dialogue with the religions is especially notable. *Vid.* in FAPA, 30 and—from the International Congress on Mission (Manila: 1979)—see FABC I, 232–235. FABC II on prayer was itself an exercise in this dialogue (FAPA I, 49–82), and the various Bishops' Institutes for Missionary Apostolate and for Inter-religious Affairs address the theme directly (FAPA I, 155–204).

[31]The term "dialogue of life," a notion borrowed from the thought of Pope Paul VI in "*Ecclesiam suam*," was first used by the FABC I in Taipei (FAPA, 31, #20). For an attempt at fuller explanation, see P. S. de Achutegui, ed., *Towards a "Dialogue of Life"*, First Asian Congress of Jesuit Ecumenists, June 18–23, 1975 (Manila: Cardinal Bea Institute, 1976), 299. "Dialogue of Life" is taken to prime "grassroots involvement" and *orthopraxis*, in this sense, the *practice* of unity, love and justice as serving mutual growth in love and understanding, even where total theological convergence cannot yet be arrived at.

[32]Parig Digan, *Churches in Contestation: Asian Christian Social Protest* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1984), 18, 21.

The FABC I statement has noted that:

> Most of Asia is made up of multitudes of the poor. Poor, not in human values, qualities, nor in human potential. But poor, in that they are deprived of access to material goods and resources which they need to create a truly human life for themselves. Deprived, because they live under oppression, that is, under social, economic and political structures which have injustice built into them.[33]

The response of the Church, sketched summarily in the same statement, the need of a "dialogue of life" with the poor, working for and above all *with* them, commitment and effort to join them in their effort and struggle "to bring about social justice in our societies," has in some ways remained a standing program. Various declarations from the Bishops' Institutes for Social Action (BISA)[34] have developed, not always in language and stance acceptable to all, these initial positions, veering in the direction of perspectives, analyses and action-thrusts usually found in liberation and EATWOT theologies.

The Manila 1979 Mission Congress defined poverty as the situation of people "deprived of access to a full sharing of human brotherhood," and pointed out that this is the context of evangelization in Asia now and "for nearly two millennia." "It is not without theological significance."[35]

Thus the discerned ecclesial response to this massive poverty is seen in making the Church in Asia more and more authentically "the

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[33]FAPA I, 31, #19–24. The first paragraph (19) is drawn in substance from the first statement of the Bishops' Institute for Social Action (BISA) (Quezon City, Philippines: March 1–15, 1974).

[34]At least six BISAs have been held; five of these are: March 1–15, 1974 in Quezon City; April 7–19, 1975 in Tokyo; November 1–16, 1975 in Kuala Lumpur; February 28–March 8, 1978 in Antipolo, Rizal, Philippines; May 27–June 1, 1979 in Baguio City. Cf. Zago, *La Chiesa in Asia Oggi*, 122–127, 150, 163–165, and *passim*; Digan, *Churches in Contestation*, 56–60. "BISAs I through III … together … involved over sixty bishops from over twenty countries and a total of 147 participants. Feedback from BISA I showed that the idea that had sunk in best was '*the need to be a Church of the poor*'."

[35]FAPA I, 236.

Church of the poor, the Church on the side of the poor," thus renewing *modo suo* the "preferential option for the poor" spoken of by the Holy Father in his Asian journeys of 1981 and 1984.[36]

> But what does it mean to be the Church of the Poor? Is not the Church for all men and women, rich and poor, for saint and sinners? We found an answer in the way many churches of Asia are moving in the direction of greater and greater involvement in the life of their people; their simply being with the poor; their attempts at working out programs of human development—integral, respectful of the people's destiny, attuned to their cultures; their standing with them in their hard struggle for justice and self-empowerment; their insistence that the rich become themselves real members of the Church of the Poor by fulfilling their obligations in justice and charity toward the poor. The Church of the Poor must do all this.[37]

> Our theological vision must be turned ever more resolutely to the Church's responsibility in the world, in the public spheres, in the construction of a more fully human future for Asian peoples. We must go beyond merely seconding Pope John Paul II's words, that "the preference for the poor is a Christian preference," and that "it expresses the concern of Christ who came to proclaim a message of salvation to the poor, … the poor who are indeed loved by (the) God … who guarantees their rights." We must now make them the pattern of our daily praxis.[38]

13. Conclusion

Largely drawn from Asian bishops' statements, this section took up the "wider understanding" of inculturation as the building up of the local church in its own place and time, with the local church itself

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[36]E.g., Pope John Paul, in the Philippines, addressing the people in the sugar plantations in Negros island: "*Yes, the preference for the poor is a Christian preference!* It is a preference that expresses the concern of Christ who came to proclaim a message of salvation to the poor, for the poor are indeed loved by God, and God it is who guarantees their rights" (Bacolod: February 20, 1981).

[37]FAPA I, 238, drawn from BISA V (Baguio City, 1979), II, par. 5–6.

[38]FAPA I, 100, from FABC III, Final Statement, #17, 1.

as acting subject of its own self-realization, through a process which has—though not in Asia—received the name "ecclesiogenesis."

The heuristic structure of the process of inculturation has been seen as following, in its own ground and from its own particular premises, the "hermeneutic or pastoral circle"—a methodology which places a premium on "dialogue" as understood, once again, in a pastoral and missionary context. Thus the FABC I statement collocates, among the primordial tasks of the Asian local churches today, the "three dialogues"—dialogue with the local cultures, dialogue with the religions of our peoples, and finally dialogue with the poor in their movement toward integral human development and the construction of communities of justice and brotherhood in Asia.

The understanding is that by addressing the concrete challenges to the Christian message and life which are present in the varied Asian contexts, the local churches in Asia will fulfill the task of inculturation, the dynamic

> insertion of the Christian life into a culture and the ongoing process of reciprocal and critical interaction and assimilation between the Christian message, its meanings and values, and the culture of the receiving people, so that ultimately a "new creation" comes as issue of this process.

Up to this point, this paper has largely been a report in answer to the question, "*qu'est-ce qui est passe dans la conscience et vie de l'Eglise?"*—as far as the Church in Asia is concerned. It has tried to provide a very summary survey on ecclesiological developments in the area in question. In so doing, the reply to a second question, "*Qu'est-ce qui fait probleme?*" has also (so it would appear) emerged. The local churches in Asia, addressing the challenges and questions which historical developments in their surrounding milieux pose to them, begin increasingly to experience the need of their own "local" theological reflection (as foreseen in *Ad Gentes* 22): and their own re-understanding, for the present moment, of their tasks of mission today. Now it is time to turn to the underlying theological issues raised by these developments and by the growing new consciousness of "truly being Church" that is present in the local church communities in Asia.

Section III: Towards a Theology of *"the Coming-To-Be" of "Catholica Unitas"*

1. The Inculturation Process: Heuristic Model

We might begin by positing what we believe to be the useful heuristic model for the process of inculturation. This is necessary as a point of departure and as grounding for methodology.

In addressing this process we are not to look on Gospel faith and Christian life as constituting "platonic universals" which exist in a pure state somewhere "up there," and which can be "brought down" (like Jerusalem descending from above) into a given people and culture. There is no pure *Wesen des Christentums* existing in an abstract state in the empyrean; every existent Christianity is in fact an "inculturated Christianity."[39]

Hence Christianity is said to be a "concrete historical universal" which is successively "incarnated" in history in different peoples and cultures, by a "transplanting" process first, and then by endogenous development subsequent to its first implanting. Christianity is, after all, the person of Christ, the message of Christ, the Christ-life in the Spirit

[39]Cf. Yves Congar, "Christianisme comme foi et comme culture," in the acta, Congresso Internazionale di Missiologia, Roma, ott. 1975, *Evangelizzazione e Culture* I (Roma: Pont. Univ. Urbaniana, 1976), 83–103. Also Yves Congar, "L'Eglise est catholique," in *L'Eglise une, sainte, catholique et apostolique*, in *Mysterium Salutis* 15 (Paris: Cerf, 1970), 149–179. The "ecclesiological projects" taken up in Section I operate from this premise. See also "Towards an Indian Ecclesiology," *Jeevadhara* (Kottayam, Kerala, India) 70 (July–August 1982), and articles by various authors, among whom, Thomas Manickam, "An Inculturated Ecclesiology," 297–304; J. M. Ela & R. Luneau, *Voici le Temps des Heritiers: Eglises d'Afrique et voies nouvelles* (Paris: Karthala, 1982). Especially relevant to points made in this paragraph, though published more than a decade after the writing of this article, is the "friendly exchange" between Walter Kasper ("On the Church," *America* [April 23–April 30, 2001]: 8–14) and Joseph Ratzinger ("The Local Church and the Universal Church," *America* 185 [New York] [November 19, 2001]: 7–11).

as present and "received" within persons and communities (the Church) in a given place and time. It is then transmitted, through the sum-total of the tasks of evangelization, to its "realization" in another presence and life within persons and communities of yet another culture.

> *Le christianisme n'est pas un abstrait universel qui doit se concretiser dans chaque culture; il est un concret particulier qui doit s'universaliser par la predication de l'Evangile de Jesus-Christ a tous les peuples. Le christianisme est la particularite singuliere de l'homme Jesus de Nazareth qui a une destinee universelle par la force qu'il a de briser toutes autres particularites.*[40]

Thus in time and space the *catholica unitas* is progressively enlarged in the communion of Churches—with the See of Peter as center and touchstone of that oneness. Thus does the *unitas*, already *virtute et potentia* universal at Pentecost, become *realiter et acta catholica*.

If we recall the definitions of inculturation given earlier, its process is then seen as moving forward from one concretely inculturated Christianity to another people and culture. Always (necessarily) there is first an "acculturation" process.[41] From that it goes onward to initial and then progressive stages of the mutual and reciprocal relationship from which eventually issues a new "inculturated Christianity."

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[40]Theoneste Nkeramihigo, "A propos de l'Inculturation du Christianisme," *Telema* 3 (1977): #4, 19–26, at p. 23. A valuable contribution, which deserves to be reflected on. The citation is from a sub-section entitled, "L'illusion d'isoler le christianisme a l'état pur."

> *Si le sort du christianisme a été historiquement lié au destin de l'europe, comme il l'est encore en grande partie, il est normal, en vertu de la particularité de l'incarnation, qu'en accueillant le christianisme on ait en méme temps accueilli l'Occident et inversement. Il s'ensuit donc que dans les pays ou il doit 's'inculturer,' le christianisme vit inévitablement de la contingence de la recontre de l'Occident avec les autres peuples.* (Nkeramihigo, "A propos de l'Inculturation du Christianisme," 22)

Cf. also *Inculturazione: concetti, problemi, orientamenti* (Roma: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, 1979), 67–88.

[41]Cf. the remarks just cited, from Nkeramihigo, "A propos de l'Inculturation du Christianisme," 19–26.

This movement brings with it some measure of necessary transformation in the receptor culture and people. The newness of Christ and all he brings with him is after all the point of evangelization. It is thus also the point to inculturation. Jesus enters into the life of a people and culture as fully as possible (thus did he enter into the Jewish culture of his time), to assume it and to invite it in turn to enter "into his own story," to summon it toward the Kingdom. If the entrance is incarnation, we will not forget that incarnation, in the pattern that is Gospel, leads towards passion and death, the "realization" of the law we call the Paschal Mystery.

Most of those who have written on inculturation see the "guiding principles" of inculturation as constituted by three phases:

- Robert Schreiter speaks of inclusion, judgment, service (Schreiter, 546–547);
- Ary Roest Crollius, of assumption, cross and resurrection, recapitulation (CIS, 44–45);
- Bruno Secondin, after I. Mancini, links the phases with Christ made man, Christ crucified, Christ risen (Secondin, 54);
- The *documento di lavoro* (DL) issued by Father Pedro Arrupe with his "Letter on Inculturation" (May 14, 1978) lines up the operative analogical movement as: incarnation, cross and resurrection, pentecost (and catholicity).[42]

[42]To gather the references together:

- Schreiter, "A Framework for a Discussion of Inculturation," 544–553, at 546–548;
- Ary Roest Crollius, "Per una teologia practica dell' inculturazione," in *Inculturazione: concetti, problemi, orientamenti* (Roma: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, 1979), 36–53, at 44–45.
- Bruno Secondin, in *Messaggio evangelico e culture: Problemi e dinamiche della mediazione culturale* (Roma: Ediz. Paoline, 1982), 54.
- For the Letter of Father Pedro Arrupe on Inculturation (Letter on Inculturation) and the "Documento di Lavoro (DL) sull'inculturazione," see *Inculturazione: concetti, problemi, orientamenti* (Roma: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, 1979), 144 ff., at 156–157.

Since there is general convergence, we might simply indicate (without too full a development) the general process here:

A. *Incarnation* or *assumption* means that Jesus' invitation to all "to enter into the Church and the Kingdom" is a vocation "in grace" to the people and culture to whom the Word is preached; in principle no people or culture are excluded (hence Schreiter's term, *inclusion*). We are not to limit this assumption and call too readily: "he was made like us in all things, sin alone excluded."

B. *Judgment, Death* and the *Cross* : The Word summons to conversion, to purification, to "elevation." Every human culture historically is touched by sin; the Gospel passes judgment on the idolatries and self-seeking present in them. It challenges individuals and peoples to the Father of Jesus and to the maturity of the Beatitudes which is the human vocation. Hence from the very beginning inculturation demands a task of discernment, and, as Gospel enters more fully into all the dimensions of a people's ways of life, the counter-cultural thrust may assume an increasing role.

C. *Resurrection, Pentecost, communion* and *participation*. Through the Spirit, given at Pentecost as fruitfulness of the Resurrection, the "new creation" constructed from each assumed and purified culture emerges to become, *in suis* (with its own identity taken up in faith and grace) part of the *catholica unitas*. Each people and culture called to Church and Kingdom are "given their own fulfilled identity" not so that it can construct higher walls of separation from others, but so that it can grow into its fullest capacity for service, communion and participation. The process of inculturation is *not an end in itself*, but precisely a call to realizing the catholicity of the one Church, and thus a call to communion and sharing. Thus Roest Crollius prefers the analogy of "recapitulation of all things in Christ"—to that merely of the incarnation. The "Arrupe DL" speaks of the mystery of the Eucharist as symbol of the end-term of catholicity, "the eschatological banquet" to which all peoples are called.[43]

[43]"Documento di Lavoro (DL) sull'inculturazione," 156–159. The "analogies" of DL bring in the incarnation as model of inculturation, the cross and

"When these three principles are held together, the transformation that the Gospel brings changes the culture, but in an organic way. It helps the culture become more truly itself, more truly alive, more redolent of the image of God which … it was meant to be" (Schreiter, 548). "In so doing, the culture grows into a fuller realization of the kingdom of God and the explicit manifestation of the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. It becomes a dwelling-place for God."[44]

2. The Issue of Method: The Hermeneutical Circle

The second issue that ecclesiology "developed in Asian contexts" must examine is the "interface between Christian experience and action/praxis and the human—especially the social—sciences, and theological reflection." Here we touch the key area of "the new methodology" already being followed by those who are "doing theology" in Asia and elsewhere, "in a new key." The first section of the present paper precisely tried to give a sampling of this sort of theological reflection. Perhaps the longest reach and the strongest influence of Latin American theology into Asia is the explicit formulation of its method, the pattern of its "new way of doing theology."[45]

We might submit that no area of theological work is of more crucial importance than the evaluation of this "new way of doing theology"—

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resurrection as part of the pattern and process, Pentecost and the catholicity of the Church—leading to the Church as eucharistic community (The "eucharistic community" as one way of describing the endterm of inculturation seems to me an especially rich "analogy" which has not been sufficiently developed.).

[44]Schreiter, "A Framework for a Discussion of Inculturation," 548. Cf. Pedro Arrupe, Letter on Inculturation.

[45]The "new way of doing theology" is a constant refrain in much Latin American writing. Cf. for example, *Fe cristiana y cambio social en America Latina* (Salamanca: Ediciones Sígueme/Instituto Fe y Secularidad, 1973), 37–372 (Juan Carlos Scannone's summary). See also Xose Miguelez, "El metodo teologico," in *La Teologia de la Liberacion y su Metodo* IV (Barcelona: Herder, 1976), 75ff. Conclusion: "La teologia de la liberacion mas que un nuevo tema es una nueva manera de hacer teologia."

characteristic not only of Latin American theology, but of almost all "local theological reflection" in so-called "Third World contexts."

We have already indicated the overall structure of this methodology. Perhaps we can here gather its main lines together once more. The "hermeneutical (pastoral/missionary) circle" has these components:

A. The role of personal (Christian) and community (ecclesial) experience of human personal and societal situations, as "received." This is regarded as the point of departure for this "new way of doing theology."

B. An "interface" is set up between Christian experience and action/praxis, and reflection and the methods of the social sciences (sociology, anthropology, political science, political economy, et al.). There is prime attention to the societal dimensions of the human reality.

C. Discernment is the first response to the preceding experience and analysis—not deduction, not conceptual dissection. It is of course understood that ecclesial discernment, if it is to be genuinely ecclesial, presupposes as referents the "Tradition" (the whole of Tradition as received in both its synchronic and diachronic senses; *catholicity* or *catholica unitas* through space and time.)

D. *Decision and action must then follow.* The process is intrinsically action-oriented. From ecclesial discernment the flow is into ecclesial action—pastorally, in missionary endeavor, or in the response of Christians to contemporary total contexts (e.g., by socio-political presence and action). Without action or praxis the hermeneutical circle ends. With it, the process moves again to a new start; the struggle to "realize" the Kingdom goes on.

E. The successive acts of discernment, decision, action, praxis, when reflected on in faith yield the possibility of systematization, of correlations and generalization, of the construction of parallels and analogies with Revelation and the Tradition as referents. Thus "local theologies" are

gradually built up, stone by stone, parallel with the building up of authentically "local churches."

Thus "local theologies" concretely are very often "theologies of ecclesiogenesis," theologies of local communities and churches *in fieri*. They are theologies of the historical self-realization of churches "*realizing themselves in a given time and place*," but also simultaneously *et eodem motu* the historical self-realization of the Church *actu et realitate catholica*, on its way to become the one Church of the Lord found in every land and people, race and culture, living by the power of the Spirit of Jesus, realizing in *signo et sacramento* the foreshadowing of the Kingdom over the earth.[46]

F. From what has just been said, especially in (e) above, the corollary follows: there has to be ongoing dialogue and "joint reflection" with other local churches and the See of Peter. If the finality is the realization of catholicity, both synchronically and diachronically, this dimension is constitutive (and happily, in our time, increasingly attainable in "the global village" that is the modern world) and, all along the way, enriching and fruitful.[47]

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[46]Inevitably, "ecclesiogenesis" (in its "generic" meaning) is the underlying thematic in "local theologizing." This is already implicit in *Ad Gentes* 22. Cf. Robert Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, unpublished ms. (Chicago, 1977), soon to be published by Orbis Books (Maryknoll, New York); Robert Schreiter, "Local Theologies in the Local Church," *Proceedings* (New York: CTSA) 36 (1982): 96–112.

[47]Cf. n. 63, where we refer to some points which might be fruitfully made re: the relationship to the See of Peter and the local churches—citations from Archbishop Mariano Gaviola, then Secretary-General of the FABC, and Avery Dulles. A study of the documents of the FABC published in FAPA I will show how the "desire and intent of communion with the Petrine See" is explicit in every major FABC document: the plenary assemblies invariably begin with a reference to the Holy Father and renew the reference in the concluding section, making clear its will-to-unity.

3. Some Questions on Methodology

"Doing theology" in the pattern of the "hermeneutical circle" presents the most fundamental, and, for the theological enterprise, the gravest issue which must be addressed. Here we can only indicate a few questions which must be asked, by way of example.

- What is the correct manner of "discerning the signs of the times" (*Gaudium et Spes* 4, 44) which since Pope John XXIII's *Pacem in Terris* (as a convenient *terminus a quo*) Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* and Church documents (both Roman and "local") have so often referred to?[48]

  From actual practice, "discerning the signs of the times" is not infrequently converted into a slogan which in turn justifies any position which "advocates" wish to pressure an ecclesial community to adopt. The word *discernment* is crucial: what are the norms and the process of *genuinely Christian discernment* which is grounded on the Word of God and illumined by the Spirit?

- In what measure are we to regard the methods of analysis of the human and social sciences as truly scientific, i.e., objective, "neutral and value free" (are they ever that, when placed at the service of an ideologically-determined framework of interpretation, i.e., whose premises derive from ideological presuppositions)?

- As a particular instance of this, how are we to evaluate, e.g., the use of even modified forms of Marxist analysis

[48]On "discerning the signs of the times," we have already cited Anton's "Abierta a los 'signos de los tiempos'," 773–782, perhaps one of the more carefully worked-out presentations of this theme presently available. Anton refers to J. da Cruz Policarpio, "Sinais dos tempos," in *Genese historica e interpretacao teologica* (Lisboa, 1971)—a work not available to us. A. Rotzetter has a more recent essay, "I segni dei tempi secondo l'interpretazione francescana," in L. Boff & W. Buehlmann, "*Costruisci la mia chiesa*": *Ispirazioni francescane per e dal Terso Mondo* (Bologna/Padova: E. M. P., 1983), 79–95.

> not only in Latin American liberation theologies, *but in almost every form of "reflection on society"* as practiced increasingly by Church groups, ecclesial communities, etc. in many areas of the Church today?[49]

Excursus: After this text was written the new text from the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith entitled "Instruction on certain aspects of the 'theology of liberation'"[50] became available. This document deals directly with the issues raised by *various* liberation theologies, and in section VII addresses itself to Marxist analysis in relation to this "new way of doing theology." Since this is the first official text from one of the Vatican dicasteries on this new worldwide theological movement, it should render valuable service to those who adopt or study one or other form of liberation theology. Hard-nosed questions and exigent dialogue are tributes to any theological enterprise, and the pity is that little by way of careful questioning and receptive dialogue has taken place up until now. As several years ago many welcomed a by-now well-known letter on Marxist analysis (from Father Pedro Arrupe),[51] all the more should the present document meet attentive study, so necessary—especially in our Asian contexts—at the present time.

We might here recall the conclusion given in the Arrupe text:

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[49]Cf. Paul Valadier, "Marxisme et scientificite," *Etudes* 344 (Mai 1976): 713–726, on the "scientific character" of Marxist analysis. The instruction from the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (SCDF), *Instruction on Certain Aspects of the "Theology of Liberation"* (Vatican City: Polyglot Press, August 6, 1984), in its section on Marxist Analysis (nos. 1–13), has some important cautions to set down on this matter. Cf. also the final statement of the Jesuit East Asian Assistancy Conference of Theologians (July 29, 1981), "Theological Reflection and Analysis of the Human Situation" (Manila: 1981), 2 pp., mimeographed, where the points made in the SCDF instruction are also stressed from convergent viewpoints.

[50]*Instruction on Certain Aspects of the "Theology of Liberation,"* signed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger.

[51]Pedro Arrupe, in *La Iglesia de hoy y del futuro* (Bilbao/Santander: Sal Terrae, 1982), 151–158.

> *En suma, aunque el analisis marxista no incluye directamente la adhesion a la filosofia marxista en todo su conjunto y menos todavia al 'materialismo dialectico' en cuanto tal, sin embargo, tal como se le entiende de ordinario, implica de hecho un concepto de la historia humana que no concuerda con la vision cristiana del hombre y de la sociedad y desemboca en estrategias que ponen en peligro los valores y las actitudes cristianas.*[52]

The new document from the *S. C. de Doctrina Fidei* has this judgment:

> In the case of Marxism, … a preliminary critique (of methods and viewpoints) is all the more necessary since the thought of Marx is such a global vision of reality that all data received from observation and analysis are brought together in a philosophical and ideological structure, which predetermines the significance and importance to be attached to them. The ideological principles come prior to the study of the social reality and are presupposed in it. Thus no separation of the parts of this epistemologically unique complex is possible. If one tries to take one part only, say, the analysis, one ends up having to accept the entire ideology [Then explicit reference is given to the well-known paragraph 34 of Pope Paul VI's *Octogesima Adveniens*].[53]

- What are the various relationships between *theoria* and *praxis* which underlie diverse understandings of the theological work itself? This is an area which has not received the attention it merits.[54]
- Is theology, necessarily at the service of "the supreme law of charity," thus necessarily "ordained to action and praxis" in the endeavor to build up the kingdom of God even initially within history? How are "action," "praxis," and "the Kingdom in history" to be understood?

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[52]Arrupe, *La Iglesia de hoy y del futuro*, 151–158.

[53]Cf. the text of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger's critique of liberation theology in *Il Regno* 29 (1984): #504, 220–223, and the *Instruction on Certain Aspects of the "Theology of Liberation,"* #6. The reference is given in #7 to the well-known text of Pope Paul VI, *Octogesima Adveniens*, #34, *AAS* 63 (1971): 424–425.

[54]Cf. the various papers in the symposium on "theory/praxis" of the *Proceedings* CTSA 32 (1977), and also the important book by Matthew Lamb, *Solidarity with Victims: Toward a Theology of Social Transformation* (New York: Crossroad, 1982).

We can only point to these questions. This is not the place to address them at greater length. But once again, we must submit, that in the area of methodology, in the issues touched on briefly above, we meet the key points of the entire movement of "theology from below" which is emerging in a particularly acute way in "Third World countries." The entire theological community across the world neglects to address these questions "at its own peril."

4. The Ecclesiogenesis Hypothesis

The final theme for reflection that is possible in a summary presentation—as the present paper might be an attempt at sketching (what might be called) a "field theory" for the theology of the local church *in fieri*—is the local church, at this moment of history, moving towards its self-realization within and towards the *catholica unitas*. We might speak of the hypothesis of "ecclesiogenesis."[55]

To begin with, it might perhaps be suggested that there was no explicit and self-conscious ecclesiology when the local churches of Europe were in *their* own period of "self-realization." The genesis of the Church in North America and in some measure in South America was largely a transplantation of European communities "in exile" to new land. The "two great ages of mission," that which accompanied the age of exploration and was mainly the enterprise of the Iberian kingdoms, and the second one which came in the wake of the 19th century and early 20th century period of colonization, were ages of the implantation of the Church largely "in transplant mode"—for the most part, *inevitably*, *necessarily* in the transplant mode. Hence it may also be suggested that the post-World War II (and "post colonial") phenomenon of scores of local churches developing out of what were

[55]May I make it explicit that the term "ecclesiogenesis" is not used here in the precise and developed meaning given it by Leonardo Boff (*Eclesiogenesi: Las comunidades de base reinventan la Iglesia* [Santander: Sal Terrae, 1981]) and Iglesia (*Carisma y Poder: Ensayos de Eclesiologia Militante* [Santander: Sal Terrae, 1982], 207–217) since we have not read these works as of the present writing. *Here the term is used in a more generic way*, as understood, e.g., by Joseph Komonchak, who will be cited somewhat fully in the texts and the notes below.

"missions" (foreign mission territories), the phenomenon of *ecclesiae novellae* in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, and *suo tamen modo* in Latin America, was qualitatively something really new, a *novum* in the post-medieval history of the Church.

From "missions" to "young churches" to "local churches" in the full process of ecclesial *fieri*, of ecclesial *Selbstvollzug*: how are we to consider this historical moment in the development of the *Una Sancta*? How are we to think of these local churches *theologically*? To us in the *novellae ecclesiae* (*novellae*, even if in some cases—as in this writer's country—hundreds of years old, but *novellae* in the sense of a new consciousness, truly qualitatively new, of "being Church"), this is one of the fundamental theological questions, a "burning issue" which at least among us cannot be sidestepped or wished away. Perhaps, if we are to address it in all its complexity, it is *the* fundamental theological concern.[56]

Here we might give some citations which in their way support the previous paragraphs.

> The problem of the inculturation of Christianity is … posed with a special urgency in regard to the young churches of the Third World …. It is not only a question of adaptation, of renewal within one and the same culture-in-movement. It is a matter of constructing a comprehensive and explanatory theology, a theology in which local cultures are not merely described but actually integrated into a larger conceptual whole, allowing a critical re-examination of the very fundamentals of Christian revelation (*Ad Gentes* 22). This is an extremely difficult task and one for which historical information (research) and good will are not sufficient.[57]

Karl Rahner's reflections on "the basic and fundamental significance of the Second Vatican Council for the church" are by now well-known, and have had remarkable influence in our part of the world. He believed that it

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[56]Cf. the article, already referred to, by A. Mushete Ngindu, "The Church of Christendom in the Face of New Cultures," *Concilium: Where Does the Church Stand?* 146 (6/1981): 53–61, and also the papers studied in Section I of the present essay.

[57]Ngindu, "The Church of Christendom in the Face of New Cultures," at 54–55.

> was something which happened in the very processes of the Council itself: for the first time in its history, the Roman Catholic Church *began to become the world-Church*. [Before this] the Church had existed in all parts of the world but it existed as a European export, not as a church with roots in all the various cultures of the world. It was during and through the Council that this European or Roman church took its first few steps toward becoming a really catholic or universal Church.
>
> So big is this break with the past that a change of such magnitude faced the Church only once before in its history: when it moved from being a Jewish church to becoming a church of the Gentiles and pagans who lived in the Hellenistic world of the first century.[58]

Yves Congar's retrospect on the twenty years after Vatican II has convergent views.

> … An evolution has been taking place after the Council. The local churches have been taking up, much more than before, the work of evangelization into their own hands. It has been said: St. Paul did not found missions; rather, he founded churches. They were themselves supposed to grow. This is quite true, but Paul also sent out Timothy, Titus, Sosthenes, Silvanus and others off on missionary tasks. There has to be missionary activity and evangelization by the "locals" themselves.
>
> The great issue which confronts us today, and which demands a renewed effort in theology, is that local churches must be, fully, the *subjects* of their own life and their own questions, that is to say, they must be responsible agents.
>
> Pope Paul VI at Kampala, and Pope John Paul II in six different countries proclaimed the right and the duty, for the Church, to be African in Africa. But what a problem this is! Pope Paul VI rightly insisted on the unity of Faith. But within that unity, diverse theologies can take their places. Here we meet the problems of African inculturation: African values, marriage problems, questions regarding Christian initiation, the veneration of ancestors, etc. … In Latin America, we meet the theology of liberation …. A Church is born from the people, by the renewed action of the Gospel …. There was not a single black bishop at Vatican I; there were a hundred-odd at Vatican II. They met and gathered together and grew into a sense of their own

[58]Karl Rahner, "Zukunft der Kirche," in *Sorge um die Kirche*, Schriften zur Theologie, Band XIV (Zurich/Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1981), 287–332.

> identity. This same movement goes on. Africa (and Asia) have received the heritage of Catholic Christianity. Now they, the heirs, have found their voice. Always it is the one and the same problem: *that Christians, and their churches, should become and be subjects of their own lives*.[59]

Having said this, we must at once admit that not very much theological reflection has been (perhaps?) going on *in depth*, at least not in Asia. The Latin American theologians have centered their reflection very decidedly around the "liberation problematic." Not having studied this growing body of literature with the time and energy it demands, I *do not attempt* to evaluate it from within the present perspectives.[60]

As to the term "ecclesiogenesis": it is a handy shortcut name for what is here addressed. Theologians writing from other contexts (i.e., different from Latin American), though doubtless influenced by the Latin American problematic, are Joseph Komonchak in the United States, Hervé Legrand in France, Severino Dianich in Italy, et al. Legrand's phrase, "*l'Eglise se realise en un lieu*," is a good and perhaps "more neutral" way of laying down plumb lines for this reflection.[61]

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[59]Yves Congar, "Les theologiens, Vatican II et la theologie," in G. Defois, ed., *Le Concile: 20 Ans de Notre Histoire* (Paris: Desclee, 1982), 172–183, and Yves Congar, "Situation ecclesiologique au moment de 'Ecclesiam suam' et passage a une Eglise dans l'itineraire des hommes," in *"Ecclesiam suam" Premiere Lettre Encyclique de Paul VI*, Colloque International, Octobre 24–26, 1980 (Brescia: 1982), 79–102 and the discussion which follows.

[60]Msgr. Bonaventura Kloppenburg, "Pluralismo eclesial," in *La Iglesia del Señor: Algunos aspectos, hoy* (Bogota: CELAM, 1983), 93–193, and Bonaventura Kloppenburg, "Teologia de Liberracao e Igreja Popular," paper for the October 1984 meeting of the International Theological Commission, 4 pp.

[61]Komonchak, "Ministry and the Local Church," 56–82; Komonchak, "The Church Universal as the Communion of Local Churches," 30–35; Joseph Komonchak, "Ecclesiology and Social Theory: A Methodological Essay," *The Thomist* 45 (1981): 262–283.

Hervé Legrand, "Le développement d'Eglises-sujets, a la suite de Vatican II. Fondements théologiques et réflexions institutionelles," in G. Alberigo, ed., *Les Eglises apres Vatican II: Dynamisme et Prospective*, Actes du Colloque International de Bologne (Paris: Beauchesne, 1981), 149–184.

Parenthetically, the reality of "basic Christian communities" or "grassroots ecclesial communities," more than any other single phenomenon, has given the decisive impulse toward the theological study of "local churches *in fieri*." This needs to be stated here, but it cannot be developed in a paper like the present one. Latin American theological writing on these "BEC's" is abundant and well-known internationally, but Africa and now Asia have already begun to produce a considerable body of books and articles on this topic also.[62]

In the pages which follow we will sketch rapidly "the ecclesiogenesis hypothesis"—as it has been developed in some of the authors cited above. What is given (in the brief space here available!) is merely a summary presentation. An adequate exposition of the hypothesis would call for spelling out of premises in greater detail, more nuanced definitions and positions, and the like. It is not possible to say everything in one paper!

It also goes without saying that if we have not taken up *ex professo* and dwelt at length on the teaching of the magisterium on "inculturation"—Vatican II and the Roman Pontiffs—it is mainly because: a) such an enterprise would require an entire paper of its own (the teaching of Popes Paul VI and John Paul II is extensive enough to

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Yves Congar, "Les implications christologiques et pneumatologiques de l'Ecclesiologie de Vatican II," in G. Alberigo, ed., *Les Eglises apres Vatican II: Dynamisme et Prospective*, Actes du Colloque International de Bologne (Paris: Beauchesne, 1981), 117–130, esp. 123ff: "Une des grandes nouveautés de Vatican II dans le domaine des documents du 'magistere' a été l'introduction du point de vue eschatologique, et donc aussi de l'historicité," and the paragraphs which follow, until 129.

Severino Dianich, "Soggettivita e Chiesa," in *Teologia e Progetto-Uomo in Italia*, Associazione Teologica Italiana (Assisi: Citadella, 1980), 105–128 (also in *Rassegna di Teologia* 21 [1980]: 415–418).

[62]Cf. S. Torres & J. Eagleson, *The Challenge of Basic Christian Communities*, International Ecumenical Congress of Theology, February 20/March 2, 1980 (Sao Paolo, Brazil/Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1981) (mainly on Latin America). *Pro Mundi Vita* dossiers have regular updates and reflection on the movement of Basic Christian Communities all over the world.

warrant a dissertation); b) this paper presupposes that teaching and is in agreement with its directives and its "caveats"; and c) recent studies, e.g., Alfredo Marranzini and Jesus Lopez-Gay, have done this quite excellently and already at considerable length.

But perhaps it will not be otiose to say that we take for granted what we believe must here—as we address the theme of the "self-realization of the local church"—be taken for granted: *the full Catholic understanding of the one Church over which the See of Peter presides with authority and in love*. It may be useful to recall not only the reservations summed up by Monsignor Philippe Delháye in his "*pluralisme culturel et pluralisme ideologique*"—reservations echoed more recently by, e.g., Pedro Arrupe, Ary Roest Crollius and Theoneste Nkeramihigo, but also to bear in mind that *a wise pastoral sense*, conscious of history and its lessons, is a necessary dimension in all "operations of change."

The points made in the following two citations, one from a very recent (June 1984) address by Avery Dulles, and the other, from a 1974 address by Archbishop Mariano Gaviola, then Secretary-General of the FABC, might also be worth referring to:

> If the Catholic Church is to continue in its role as a great international force for unity and truth, justice and peace, it is important to preserve solidarity among regional churches. Dialogue is needed both because each particular church may have special insights of value to the others and because each, being immersed in a particular culture, has its own characteristic blind spots. Each local or regional church is accountable to its sister churches and to the Church of Rome, which presides over the whole assembly in charity. As noted in *Lumen Gentium*, the Petrine See has a dual responsibility: to protect legitimate differences and to see that these differences do not hinder unity. Far from becoming less important, the papacy takes on greater responsibilities than ever as the new world Church becomes a reality. The papacy has been effectively used as a symbol and agent of unity by recent Popes, including Pope John Paul II. (Avery Dulles)

The second-to-last sentence cited above bears repeating, and we record full agreement with it. "Far from becoming less important, the papacy takes on greater responsibilities than ever as the new world Church becomes a reality." The detailing of these greater responsibilities will be one of the large concerns of the coming decade and beyond.

> We must point out right away [Archbishop Gaviola remarked at a press conference during the 1974 Synod] that this (up-building of the local church, affirmed as the overriding task of the Church in Asia) is not to be seen in any way as a "separatist move": at the Taipei meeting of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) it was stated quite clearly that "in Asia there does not exist that allergy with regard to the primatial role and teaching of the Holy Father which is said to be present in some places …."[63]

This said, we will not make the effort to line up a whole catalogue of premises re: the unity of the Church and the "*originalite chretienne*" (the "non-negotiables of Faith") which must be safeguarded. Hence if the presentation may seem to have its *lacunae*, it is not because of some sort of "selective orthodoxy," but merely due to constraints of space in an already over-long paper.

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[63]On the magisterium and inculturation, two papers: Alfredo Marranzini, "Il magistero al servizio della inculturazione," in B. Genero, ed., *Inculturazione della Fede: Saggi Interdisciplinari* (Napoli: Dehoniane, 1981), 129–173 and Jesus Lopez-Gay, "Pensiero attuale della Chiesa sull' Inculturazione," in *Inculturazione* (Roma: CIS, 1979), 9–35.

Msgr. Philippe Delhaye, "Pluralisme culturel et pluralisme ideologique," in *Evanggelizzazione e Culture* I (Roma: Pont. Univ. Urbaniana, 1976), 128–164. In 138–139, Msgr. Delhaye remarks that even some speeches which profess to strive for the double fidelity "*aux valeurs chrétiennes et aux valeurs africaines*" often are heavily loaded in favor of indigenous values. "*Mais l'impression plus générale allait dans un autre sens*." Perhaps such an impression cannot but be created in many writings on inculturation, as the effort to stress one set of values cannot be always *fully balanced out*, in any given short text, by the—presupposed—fidelity to the Christian "given" and the "givens" of the Tradition.

The citations: Avery Dulles, "The Emerging World Church: A Theological Reflection," address at the Catholic Theological Society of America annual convention (Washington, D.C.: June 13, 1984), ms. text; Archbishop Mariano G. Gaviola, then Secretary-General of FABC, in his press conference during the Roman Synod of Bishops 1974. Cf. the FABC booklet, *Evangelization of the Church in Modern Day Asia*, 3rd ed. (Office of the FABC Secretary-General: Hong Kong/ Manila, 1976), 70. It might be remarked that one of the main features of the FABC texts is their frequent reference to and citation of Vatican II documents and texts of the Roman Pontiffs.

5. "Objective" and "Subjective" Poles in Ecclesial Self-Realization

In the transmission of the Word—the Christian message and life—we have a process which has necessarily

- an "objective pole," the pole of the Tradition (*the* Tradition in its past and present expressions, including the Church's living magisterium), and
- a "subjective pole," the pole of the reception and appropriation of the "given"—in a given community, in a given time and place.

The "objective pole," the pole of the Tradition, is made up of "objective representations" of the Christian message and the "objective elements" of the Christian life. We would include here the Scriptures, the *monumenta traditionis*, creed, liturgy and the sacraments, hierarchy and ministries, the *Magisterium*, institutions, roles and inter-relationships, customs, habits, stories and places of cult, lives of saints and exemplary believers.

> All of these are the very ways in which previous generations of Christians have objectified the interpretation and evaluation of human life which they have drawn from and centered upon Jesus Christ. They express and embody the Christian response to the basic questions of human existence in the world. Embodiments of meaning and value which directed the lives of a previous generation, they provide for succeeding generations a heritage by which they may locate themselves in the world, in history and before God.[64]

The "subjective pole" is (we said above) the pole of reception and appropriation. The "objective pole" communicates to us what the previous generation(s) has(have) received and appropriated; we are offered an interpreted, embodied, inculturated Christian message. Our "reception" and "appropriation" is reception and appropriation of the Tradition as handed down to us by the preceding generation.[65]

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[64]Komonchak, "The Church and Religious Education in the 1980's," #3, 204.

[65]Komonchak, "The Church and Religious Education in the 1980's," 205. Cf. also Schreiter, "Local Theologies in the Local Church," at 107–109:

"Reception and appropriation" must recall to us the scholastic dictum *quidquid recipitur secundum modum recipientis recipitur*. The *recipiens* in this case is ourselves, our own generation in the Church.

Now we ourselves are neither *tabula rasa* nor wholly empty vessels. We must be people with our own thoughts, aspirations, questions … questions "which we have either brought with us or which the message has evoked" from us even as we "come up" to it. We have our fundamental questions about world and nature, self and neighbor, life and death and afterlife. Not every generation asks exactly the same questions, nor asks them in exactly the same way. As the message questions us, so in the very act of facing it, we question the message. Or the message itself may call forth from us the questions we address to it. And our questions vary, as season of life follows season of life, as life itself questions us.

> When one generation of Christians receives from an earlier generation its expression of Christian meaning and value, an interpretative process is going on …. The genesis of the Church in the always concrete process of reception and appropriation represents precisely that critical correlation of authority and situation (which has been called the "hermeneutical or pastoral circle"). The genesis of the Church is an interpretative achievement.[66]

The author just cited (Joseph Komonchak) had earlier written, regarding this theme, that if it can be rightly said that "the Church is something which must be made to come to be, and that this genesis of the Church is the responsibility of each generation of Christians," yet

> To avoid misunderstanding, let me say at the outset that I do not mean this is a creation out of nothing, as if the Church did not exist before or as if an entirely new and radically different Church has to be engendered …. None of this is meant to deny or to downplay the divine initiative. It was God who was in Jesus Christ, in the words he spoke, in the deeds he performed, in the community he gathered; and it was God's grace

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"The tradition of response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ is essential for the development of the self-understanding of the local church. It provides the touchstone against which it can measure its own responses."

[66]Komonchak, "The Church and Religious Education in the 1980's," 205.

> that made it possible for certain men and women to recognize God's hand and his very self in Christ, to become convinced that death had not conquered him, and to come together in a new community.[67]

The genesis of the Church in each generation is also, and primarily, the doing of the Holy Spirit; in every generation the Spirit continues to animate the Church as *anima corporis Christi*, as in every generation, too, the Church grows in and through the development of each local church. None of this is for a moment denied when we speak of "the Church engendering itself everyday, reproducing itself over and over again" in every age. The "objective pole," that "horizontal continuity" of the Tradition, is not denied; it is not in the least downplayed. But here we are trying to give full weight also to what "the subjective pole, the pole of reception and appropriation," means in the process of the self-realization of the Church through history, and when we speak (as our theme demands) of inculturation—in every "receptor culture and people" and community.

It is, in fact, this understanding of the genesis of the Church out of the communication and reception of Christian meaning, value and life which allows us to grasp the concrete mode of actualization and coming-to-be of the universal Church in the richness and variety of local churches all over the world.

> There is a Catholic Christianity because there is an Irish, an Italian, a Latin American, a North American, an Asian, an African Christianity. We recognize each other as Christians because we all acknowledge the same objective representations of the Christian message …; but we also need all the adjectives because what we have all done in receiving and appropriating that message is marked by the economic, social, political, ethnic and cultural characteristics of our several circumstances. The Church is one throughout the world because one message gathers it together; but it is universal or Catholic in its unity because we all receive and appropriate that message in our distinct ways. The one Church is truly universal not in spite of, but precisely because of its manifold particular realizations throughout the many cultures of the world.[68]

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[67]Komonchak, "The Church and Religious Education in the 1980's," 202.

[68]Komonchak, "The Church and Religious Education in the 1980's," 205.

6. "Catholica Unitas" as End-term: *Lumen Gentium*

Having said all this, we must return to what was set down in the previous section: that the purpose of inculturation and its end-term is the actualization/realization of the *catholicity of the one Church*, St. Augustine's *catholica unitas*.[69]

Catholica unitas, implying as it does true oneness within cultural diversities, is by no means meant to set local and/or particular churches in opposition to a universal Church. The clarifications given by Msgr. Pierre Eyt[70] in his paper written for this same meeting can be repeated here, with total agreement. He points out that if we are to be faithful to the genuine thought of Vatican II, we are to recall that

> the mention of particular churches is always accompanied in the [Vatican II] texts with the explicit recall of the demands bound up with the visible unity of the Church and the universal ministry of the Roman Pontiff. In relation to our problem, it is to be noted that the particular church … cannot be opposed to the universal Church.
>
> In effect, the particular church "is not merely an administrative circumscription of the entire Church; it is not the product of a break-up process which would 'atomize' the space of the universal Church. Rather it is the issue of a concentration of the Church exercising its own capacity for self-realization" (Karl Rahner). In such wise that between the particular church and the universality of the Church "there is a kind of mutual interiority" (Yves Congar). "At the heart of every (particular) church," Cardinal de Lubac concludes, "the universal Church is, in principle, present."
>
> The universal Church is thus not an addition to the particular churches; it is not the federation of particular churches. Neither is it the product of splitting off from the universal Church considered as somehow

[69]*Lumen Gentium,* par. 8: "dona Ecclesiae Christi … ad unitatem catholicam impellunt" (a text which can be transposed for the theme at hand), also #13, 17, et al.; *Gaudium et Spes* 42, 53. Cf. Henri de Lubac, *The Motherhood of the Church* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1982), 191–273.

[70]Msgr. Pierre Eyt, "L'Eglise comme sacrement universel et la 'catholicité': La discussion autour de l'université et de la diversité appliquee a l'Eglise," paper for the International Theological Commission (October 1984 session), at 11–12.

> existing beforehand. We must emphasize here that it is through the episcopate—present in each one of the bishops—that the universal Church is wholly present in each one of the Churches. It is "the unity of the hierarchy which makes of the particular church 'one thing' with the universal Church." (Dom Grea)

When we speak of the coming of the "world Church," we recall what *Lumen Gentium* says of the Church: "sign and instrument of the unity of all mankind."[71] Hence the diversity of realizations of the one Church within the *catholica unitas* is not meant to be a reality of further division, but precisely a "sacrament" of oneness between diverse peoples, the coming-to-being of a family of peoples. The communion of churches with all their diversities within the Church is meant to be a sort of "soul" of the ultimate oneness, according to the design of God, of all men and all peoples in the Kingdom of God.[72]

The point to inculturation must ultimately be the point to Christianity itself. "That they may be one even as we are one: as you, Father, are in me and I in you, so also may they be one in us" (John 17: 21–22).[73]

Postscript

For the Asian churches and Church today, these issues are not merely academic. A few years ago, a member of the International Theological Commission from Africa spoke of the necessity of addressing ourselves to these questions, specifically to a comprehensive understanding of "local churches," lest, he said, events would settle them one way or the other before adequate thought and discernment

[71]Vatican II, in *Lumen Gentium* 1: "in Christo veluti sacramentum seu signum et instrumentum intimae cum Deo unionis totius generis humani unitatis …"

[72]de Lubac, *The Motherhood of the Church*, 210–211, 213–232.

[73]Crollius, "Per una teologia practica dell' inculturazione," at 44ff, opts for the mystery of recapitulation as principal "model"/analogy for inculturation. Cf. also "Inculturation and Incarnation," *Bulletin Secr. pro non cristianis* 13 (1978): 134–140. The *Documento di Lavoro* accompanying Father Arrupe's letter has a comprehensive pattern ("Documento di Lavoro (DL) sull'inculturazione," 156–159).

could be brought to bear on them. Such theological effort, at once challenging and arduous, would seem to be an act of obedience to the imperatives of the Second Vatican Council, as well as an act of love for the Church, and the *catholica unitas* which is both God's gift to her, and our task and vocation as servants of her mission.

Landas 25 (2011) 135–167

THE CHURCH IN ASIA AND MISSION IN THE 1990s*

Catalino G. Arévalo, S.J.

Pre-note[1]

One of my earliest memories of Cardinal Jaime Sin was of his participation at the First Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) at Taipei. He had been installed as Archbishop of Manila on the feast of Saint Joseph

*The first part of this paper represents an article previously published in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, edited by Dr. Gerald H. Anderson of the Overseas Ministries Study Center (New Haven, Connecticut 06511 U.S.A), and a position paper written for the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the FABC (Bandung, Indonesia, July 17–27, 1990). The second part, which for the most part summarizes Father Joseph A. Komonchak's "God's Gift and Our Task," has been revised considerably. This two-part paper was offered as a contribution to a *Festschrift* on the occasion of the silver jubilee, on March 19, 1999, of Jaime Cardinal Sin's episcopal consecration.

[1]I would like to acknowledge indebtedness to the following publications, where the material here reproduced (with considerable revision) was first published.

International Bulletin of Missionary Research 14 (40th Anniversary Issue, April 1990): 50–53, published by the Overseas Ministries Study Center (OMSC), 490 Prospect Street, New Haven, Connecticut 06511 (U. S. A.). Dr. Gerard H. Anderson, director of the OMSC, serves as editor. The papers on "Mission

(March 19, 1974). I had been present at the ceremony of installation held in the Manila Cathedral; I remember what an "upbeat" moment it had been—one of great expectation, of much hope. As a person, he was so different from the late Cardinal Santos. There was his ready laughter, with his infectious optimism and joy. Something of the same impression was made on the Asian bishops gathered at the Yangminshan meeting in Taiwan (I suppose many of the bishops there wanted to know what sort of man the new archbishop of Manila was).

Cardinal Sin's ministry as head of the archdiocese has included a notable presence in the "FABC area": visits, talks, participation in innumerable meetings and conferences in every major city of the region. Tokyo, Taipei, Singapore, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Calcutta, New Delhi, Bombay, Kuala Lumpur, Kota Kinabalu, Seoul … Shanghai, Beijing, Xiamen … all these cities and many others have been visited by our Cardinal. It was my privilege to have been invited to accompany him on his first visit to China in 1984, and to the Soviet Union in 1987.

Not having been with him at all the FABC meetings he has participated in, I cannot evaluate the impact he has made at them all. But I believe his contribution to the *koinonia*, the fellowship among Asian bishops that the FABC has so greatly facilitated—that his contribution has been noteworthy. At the Third FABC Plenary Assembly in Bangkok in 1982, the bishops present put in first place

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in the 1990s" were later gathered by Gerard H. Anderson, J. M. Phillips and Robert T. Coote in *Mission in the Nineteen 90s* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Win. B. Eerdmans/New Haven, Connecticut: OMSC, 1991).

C. G. Arévalo, S.J., "The Church in Asia and Mission in the 1990s," Fifth Plenary Assembly Workshop Discussion Guide, *FABC Papers* No. 57b (1990), with an appendix by Carolus B. Putranta, S. J., "A Brief Survey of the FABC Documents, 1970–82." The FABC Papers are published by the Office of the Secretary-General, Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), Caine Road, Hong Kong, GPO Box 2984, Hong Kong. Fr. Edward Malone, M. M., serves as editor.

Joseph A. Komonchak, "The Church: God's Gift and Our Task," Address to Church Planners and Council Members, *Origins* XVI (1987): 735–741.

among "the gifts of the FABC" to them, the creation of greater mutual understanding and of "bonds of friendship and solidarity [which have] grown among them" (FABC III, Statement of the Assembly, #3.1).[2]

> Surely for shaping a community among the churches in Asia, this is a wonderful beginning, full of promise for the future, for unity is first of all a oneness of minds and hearts in friendship.

Once again: for the creation of these bonds of friendship and solidarity, I have no doubt Cardinal Sin's contribution has been very significant.

To mention only one personal recollection; it concerns the late (and much loved) Bishop Simon Fung of Kota Kinabalu. Whenever I would meet him, "somewhere else in the world," he would have a new joke or funny story he would want me to bring home to Cardinal Sin; a joyful friendship had developed between them. He was to invite the Cardinal to the solemn consecration of the newly completed cathedral at Kota Kinabalu. More than once he told me of his affection for the Archbishop of Manila. Bishop Simon died young, and his last months, his final illness and death moved all those who were witnesses deeply: his strong and inspiring faith, hope and love shone through so powerfully. I am glad I could have served two or three times as a vehicle of his friendship for Cardinal Sin.

The paper which I here offer as a contribution to this *Festschrift Sin* deals with "The Church in Asia and Mission in the 1990s." Cardinal Sin has several times been asked to speak about the mission of the Church in Asia, in the Philippines and abroad. It would be interesting to draw up a summary of his addresses on this theme. Father James Kroeger's dissertation, *The Philippine Church and Evangelization 1965–1984* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1985), has at least 30 references to Cardinal Sin's words and deeds, and over 180 entries in the bibliography, listing addresses and writings of the 1965–1984 period alone.

These pages present a revision of an article previously published in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (edited by Dr. Gerald

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[2] *For All the Peoples of Asia*, Asian Bishops' Statements on Mission, Community and Ministry, 1970–1983 (Manila: IMC Publications, 1984), FABC III, 83–108, at 90.

H. Anderson of the Overseas Ministries Study Center, New Haven, Connecticut 06511 U.S.A) and of a position paper written for the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the FABC (Bandung, Indonesia, July 17–27, 1990). The second part, summarizing Father Joseph A. Komonchak's "God's Gift and Our Task," has been revised considerably. I thought this paper would be of greater relevance for this volume offered to our Cardinal Archbishop on the silver jubilee of his episcopal consecration. It is a humble piece of work, but its concerns are close to Cardinal Sin's heart, I know. It is a token (such a poor token!) of my gratitude and affection for a man of the Church whose place in the history of the Church in our country is large and secure. Our hope and our prayer is that the years to come may witness an even more outstanding and more enduring presence and action of our Cardinal Archbishop in our land, our Church and our world.

Part One[3]

I. Agenda for Mission

The last two decades have produced so many discussions on the theology of mission and of the Church's missionary activity, so much soul-searching and debate on the role of missionaries and on the tasks of Christian mission as we move toward the third Christian millennium, that we can only repeat, or pickup and choose from, the positions already taken and the agenda already drawn up by countless conferences, seminars and individual theologians. The essays already published in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* on "Mission in the 1990s" have done us the service of summing up much of the enormous contemporary literature on the subject of Christian

[3]Cf. n. 1 above. I have made some minor changes in the text, and have revised some of the notes. I might use this occasion to encourage the reader who is interested in these issues to read Anderson, et al., *Mission in the Nineteen 90s* (publication data indicated in n. 1 above).

mission and the questions it raises today.[4] This contribution thus cannot be expected to say anything really new. It will try instead to present "Mission in the 1990s" from a rather specific Roman Catholic viewpoint and from a definite context: East and Southeast Asia.

For twenty years, Roman Catholic bishops and theologians have struggled with the subject of Christian mission—more precisely with the mission of the Church—in what might be called the "FABC region" (Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences), that part of Asia that Europeans call "the Far East" ("Far from whom?" the renowned Filipino historian, Horacio de la Costa, used to ask). The years following the Vatican Council II saw in Latin America the remarkable emergence of CELAM (Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano) and the significant movements in theology and ecclesial life and praxis that the names of Medellin and Puebla evoke. In a lower-profile way, the FABC assemblies and workshops represent in East, Southeast, and South Asia what CELAM II and CELAM III have meant for the Churches in Latin America. It is appropriate, therefore, to give readers a summary of FABC thought and directions on the theme of Christian mission.[5] It is my conviction that mission in Asia, as far as

[4]"Mission in the 1990s": I. Arthur F. Glasser & II. Michael Amaladoss, *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 13:1 (January 1989). The present contribution owes much to Fr. Amaladoss' more comprehensive treatment of the theme. Cf. also his book, *Mission Today* (Rome: Centrum Ignatianum Spiritualitatis, 1988).

[5]Cf. *For All the Peoples of Asia* I: *The Church in Asia*, Asian Bishops' Statements on Mission, Community and Ministry, 1970–1983 (Manila: International Mission Congress Office, 1984) and *For All the Peoples of Asia* II: *Further Texts*, 1974–1986 (Manila: 1987). These two volumes are being reprinted in one volume, with additional materials (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, and Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992). Cf. also Gaudencio B. Rosales, et al., eds., *Toward a New Age in Mission*, International Mission Congress in Mission, December 2–7, 1979 (Manila: International Mission Congress Office, 1981), Books I–III, 2 vols. For a study of these and other texts, cf. Carolus Putranta, S. J., *The Idea of the Church in the Documents of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) 1970–1982*, unpublished S.T.D. dissertation (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1985), 2 vols., 585 pp.

the Catholic Church is concerned, will be in continuity with these directions, that the 1990s will spell out these orientations in more concrete ways and deepen the theological understanding of these areas of ecclesial thought and practice.[6]

1. Always the point of departure in the thought and texts of the FABC conferences has been the vision of a "new world being born" in Asia since the end of the colonial period in our part of the earth. In "this vast and varied, restless and swiftly-changing world" of nearly three billion people (almost two-thirds of humanity), we see an ever-widening, ever-increasing search, "new today in its breadth, restlessness and urgency," for the reshaping of national societies and human communities "in the midst of so much social change, conflict and struggle, suffering and oppression, inhumanity and death." This search "defines the turbulent history of our time." FABC documents clearly and explicitly affirm that the Church's missionary proclamation and activity must be in close dialogue with the realities of this context and must seek to respond to the "signs of the times."[7]

This perspective, on the part of Roman Catholic Church leaders in Asia, is a relatively new one. Vatican II, especially its pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, provided the necessary intervening moment toward the acceptance of this perspective. If we may draw

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[6]For example, for India, Felix Wilfred, *The Emergent Church in a New India* (Tiruchirappalli: 1988), and, for the Philippines, Brendan Lovett, *On Earth as in Heaven: Corresponding to God in Philippine Context* (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian, 1988). See also Lovett's *Life Before Death: Inculturating Hope* (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian, 1986). Cf. also Bishop Francisco Claver's writings, e.g., *The Stones Will Cry Out: Grassroots Pastorals* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1978); from them a rather explicit ecclesiology of mission may be discerned. Also, Bishop Teodoro C. Bacani, *Towards the Third Millennium—the PCP II Vision* (Manila: 1991), a presentation of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines' vision of the Church's mission for the coming decades, by one of the main drafters of the final document.

[7]Words included within quotation marks are taken from FABC texts, but especially from the "Final Statement of the International Congress on Mission, Manila, 2–7 December 1979." Cf. n. 5 above.

wisdom from a perceptive remark of Cardinal Newman, however, it will take another generation before this point of view becomes universally accepted by Church leadership. But the establishment of this new perspective is henceforth irreversible and decisive.

2. From 1971 onward it has been affirmed—most clearly by the FABC General Assembly of 1974 at Taipei—that the "basic mode of mission in Asia" must be dialogue, *missionary* dialogue, of course. We must explore the interface of the Gospel's meanings and values with the realities of Asia and its many peoples—its histories and cultures, religions and religious traditions, and especially its "poor masses" in every country. These realities—cultures, religions, life situations of poverty—make up the ambiance and context wherein the Gospel is to be proclaimed; these realities define the "place" for the localization of the Church and the inchoate "realization" of God's kingdom.

This overarching program of dialogue with the cultures (i.e., inculturation), with the religions and religious traditions (i.e., inter-religious dialogue) and with "our peoples, especially the poor multitudes in Asia" (i.e., development/liberation), has been the thematic background of both the pastoral and missionary activity of the local Churches of Asia in the past twenty years. In the 1979 International Mission Congress (Manila), it was used as the overall framework for reflection on mission and the tasks of mission in the 1980s. For the 1990s, these dialogues remain the headings under which the concerns and activities of Christian mission are collocated. It is in the endeavor to bring these dialogues into life and practice, and in the ongoing reflection on the processes they have initiated, that the way of theologizing on mission must surely be constructed in the decade to come.

3. The "acting subject" of this missionary work and dialogue must be, concretely and in the first instance, the "local Church." The local Churches and Christian communities constitute the responsible historical subject of mission today in Asia (again, in the first instance). It is they who can discern and work out the way the Gospel is best proclaimed, the Church set up, the values of God's kingdom realized in their own place and time. The local Christian community "becomes

Church" largely through interrelationship with the milieu that is its place and context of mission.[8]

4. The local Church means the entire Christian community, the "entire people of God" in this given time and place. Here the participation of lay people in the Church's missionary activity is especially to be stressed. This total ecclesial community is, in the first instance, "the self-acting and self-realizing subject of the Church's mission"; the proclamation of the Gospel by word, witness and work within the concrete realities of people's life, is a common task shared by all Christians and involving the entire community of faith.

Once again, if the language is not new, the living out in practice of these principles is new and has hardly begun to get off the ground. Here is where one of the most important realities, perhaps the most important reality that has emerged in Christian churches in Asia in the past twenty years, must be made: the grassroots ecclesial communities, or Base Ecclesial Communities (BEC), involving Christians "where they are and where they are at." We may note that although the BEC notion has gained very wide attention and encouragement in official texts and documents, the concrete emergence of BEC in Asia is only at the beginnings, except perhaps in a few areas (e.g., on Mindanao island in the Philippines). Similarly, the wider, fuller participation of lay people in ministries, called for repeatedly in the past twenty years, is only in its early stages, even if these beginnings are significant enough to invite widespread attention and advocacy.[9]

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[8]Joseph A. Komonchak, *Towards a Theology of the Local Church, FABC Papers* No. 42 (Hong Kong: FABC Office of the Secretary-General in Hong Kong, 1986).

The FABC Theological Advisory Committee (TAC) has recently published its study-paper on the theology of the local church in the Asian context (*FABC Papers* No. 60 [Hong Kong: 1991]).

[9]Cf. Niall O'Brien, *Revolution from the Heart* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), a remarkable account of base ecclesial communities (BECs) in the diocese of Bacolod, Negros Island, Philippines, which deserves an even wider audience than it has already reached.

5. "[In] practice … mission is no longer, and can no longer be, a one-way movement from the 'older churches' to ' younger Churches.' … Every local Church is and cannot but be missionary. Every local Church is sent by Christ and the Father to bring the Gospel to its surrounding milieu and to bear it also to all the world. For every local Church, this is a primary task …. [Every] local Church is responsible for its mission, and co-responsible for the mission of its sister Churches. Every local Church, according to its possibilities, must share whatever its gifts are for the needs of other Churches, for mission throughout mankind, for the life of the world."[10]

These words, written in 1979, have already been remarkably verified. Exact figures still have to be gathered, but from general information we know that already "missionaries from the two-thirds world" have taken up the tasks of mission in all continents, and "the internationalization of the missionary movements is the great new fact of our time."[11]

6. "The proclamation of Jesus Christ is the center and primary element of evangelization, without which all other elements will lose their cohesion and validity. In the same way, evangelization will lead to gathering together a believing community, the Church."[12]

Bishops and pastoral leaders in the FABC region and the theologians who work most closely with them have never wavered in the primary role they give to the proclamation of the Gospel and of Christ. It is no secret that much theological writing in our area in the past few years has raised radical questions about the uniqueness

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[10]Cf. "Final Statement of the International Congress on Mission, Manila, 2–7 December 1979." See n. 5 above.

[11]Cf. Arthur Glasser in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 13:1 (January 1989), cited above, n. 4.

[12]"Evangelization in Asia Today," Statement of the FABC All Asian Conference on Evangelization, Suwon, South Korea, August 24–31, 1988 (Shillong, India: FABC Office of Evangelization, 1988), No. 6, *FABC Papers* No. 50, *The Urgency of Christian Mission* (Hong Kong: FABC Secretariat, 1988), 74–78.

of Christ in the history of salvation. A good deal of current thought on this matter focuses on the "myth of Christian uniqueness" thesis. If it is true that a few Asian theologians (in agreement with some of their Western counterparts) propose a full blown pluralistic theology of religions whose bottom line is finally a parity of religions, still the Asian Roman Catholic bishops in their statements on mission and inter-religious dialogue have been consistent in holding on to the "traditional" view on the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the one mediator of God's salvation in history.

The agenda outlined above received remarkable confirmation in the SEDOS Seminar on the Future of Mission (Rome, March 8–19, 1981), which identified the directions foreseen for the coming decades as proclamation, dialogue, inculturation and liberation of the poor. The final conclusions insisted on "the central place of the local Church." Whether or not the FABC texts had a strong influence on the SEDOS seminar is not really important; what is significant is the near-total agreement regarding the directions for the future of mission.[13]

II. The Doing Remains

In the theology of mission, then, it is clearly on this same FABC itinerary that the interaction of praxis-reflection-policy-action must move. And "all the doing remains."[14]

Inculturation has been very much present in theological discussion since the 1960s, but its implementation has not really moved forward in a genuinely significant or decisive way. The liberation theology

[13]Cf. part 3: "Agenda for Future Planning, Study and Research in Mission," from the Research Seminar on the Future of Mission, March 8–19, 1981, Rome, Italy, in Mary Motte & Joseph Lang, eds., *Mission in Dialogue* (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis, 1982), 633–649. Also James Scherer, "Roman Catholic Mission Theology: The Impact of Vatican II," in *Gospel, Church and Kingdom: Comparative Studies in World Mission Theology* (Minneapolis: Augsburg), esp. 196–232.

[14]John Winjngaards, "New Ways for Mission," *The Tablet* (London) (October 22, 1988): 1208–1209. Cf. the study by Father Putranta, referred to in n. 5, above, and the recent work of Father Amaladoss, n. 4, above.

breakthrough and subsequent vigorous debate on it now have been at the forefront of attention for more than fifteen years. This movement without doubt has been a major dimension of the ecclesial/missionary life of our time; the contribution of the Latin American Churches has been invaluable for a rethinking of mission. Liberation theology's energies are not spent, and for the decade to come we await continuing development and greater participation by other sectors (Asia, Africa, etc.).[15]

Inter-religious dialogue has gradually but steadily been moving toward front-and-center in the past few years. It will surely assume larger proportions in the coming decade. The debate on "the myth of Christian uniqueness" is already productive—not only of unsettling questions—but of a deepening re-examination of the person and the message of Jesus and of the salvation found in him. In this discussion of the very meaning of Christianity, the caution must be repeated that constant contact needs to be maintained with those actually engaged in missionary life and action and with "practicing believers" in other religious traditions. A mere exchange of ideas largely elaborated in academic circles begs to become a game of chess instead of a genuine service to mission in our time.

The Asian Theological Advisory Commission (TAC) of the Asian Bishops' Conferences, constituted in 1985 to advise the FABC, after informally sounding out the Asian episcopal conferences to find out

[15]Cf. for instance, "Journeying Together toward the Third Millennium," Final Statement of the Fifth Plenary Assembly of the FABC, Bandung, Indonesia, July 27, 1990, in *Asia Focus* (August 24, 1990), UCAN, Hong Kong, section 60/D, where "companionship, servanthood, compassion" are words charged with liberation theology resonances, softened in a language the FABC documents have consistently used when dealing with liberation theology themes. Also, "Journeying Together toward the Third Millennium," 7.3.2.2. In the section on "A Spirituality for Our Times," the same transposition of language takes place. Cf. Cardinal Stephen Kim, 19–22 (well worth reflecting on), Aloysius Pieris, "Human Rights Language and Liberation Theology," 299–310 (as always, stimulating), and also Samuel Rayan's contribution, "Wrestling in the Night," 450–469 (with his accustomed eloquence), in March H. Ellis & Otto Maduro, *The Failure of Liberation Theology: Essays in Honor of Gustavo Gutierrez* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1989).

what the pastoral leaders in the region believed were the most crucial and most urgent theological concerns, placed two themes—the theology of inter-religious dialogue, and the theology of the local Church—as the top items on its agenda.

The concern for the local Church is an attempt to understand the situation of Church communities on various levels in the present period of the Church's history in Asia. In many ways it is an effort at coming to grips with what the mission and task of each local Christian community must be, in the most concrete manner possible, as it tries to live the imperatives of the Gospel and insert the Gospel's meanings and values in the human milieu whose common history it shares. This will obviously mean a deepening of understanding, not only of the milieu of proclamation, witness and service, but of the concretion (or incarnation) of the Gospel's meanings and values in a given time, history and culture. Hence the concern that inculturation and dialogue, as well as human and societal development and liberation, become concrete in "the living out of its own particular mission, by the local Church." The fulfillment of Christian mission is the way to self-realization of the Church as authentic bearer of the gospel in its being and life, in its own place and time.

Our planning for mission activity should start from below. What we should do in a particular situation cannot be determined *a priori* from above. It should be the fruit of an analysis of the situation, of the kind of people with whom we are working, of their real needs. It is by involving ourselves with them and experiencing life with them that we shall be able to discern the will of God in that situation. Mission is not bringing God to a place where he is not present, but helping people to discover and listen to God who is there, perhaps hidden or dimly perceived or seen differently, but who is calling them all that time towards a dialogue leading them to fuller life.

Such a mission can be best accomplished only by a local Church. … Each Church is on mission and is co-responsible for mission all over the world. So instead of the more familiar concept of "foreign mission" we will have to be accustomed to the concept of collaboration

in mission. The vision of the Church Universal as a communion of local Churches will also be manifested as a communion in mission.[16]

III. Some Enduring "Musts" for Mission

At this point I would like to recall yet older, more traditional things. They center around the spirituality of mission.

1. The thrust of grassroots ecclesial communities is a return to the most fundamental of Christian basics: *koinonia*, the Trinitarian life experienced and shared with the community of faith, hope and love. Mission today must be about the creation of Christian community, about the building up of human solidarity, beginning on the grassroots level. Hence the continuing importance of "base communities" and what they concretely mean for communion and participation.[17]

The realization of community, sociologically speaking, will differ from place to place, from society to society, from culture to culture, from "level to level." Community is not a univocal term, and its

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[16]Joseph A. Komonchak's "field theory" on the self-realization of the local Church is surely a most important contribution to the discussion on the theology of the local church (*FABC Papers* No. 42 [Hong Kong: FABC Secretariat, 1986]). We will refer to Father Komonchak's work in the second part of our paper. Father Komonchak participated in the discussions preceding the final formulation and publication of the Theses on the local church issued by the Theological Advisory Commission (TAC) of the FABC. Some excellent material will also be found in the book of Severino Dianich, *Chiesa Estroversa. Una ricerca sulla svolta dell'ecclesiologia contemporanea* (Torino: Edizione Paoline, 1987), esp. 110–122, and in Amaladoss, *Mission Today*, 164–166 (cf. n. 3, above), from which the quotation is taken. Cf. the really excellent work of the Italian theologian Bruno Forte, *The Church: Icon of the Trinity*, An introduction to Ecclesiology, trans. E. P. Hontiveros, C. G. Arévalo & F. Gustilo (Makati, Metro Manila: St. Paul Publications, 1990), 84–104 (on the local church), and 149–164 (the appendix from J. A. Komonchak).

[17]Niall O'Brien's book, *Revolution from the Heart*, spells out the revolution of hope that these base ecclesial communities can awaken. Cf. also Marcello de C. Azevedo, *Basic Ecclesial Communities in Brazil: The Challenge of a New Way of Being Church*, trans. John Drury (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1987).

realization will take on diverse concrete expressions. Perhaps the word *solidarity*, so frequently in the vocabulary of John Paul II, best translates what is meant here.[18]

2. In his mission letter issued in 1975, Pope Paul VI spoke of the need of radical Christian witness for our time: the witness of totally given, self-sacrificing love. In the surfeit of words in our age, he said, only those teachers who teach by deed will be heard, or who join the witness of their lives to their words.[19]

3. Lastly, and in the same vein, we must affirm what a work on the theology of mission published not too long ago calls "mission as mystic itinerary."[20] Today it is the sense of God as *mystery*, beyond human concepts and formulations, rooted in the personal experience of faith, that characterizes the search for God, for the hidden God of our age. Face-to-face with the radical challenges to Christian mission, the bearers of the Gospel in the midst of any society—of other faiths or of unbelief—must speak from an authentic experience of God, personal or within community, or it will fail to gain a hearing. This experience must arise today and in the decades to come, as it has always arisen, from a living out of the Paschal Mystery in one's own life—in prayer and contemplation, in the labors of witnessing to the Gospel, in discernment in the Spirit, in the fundamental dedication to and involvement with the poor, the suffering, the broken, and the powerless in this world—"to the uttermost limit of loving" (John 13: 1). This has always been the authentic way of Christian mission; in the end, there is no other way.

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[18]On diverse realizations of community, see *The Church as a Community of Faith, FABC Papers* No. 29 (1982): 15. On Pope John Paul II and "solidarity," cf. his encyclical, *Solicitudo Rei Socialis*, for the twentieth anniversary of *Populorum Progressio*, December 30, 1987 (Vatican City: 1987).

[19]Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (on evangelization of the world in our time) (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1975), no. 41. Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (Rome: 1990), nos. 42–43 (on witness).

[20]Pierre Schouver, *L'Eglise et la Mission, Croire et comprendre* (Paris: Centurion, 1977), 140–142. Cited in Rosales, et al., *Toward a New Age in Mission* I, Book II, 152–153.

The work of mission is finally the work of the Spirit of God.[21] In the 1990s, as in the past, we will seek to discern both the signs of the times and the ways by which we must respond to them. But in all this we must seek to be obedient to the Spirit, for in that obedience alone can we second God's renewing of the face of the earth.

Part Two

From what has been said in the previous section, we may (I believe) legitimately conclude that there is really no need for a "new ecclesiological vision," in the sense of something hitherto not attended to, something hitherto not discovered. True, the study of the FABC documents undertaken by Carolus Putranta reveals (Putranta holds) several *lacunae* in their ecclesiological checklist, e.g., a stronger ecumenical dimension, a more organic synthesis, an explicitation of "a method for Asian theological reflection," some guidelines for action in conflict-situations, further spelling out of forms of community for the local church. We can accept Putranta's comments, noting however that they constitute a list of items for a future agenda.[22] But substantially the overall vision stands.

There exists a good number of books and articles which develop in some detail the responses called for by contemporary situations in the FABC region.[23]

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[21]See Leslie Newbigin, *Mission in Christ's Way,* Bible Studies (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1988). John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, III, 21–30. See also Krister Stendhal, *Energy for Life*, Risk Series (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1990).

[22]Carolus Putranta, "A Brief Survey of the FABC Documents, 1970–1982," in *For All the Peoples of Asia* II (IFAPA III, Volume Two: *Further Texts*) (Manila: IMC Publications, 1987), 438–446, reprinted as an appendix in *FABC Papers* No. 57b for FABC V (Bandung, Indonesia: 1990).

[23]We may simply refer here to the Workshop Discussion Guides prepared by *FABC Papers* for FABC V, e.g., Robert Hardawirjana, *The Church before the Changing Asian Societies of the 1990s* (*FABC Papers* No. 57a), and Michael Amaladoss, *The Church and Pluralism in the Asia of the 1990s* (*FABC Papers* No. 57b).

These responses are, *inter alia*, renewed and ongoing proclamation, participation in the tasks of human development and in the creation of new human community, the enactment of the solidarity which John Paul II's *Solicitudo rei socialis* calls for, and so forth. The "models" (so much used in North American ecclesiology) of Church as "companion-on-the-way," as servant, as prophet, as itself "dialogues," as community of disciples, etc., are recalled too, as diverse modes of response. These perspectives are surely not new.[24] These have been in our conceptuality and language for some years now, even if their more exact significance and relevance are sharpened for the present and its developing concerns.

Is there some way of thinking on the church-in-mission which might be especially useful for our reflection? Is there some way that might bring us "beyond" even the preferred models of the Church in the last two decades, and which might enable us to see ecclesial praxis as deriving from a unified conception?

I. Building up of the Local Church

We might go back to the first FABC plenary assembly in Taipei (1974) to find there our point of departure.

> To preach the Gospel in Asia today we must make the message and life of Christ truly incarnate in the minds and lives of our peoples. The primary focus of our task of evangelization, then, at this time in our history, is the building up of a truly local Church.
>
> *For the local Church is the realization and the enfleshment of the Body of Christ in a given people, a given place and time* (FABC I, FAPA I, 29).[25]

In a sense, our task, twenty years after FABC's first "conception," is to return to the prophetic insight of our first beginnings. A fuller,

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[24]Cf. Edmund Hill, O.P., "Church," in J. A. Komonchak, M. Collins & D. Lane, eds., *New Dictionary of Theology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press/Michael Glazier, 1987), 185–201, and Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1974).

[25]*For All the Peoples of Asia* I, First Plenary Assembly, FABC (Manila: IMC Publications, 1984), 29.

richer grasp of what "local Church" means, what this calls for from us in our communities today, provides us with some sort of unitary vision, and (properly understood) even traces an itinerary for FABC in the future. From such an understanding, projected onto our context(s) and interfacing with them, we can re-imagine the kind of Church we want to build, by the power of the Spirit of Jesus, in the years ahead of us.

The Theological Advisory Commission (TAC) of the FABC has recently completed and published its theses on the local Church in the Asian context, the fruit of five years of study and discussion. This text introduces us to a more developed reflection on the local church and its theology—incorporating much of what contemporary theological study is saying on this theme, but saying it from the perspective of the local churches of our region.[26]

II. "Field Theory" of the Local Church (An Excursus)

At this point I believe it is not only useful but even necessary to present a sketch of a theology of the local church. I here summarize briefly an address given by Father Joseph A. Komonchak of the Catholic University of America to church planners and church council members some years ago (in 1987, later published in *Origins* April 2, 1987 [Washington, D.C.: NC Documentary Service]).[27]

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[26]"Theses on the Local Church," *FABC Papers* No. 60, issued by the Theological Advisory Commission (TAC) of the Federation, which has been meeting annually since 1986. Father J. A. Komonchak of the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C., wrote the first study-paper on the theme, also published by *FABC Papers* No. 42 (Hong Kong: FABC, 1986).

[27]Komonchak, "The Church: God's Gift and Our Task," 735–741. Cf. Forte, *The Church: Icon of the Trinity*, 84–104, 138–140, 148–164. As noted above, Fr. Komonchak's work provided a basic reference for the FABC/TAC's "Theses on the Local Church" (cf. n. 26 above). It is difficult to improve on Fr. Komonchak's presentation, and it is very difficult to compress the address here summarized, without notably reducing its intelligibility. Fr. Komonchak's "popularization" is already a digest of his fuller, more leisurely exposition. I can thus only refer the reader to his other writings. Cf. Joseph A. Komonchak, "The Local Realization

Here, then, is a brief presentation.

Komonchak begins with this as an initial question: Should we perceive the Church as "something we make," something that is ours, or rather "something we receive," something that comes from God, something that is Christ's? "Is the Church God's gift, or is it rather our task?" The Second Vatican Council, of course, does not accept such an "either-or." No Catholic view can.

The Council's own statement on the fundamental issue was far more balanced:

> The Society structured with hierarchical organs and the mystical body of Christ, the visible society and the spiritual community, the earthly Church and the Church endowed with heavenly riches, are not to be thought of as two realities, but as one complex reality which comes together from a human and a divine element. (*Lumen Gentium*, 8)

> [Komonchak continues] This text is the equivalent for the Church of the statement of the Council of Chalcedon about Christ. Two sets of statements must be made about the Church: It is clearly a human community, with structural and societal elements, subject to the conditions and laws of human life here on earth, like many other human communities in its features. But it is also the people of God, the body of Christ, the temple of the Spirit. And just as the two sets of statements about the humanity and the divinity of Christ must be—asserted of one and the same Jesus of Nazareth without confusion or division, so also it is of one and the same Church that the two sets of statements, without confusion or division, must be asserted which describe its human character and its unique transcendence. And the chief task of the ecclesiologist is to try to understand how both statements can be made intelligibly about the same reality, how it is, to return to my title, that the Church is both God's gift—the mystery of his life communicated to us in Word and grace—and our task—a human community constituted by the faith, hope and love of its members and by the social and interpersonal relationships those founding acts

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of the Church," in G. Alberigo, J. P. Jossua & J. A. Komonchak, *The Reception of Vatican II* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1987), 77–90, where many relevant bibliographical references (e.g., to H. Legrand, E. Lanne, H. de Lubac, J. Grootaers, et al.) are given.

> presuppose and engender. Or, in still other terms, how is an integral ecclesiology both sociological and supernatural?
>
> Without becoming highly technical or explaining all the methodological options which lie behind it, let me at least attempt a way of thinking about the Church which I believe offers some hope for going beyond the facile dichotomies and also for intelligibly relating the two necessary elements in any solution whether theoretical or practical.

First of all, the Church is a creature. It is the People of God, the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Spirit. But it is not itself God, Christ, or Spirit.

The Church is God's gift. Its permanent origin is out of the word of God and the grace of God: in what God has done in Christ and continues to do in the Spirit. The coming-to-be of the Church anywhere, and its continuing to exist anywhere, depends initially and finally on what God does and gives.

The Church is the sacrament, i.e., sign and instrument, of God's continued presence and action in the world. As a social and historical instrument, it has as its irreplaceable and unchangeable elements, the apostolic creed, the ministry and liturgy; these we receive from those who made up the Church before us.

The Church is Christ's sign and instrument precisely as a human community of men and women. As a human community it is "all too like other human communities" among which it lives, just as Jesus was fully a human being, "like us in all things save only sin."

Hence we must consider what a human community is, and how it is constituted, how it realizes itself as a human community. Let me cite Komonchak directly.

> It is helpful here to turn to the heuristic description of community elaborated by Bernard Lonergan. For Lonergan, a community is an achievement of common meanings and values. A group of people has some common field of experience, which they talk about and reflect on together, which they come to understand in common or at least complementary ways, about which they make common judgments, so that out of their common experience, understanding and judgments, they can act in common pursuit of common goals. Without this

> common experience, understanding, judgment and commitment, there is no community, but just an aggregate of men and women linked only spatially or temporally.

The historical origins of the Church provide a paradigm for understanding how the Church is constituted by the Word and the grace of God.

A group of Palestinian men and women came together only because of the preaching of one Jesus of Nazareth. They followed Him, listened to His message about the reign of God as coming near. They related what they heard from him to their own religious ideas, values and hopes. They became his disciples. They hoped he would deliver Israel as the one sent by God. But when he was arrested and condemned to death, their hopes were shattered; most abandoned him and his cause. But shortly afterwards they came to believe that God raised Jesus from the dead. Their belief in his resurrection brought them together again. They shared in the experience of a new and transformed existence in the Spirit. Their renewed encounter with Jesus, once crucified but risen, and recognized by them as Lord and Messiah, reconstituted them as a community which came to call itself the Church.

This community of men and women who experienced what they experienced, who came to understand what they understood or believed, who spoke of Jesus as they spoke of Him, thus became a new and distinct community in the ancient world. The faith of this community was utterly dependent on the word lived and spoken, and on the Spirit of love poured out in them. Yet they believed, they began to hope, they learned how to love as Jesus did. What God had created and given was the new fellowship (*koinonia*) in the Spirit *constituted* by their common faith, hope and love.

And what they had received they undertook to share with others (cf. 1 Jn. 1: 1–4). The Church created by the encounter with Christ became the instrument of a new encounter with Him for those who themselves cannot see and hear and touch what that first generation of Christians experienced. That first generation spoke so that the fellowship created out of its originating experience could continue to generate the same joyful fellowship with God and His Son.

> Under God, as the Venerable Bede said, "Every day the Church gives birth to the Church." God gives birth to the Church, but God does not give it birth as Father except through the maternal acts of the Church's proclamation, worship, love and service. The Church does not exist unless we contribute what we can—our faith, our hope, our love, our service, by which the Church is built up. And a new generation of believers is not born as the fellowship unless our community and our actions within it provide a living and powerful matrix for the birth of their faith. We are the Church as the people gathered into the fellowship of the Spirit, the *ecclesia congregata*; and, children of the preceding generation, we are the Church which must gather a new generation into God's people, the *ecclesia congregans*.

From the foregoing it would then seem evident: always and anywhere, the Church is at once *God's gift*, and *our task* and *our achievement*. Without believers who hope in Christ and the Spirit and who love God and love their fellows because of God's love for us, there would be no Church. The Spirit incorporates us into Christ, but we ourselves build up the body of Christ. We are brought into the temple of the Spirit, but we ourselves are the living stones of which it is constructed.

A complementary way of considering the Church as God's gift and our task is had by reflecting on the "two moments" in the coming-to-be of the Church (*ecclesiogenesis*).

We posit two elements of this genesis: an objective one, and a subjective one.

> The objective element is constituted by the Gospel of Jesus Christ as mediated through the Scriptures and fellowship of the Church. It is objective in the sense that it stands over and against every new generation of men and women as the representation of God's self-gift to us in Christ and the Spirit, for us to receive or to reject. This is the dimension of the Church that is not ours to refashion, but which we can only receive. And this objective dimension is what constitutes the unity of the apostolic Church across the centuries of history and across the diverse cultures of our own day.
>
> But this objective element by itself does not constitute the Church. Of itself it is only the potential form of an actual community of believers. The actual Church comes to be only when it is received and appropriated by and in the faith, hope and love of a group of men and

> women. This living faith, hope and love of the members thus enter in as constitutive dimensions of the Church's genesis. This word of God itself does not constitute the Church; the Church exists only where the word is believed. God's love for us does not itself constitute the Church; the Church exists only when that love creates the loving fellowship in the Spirit. God's gift does not constitute the Church without the individual and communal acts which that gift enables us to accomplish.

At this point we come then to *the local church*, to which we have been moving (emphasis ours).

> This is why the genesis of the Church always occurs locally. The Church is born out of the communication and appropriation of the word of Christ and the grace of the Spirit. But the word is always communicated and received in concrete situations in which it is presented and received as light for the questions of existence asked by specific communities of men and women. The grace of God is always offered to and received by individuals and communities of believers whose need for forgiveness and new life are displayed in quite specific threats of sin and death. The fellowship of love emerges in communities which specific kinds of alienation have divided. Because there is no word of faith in the abstract, no grace or forgiveness in the abstract, no reconciled fellowship in the abstract, there is no Church in the abstract; there are only local communities of believing men and women. And this explains the remarkable interest since the Council in the theology of the local Church.

The question of local church vis-à-vis the Catholic or Universal Church surfaces here.

> The Church is, of course, catholic or universal. But the Church Universal is not some other Church, existing somewhere over and above the local Churches. The Church is universal because everywhere the same Gospel and the same Spirit have created the same fellowship of faith, hope and love. The one and universal Church is precisely what is realized in the variety of the local churches. Its unity is assured by the common reference to the same founding Gospel and engendering Spirit, its catholicity by the reception and appropriation of Gospel and Spirit in the various communities of faith in all the many varied situations of the world. The Church Universal is constituted in and out of the local churches: it is the communion of the local churches.[28]

[28]Komonchak, "The Church: God's Gift and Our Task." On local church and universal Church, cf. J. A. Komonchak, "The Church Universal as the

Komonchak can now bring his exposition to term. All this shows us that "the Church is generated every day in quite specific communities of men and women." Komonchak sums up what he has been saying, with this conclusion.

> The mystery of the Church does not occur in some ethereal place, halfway between us and God. It is realized here, among us, through us, in human history and as part of its dialectic. And it is not some purely transcendent achievement in which only God is at work and we are only passive recipients. The mystery, rather, is precisely in what God effects, in what his word and grace enable us to accomplish through our faith, hope, love and service. As grace does not destroy but creates genuine human freedom in the individual, so also the gift we receive as the Church is the Church we build by our common acts.

Certain corollaries are drawn from this "field theory" of the self-constitution of the Church regarding the tasks involved in serving this self-constitution, this genesis of the Church. First, since it takes place when the mystery of God transforms the mystery of man, we are merely servants of mystery. Second, everything—everything—in the Church is to be measured by its reference to the genesis of the Church out of the word and love of God. Third, because the genesis of the Church is the genesis of a human community, any serious study of the Church may not ignore the contribution of the human sciences of community. Finally, fourth, over the entire "process" stands the Cross of Jesus Christ and his Paschal Mystery.

Komonchak's fifth and sixth corollaries are particularly relevant to our reflection, and we may be allowed to conclude this lengthy excursus by citing two final paragraphs from Komonchak's study.

> Fifth, the Church always comes to be locally. It does not occur on some abstract universal level or in diocesan parochial planning offices. It occurs when, perhaps as a result of our efforts, the word of God is preached pertinently and effectively, when the liturgy is celebrated joyfully and attractively, when a genuine community of reconciliation appears in our

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Communion of Local Churches," *Concilium* (June 1981): 30–35. The valuable ecclesiological work of H. Legrand, "La réalisation de l'Eglise en un lieu," in B. Lauret & F. Refoul, eds., *Initiation a la pratique de la Theologie*, Tome III, Dogmatique 2 (Paris: Cerf, 1983), and J. M. Tillard, "La communion visible des Eglises," chap. IV, in *Eglise d'Eglises, l'ecclesiologie de communion* (Paris: Cerf, 1987), 324ff.

> broken world. The real action takes place outside our offices, where the drama of sin and grace is played out in the lives of people.
>
> Sixth, what we are to think about and plan for in our work, therefore, is how to help the genesis of the Church to occur in the particular times and places over which we have some responsibility. That should be our focus. And the kinds of questions we need to ask are: what are the specific questions of meaning, individual and social, that a proclamation of the word of God needs to address? What light do they throw on the Gospel and the Gospel on them? What are the temptations to resignation or despair to which the Christian message of hope must be addressed? What personal and social addictions do people need to be freed from? What are recurrent sins that need forgiveness, the egoisms and group biases that love needs to overcome? What are the divisions among people that need to be healed? Who are the contemporary equivalents of the Jew and the Greek, the man and the woman, the freeman and the slave whom Paul said were all one in Christ? And these are just particular ways of expressing the one great and basic question: what must we do in order for the world to see in and through our communities what God has already done in Christ and promises us in the Spirit?[29]

III. Local Church and Inculturation, Communion, Participation, Mission

For many Asian theologians, building up the local Church, or the genesis of the local church, is seen as another way of describing the process of *inculturation*, seen in its wider meaning. For this "self-realization of the local Church" in each of our diverse "places" will mean the actualization of a Church not "for" all peoples and cultures only, but truly "of" all peoples and cultures: of each people, with its own history and tradition, with its own concerns and questions, its own project in history.[30]

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[29]Komonchak, "The Church: God's Gift and Our Task."

[30]Cf. n. 27, above. Also Karl Rahner, "Basic Theological Interpretation of the Second Vatican Council," in *Concern for the Church*, Theological Investigations XX (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 77–89. L. Richard, D. Harrington & J. O'Malley, eds., *Vatican II: The Unfinished Agenda. A Look to the Future* (New York/Mahwah:

This means making "total ecclesiology" actual in each of our communities: i.e., that every one of the faithful, to the extent of each one's possibilities, participates in the life and activity of the community of faith. "Communion and participation," so often spoken of with regard to ecclesial communities, must move from word-and-concept merely, to real life, in interchange, in action, in mission. Only through the ever-fuller activation for communion and participation—especially with regard to lay people—does any community *become Church* (in the sense given above).

Another way of saying this might be taken from Jürgen Moltmann, writing on the "servant Church" in 1979:

> My thesis is a simple one: the local congregation is the future of the Church. The renewal of the Church, finally, depends on what happens at the grassroots level. And renewal at this level awaits, it seems to me, the conscious reclaiming of the gifts of the Spirit on the part of the laity. These gifts, which in the New Testament are always identified as signs of the coming Kingdom of God, are given to the whole people of God for ministry, for *diakonia*.[31]

This same demand for "communion and participation" was central in FABC II in Bangkok, in the plenary assembly of 1982 (here we see once again that the past assemblies have consistently sounded the right notes and formulated the right imperatives).[32]

> In our day-to-day living with each other we have inadequately manifested true communion and participation …. (9.2)
>
> Sometimes organs of lay participation and co-responsibility have not been established, or are left inactive and impeded, existing only in name. Often enough the gifts and charisms of the laity—both women and men—are not duly recognized, welcomed or activated in significant functions and tasks of ministry and apostolate. (9.5)

Paulist, 1987), esp. 3–8 (the essays by Leo J. Donovan), 9–21 (Karl Rahner himself), and 57–70 & 93–112 (the two contributions of L. Richard).

[31]Jürgen Moltmann, "The Diaconal Church in the Context of the Kingdom of God," in *Hope for the Church* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), 21–36, at 21.

[32]Cf. FAPA I (see n. 25, above), 89–102, Final Statement, nos. 9.2 and 9.3.

> We have seen … how the local Church must be a community of graced communion rooted in the life of the Trinity; a community of prayer and contemplation, and of sacramental celebration and life centered around the Eucharist. It must be defined by its life of faithful discipleship in the Gospel, patterned on the Paschal Mystery of Jesus, "a community for others …." We have realized that genuine participation and co-responsibility must be the essential elements of its existence, and theological reflection and discernment, integral components of its life.[33]

We will note that FABC III stressed that what our treatises on the Church call "communion" must become each day a reality in its life. How? Through finding and activating all the charisms of the community, through creatively bringing these charisms into action, in mutual collaboration and coordination, in effective co-responsibility. The final responsibility for this rests with the ordained ministry, true, but even here there are ways of exercising this responsibility. We are to remember that the bishop and priest embody not "a synthesis of ministry" but a "ministry of synthesis" (Bruno Forte). In a way, the whole point here is "empowering the faithful"—making our lay people, above all, active subjects, acting subjects, in the full sense of that term in contemporary thought.

FABC III was clear-sighted and insistent too in saying that local communities cannot "become Church" except in and through mission. If, according to Pope Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, evangelization is the very definition of the Church's task, no Church can "come into being" without mission. As with human persons, so with the Church, "it is our *praxis* which makes us what we become."

IV. Return to Images/Models

Having tried to understand the dynamic of "building up the local church" or of "serving the genesis of the local church," we may be allowed at this point to return to models-and-images. Given our present day context(s) in our various regions, and the signs of the times we discern in them, what sort of image of the Church should we keep

[33]Final Statement, no. 15.

before our eyes to "charge our imagination" in the years ahead of us (if we have not already kept our eyes on it in the years past)?[34]

A. The Church as "Fellow Wayfarer"— As Companion on the Journey

For our basic premise, I believe, we can take Pope John Paul II's master principle in ecclesiology, "man is the way that the Church must walk" (*Redemptor hominis*, 14).

> … Man is the primary route the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission; he is the primary and fundamental way of the Church, the way traced out by Christ Himself ….
>
> This man is the way for the Church—a way that, in a sense, is the basis of all the other ways the Church must walk, because with man—every man without exception whatever—Christ is in a way united, even when man is unaware of it.[35]

From that premise, to speak of "being with" as the basic stance of the Church, i.e., to be companion, *acompañar*, on the journey of history, is only to transpose the principle in terms of a cognate image.

Acompañar is thus "being with" on the journey, walking with, and—as in the Emmaus narrative—sharing the fellow-wayfarer's story or situation, his sorrow or joy, disappointment and disillusionment, expectation and hope. It means also speaking the word of meaning

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[34]Some remarks made by J. A. Komonchak in "The Church: God's Gift and Our Task" are worth noting here. "As commonly received both by theologians and lay people, however, I believe that the models approach has not proven adequate either for ecclesiology or for Church life." Komonchak points out that the danger of "theological reductionism" has not been absent in the use of these models. "… the rightful stress on these theological notions has sometimes not been accompanied by any serious effort to show they apply to the quite concrete groups of men and women which constitute the Church" ("The Church: God's Gift and Our Task," 737–738). He also notes that "Father Dulles appears to be convinced that it is neither possible nor desirable to transcend the plurality of models, *on which I would disagree with him*" (italics are mine).

[35]Pope John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis* (Rome: 1979), 14. Cited in "Journeying Together toward the Third Millennium," D, 64.

which enkindles the heart ("Were not our hearts burning within us?"), and it leads, in the end, to community—in faith, hope and love.

During the last years of the Marcos regime in the Philippines, when an increasingly all-pervading sense of hopelessness became present, and more and more people began opting for violent solutions, priests and religious were urged simply to keep alive a sense of hope among people, the sense that—with God's help—with prayer and patience, with persevering effort to foster change, things could still be turned around: that it was still possible to raise up a future for our people. Perhaps only then did many of us understand what the duty and service hope itself could be, grounded on our Christian faith.

B. The Church of the Suffering Servant

There are not a few among us who believe that the Asian situation(s) of today—situations of great poverty and suffering, of the privation and oppression for so many multitudes—demand a "more dramatic" stance from the Christian community. This response, it would seem, is present already in many statements from Christian groups (e.g., religious men and women, episcopal conferences, etc.) in Asia, and even explicitly or implicitly present in some of the FABC texts. *Acompañar* (which can suggest even going along on a holiday excursion) seems to some not to summon that sense of urgency, of tragic circumstances present around us, pressing down on our poorer people. Thus some believe that we are compelled as Church to turn rather to the biblical image of the Suffering Servant in Second Isaiah for a model of the Church we must become.

The servant model is often merely that of *diaconal* Church, which is ordinarily taken to mean that all the faithful participate in the Church's ministry: a Church in its entirety a ministerial Church. But the "Church of the Servant" is the Church of the Suffering Servant, with all that the name implies.[36]

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[36]Brendan Lovett, "The Servant," in *On Earth as in Heaven: Corresponding to God in Philippine Context* (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretian, 1988), 13–15. Father Lovett's entire book (a slim one of only 79 pages) deserves careful study: it is difficult, but rewarding. For the theme of the Suffering Servant and its meaning

1. The Suffering Servant is seen as "the figure of those who correspond to God in history, … i.e., those who refuse to meet evil with evil, … who participate rather in God's redemptive action for the healing of the world, overcoming evil with good." "The servant does the unthinkable thing. He shows that the way forward is for the people to take on their own shoulders the burden of historical evil and creatively turn it around."

2. The formula given us in the Scriptures of the Suffering Servant is God's own solution to the problem of evil; the Church is asked to identify with it. The operative image to nourish in our minds here is not that of divinely empowered Rambos, whose energies are fired by hatred, but rather that of the Servant who absorbs the evil in himself without a retaliation or violence. "The Songs of the Servant suggest that the people called by God should find their destiny in this role. The Church only exists in order to embody this divine solution to historical evil" (Brendan Lovett).

The Servant is to carry out his mission "not in a world where evil has been abolished; it is to be in a world of continuing evil. If the Servant is not prepared to carry out his mission under these circumstances, there will be no historical salvation." "In the living of the Servant, who stands only for life, never death, who does not condemn and refuses to retaliate with evil for the viciousness of the people, they saw how a space for life could be opened up for everybody, a space for peace."[37]

3. Jesus came to realize the servanthood of the Isaiahn Servant in Himself. He came to fulfill the Servant's task in His own life, and above all in His passion, death and resurrection.

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for the Church, *vid*. writings of Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellacuria for the Latin American context, e.g., Sobrino, *Jesus in Latin America* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1987), for a briefer presentation of themes more fully developed in his longer works, and Ellacuria, one of the Jesuits killed in San Salvador, "El pueblo crucificado," in *Conversion de la Iglesia al Reino de Dios, Para anunciarlo y realizarlo en la historia* (Santander: Sal Terrae), 21–53.

[37]Lovett, *On Earth as in Heaven*, 13–15.

The Church, in turn, is in history to follow the path of the Servant, of Jesus, for the life of the world. "The Church is the movement within history of those willing to suffer for the sake of life, confronting evil and injustice … until justice be established on earth."[38]

4. What does this mean for the Church in the concrete? In varying degrees of clarity this has been (as noted above) implicitly or explicitly articulated in statements and pronouncements by Christians and by the Churches in the last twenty years or so. It has been formulated by the Latin American Bishops (CELAM II and III) as "the preferential option" or the preferential love of the poor, a position substantially confirmed by the present Holy Father many times over. It has been called also "solidarity with the poor, with the outcast, the victims."[39]

5. Perhaps one way, more generally acceptable, of spelling out how the Church in Asia can become "the Church of the Servant" is by affirming that the most important imperative for us is to develop in our communities a living out of a Christology of compassion, *a discipleship of Jesus as the compassion of God*, an ecclesial spirituality of compassion.

C. The Community of "Jesus, the Compassion of God"— an Ecclesiology and Spirituality of Compassion

It will be worthwhile, it would seem, for us to end this reflection with some paragraphs on "Jesus, the Compassion of God." In this theme many will find a key which opens the door to a perspective we are seeking (This third image does not differ greatly from that of the Suffering Servant. If the theme of the Suffering Servant, especially in some strands of liberation theology, seems to carry a freight of struggle and even conflict, the image of the community which bears Jesus, the Compassion of God, into the world, could hold within it all

[38]Lovett, *On Earth as in Heaven*, 13–15.

[39]Donald Dorr, *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching* (Maryknoll: New York, 1983), and Matthew Lamb, *Solidarity with Victims: Toward a Theology of Social Transformation* (New York: Crossroad, 1982). See the two instructions from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith: "Libertatis nuntius" (On Certain Aspects of the Theology of Liberation, 1984) and "Libertatis conscientia" (On Christian Freedom and Liberation, 1986).

that has been said under the preceding model, adding to it a decisive note of nonviolence—as well as the mark of the mercy of the God and Father of Jesus).

We summarize here some pertinent passages from Monika Hellwig on this theme.[40]

- Compassion is pity, but it means more than that. It means a movement towards the other; to help, to be involved in the situation, to enter into the experience of the other—especially "the suffering other," to try to do something about his suffering and oppression.
- Jesus as the compassion of God: what this means for us:

We are everywhere confronted by human suffering on a massive scale: suffering often enough brought about by sinful structures built up by evil deeds. Before them we experience our powerlessness and insignificance.

Yet in the face of all this, we as Christians still experience a sense of hope and courage. In places of greatest oppression and deprivation we meet the transforming power of, e.g., Christian grassroots communities among the poor and powerless.

We realize that this transforming hope and power comes from the crucified and risen Christ who lives among His people and fills their hearts with His own presence, love and courage.

Thus do we encounter Jesus who is the Compassion of God.

- In contemporary Christian praxis there are those who see the redemption of Christ as moving within the struggle of "victims" for liberation in all its historical and social concreteness, and those who see the redemption not so much as conflictive struggle, but as primarily communion with and surrender to God in individual lives.

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[40]Monika Hellwig, *Jesus the Compassion of God* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier/Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1983), 121–123. The argument is more briefly summarized in our presentation.

The representation of Jesus as God's Compassion seems to lay down a middle ground between these two perceptions, because compassion is both essentially non-violent (tending to communion and community) and essentially active (tending to redress injustice and injury).

- God's Compassion is God's distinctive "activity" toward humanity and toward creation.

> It identifies Jesus with that outreach into creation which makes God present in it, entering into the human experience in solidarity with human suffering, history and destiny. It is a way of saying that in the person of Jesus, God truly enters into creation, into the human dilemma in all its tragic dimensions.[41]

From Jesus, the Incarnate Compassion of the Father, we take the steps to his re-presentation in the Church—the Church as the community of "Jesus the Compassion of God." This Church, this community, calls us to faithful discipleship in all those places in our lands in Asia where we must fulfill our discipleship and live out the Lord's sovereign compassion in the reality of our lives.[42]

Conclusion: On the Way to the Third Millennium

Already the First Plenary Assembly of the FABC, held at Taipei, so prophetically foresaw the *local church* standing at "front-and-center" among our concerns in our time. For as the years since 1974 have moved on, it has become more and more truly the *acting subject* on the Asian

[41]Hellwig, *Jesus the Compassion of God*, 121–123.

[42]"Journeying Together toward the Third Millennium" adopts the theme of the Church as community of the Compassion of God, D. 6. 4. "It will be a compassion that makes the Church weak and powerless with those who are weak and powerless" (*Non-violence*). But "it will be a compassion that will denounce in deeds, if it is not possible to do so in words, the injustices, oppressions, exploitations and inequalities resulting in so much suffering that is evident in the Asian situations" (*Active struggle*).

scene, through communion-and-participation ever more fully realized, as well as mission-and-service more authentically activated. The 1990s, as we journey to the third millennium, will more urgently call for the self-realization of these local churches, if the Church will become in our epoch, not only the Church "for" all peoples, but also the Church truly "of" all peoples. What this self-realization calls for, the themes of *acompañar*, of the *Church of the Servant*, and of the community of "*Jesus the Compassion of God*" invite us to consider in all conscience.[43]

The past twenty years of the common journey of the Asian Bishops in the FABC have been years of growth in our local churches in Asia, years of growth hopefully "in wisdom, age and grace." In the years ahead, so full of challenge and promise, the tasks discerned for mission remain in front of us as imperatives which we have only begun to understand and fulfill. *Ardua adhuc restat via*, but as we move forward, we move in hope, knowing we can do more than our weakness can even dare, in the Spirit of Him who lends as His empowerment, the selfsame Spirit who renews the face of the earth.[44]

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[43]"To Love Is To Work for Justice and Peace," Statement of the Catholic Sector Peace Conference (Tagaytay City, August 10–13, 1990), I. Vision: "A Church for the Making of Peace," calls for a church of *conversion*, *companionship* and *compassion*, reflecting FABC V's declaration. "For the Church is that community which fulfills Jesus' servanthood in the world, made up of his disciples who must live out in their lives in solidarity with the struggle of the poor for life, that gospel-struggle for justice rooted and grounded in love" (*National Peace Conference III: Sectoral Pre-Conference Consultations* [Pasig, Metro Manila: Assisi Foundation, 1991], 13). We might here note that this statement, along with the various texts and resolutions which have emerged from the *National Peace Conference 1991*, deserves wider dissemination and more careful study—plus, hopefully, serious attempts at effective implementation.

[44]Pope John Paul II's *Redemptoris Missio*, his encyclical letter on the Church and her mission today, has not been taken up in these pages, which were substantially complete by the time I studied the papal document more closely. My own reading of the Pontiff's work is that the mission agenda here indicated is fully coherent with Pope John Paul II's thought and teaching. We can only express our gratitude for this new charter for mission in our time (C. G. A.).



Part II

EDITOR'S PREFACE

This is the second part of this *Festschrift* volume in celebration of Fr. Catalino G. Arévalo, S.J.'s person and work, especially as the coming year 2014 will mark his 90th birth anniversary (April 20) and the Diamond Jubilee of his ordination as a Jesuit presbyter (June 19). We recall how the first part of this *Festschrift* made available to our readers a few selections from Fr. Arévalo's writings that span the course of his now almost sixty years of service in the work of theology, teaching, administration, pastoral work, retreat-giving, and service to the Church as a writer and theologian. For this second part, a variety of articles in tribute to Fr. Arévalo as a friend, colleague, mentor, theologian, religious, and priest are presented.

The authors of the articles in this issue are among the many[1] who have known Fr. Arévalo for decades, some for more than half a century.

[1]Many more would have wanted to contribute articles but time and space limit what we are able to present in this volume. The President of the Republic of the Philippines, His Excellency Benigno Simeon C. Aquino III, comes to mind. Fr. Arévalo not only held the Bible as Mr. Aquino took his oath as President, but was a close confidante of, and occasional ghostwriter for, his mother, the late President Corazon C. Aquino. Moreover, many more ecclesiastics who were among Fr. Arévalo's generations of students would surely have wanted to contribute to this *Festschrift*.

German theologian Dr. Georg Evers contributed not only one but two articles—an interview with Fr. Arévalo in the 1990s which he gave us permission to re-print, and another one written for the present volume remembering his encounters with Fr. Arévalo over the years. The Archbishop of Jaro, His Grace Most Reverend Angel N. Lagdameo, D.D., who had been a student of Fr. Arévalo, also pays tribute to him as a mentor and friend. Fr. Michael Amaladoss, S.J., contributes an article on soteriology and Christology keyed to the Indian context. It is a fitting tribute to Fr. Arévalo's own concern for inculturation and his many years of teaching Christology at the Loyola School of Theology. Fr. Francis Gustilo, S.D.B.—who is only the third Filipino to serve on the International Theological Commission, the first being Fr. Arévalo, and the second, then Fr. Luis Antonio G. Tagle (now Cardinal Archbishop of Manila and also a contributor to this Festschrift)—offers a brief study of Benedict XVI's thought regarding consecrated life. This is a fitting tribute to Fr. Arévalo who has not only lived faithfully as a religious since 1941, but has also lectured extensively on Benedict XVI's thought, and has worked in service of the Church with fellow religious both here and abroad, among them Fr. Gustilo himself.

Fr. Arévalo taught the course on Holy Orders for decades at the Loyola School of Theology. Three contributions touch on this topic close to his heart. Fr. Jeffrey Chang, S.J., writes on one of the great concerns of Fr. Arévalo—the question of the structures and shapes of ministry in the work of evangelization in Asia, especially in keeping with the vision of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, a vision which Fr. Arévalo did much to help articulate. Fr. Fernando Guillén Preckler, Sch.P., reflects on priestly holiness, an important theme not only in the courses of Fr. Arévalo on ordained ministry but in his many conferences and retreats and recollections given to clergy and bishops here and abroad. His Grace Most Rev. Socrates Villegas, D.D., Archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan and current President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, shares a homily on the importance of a priest's

prayer life for his perseverance in faithful ministry—also a point that Fr. Arévalo stresses in his countless homilies at the first Masses of his many students who have been ordained.

Fr. James Kroeger, M.M., contributes two articles. One shares with us the high praise given to Fr. Arévalo by no less than the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences in a citation penned by Fr. Kroeger himself. The other is a bibliography of the significant theological and spiritual works of Fr. Arévalo through the past several decades. Fr. Salvador Agualada, C.M.F., writes on a basic aspect of the theological anthropology of Karl Rahner whose thought Fr. Arévalo helped to make accessible to his students over the decades.

Fr. Arévalo has always had a passionate interest in Mariology. This topic is discussed by His Eminence, Luis Antonio G. Cardinal Tagle, D.D., in his reflection on communion in the Word of God and the unique communion in the Word that was experienced by Mary, and how the Church shares in that communion.

We thank all the contributors to this anthology, this bouquet of words in honor of Fr. Catalino G. Arévalo, S.J. Our gratitude goes also to Mr. Roberto Reyes, Mrs. Rica Bolipata-Santos, Fr. Arsenio Jesena, S.J., and Mr. Leo R. Ocampo for their assistance to the editorial board.

Most of all, we thank the triune God for the 90 years of life and 60 years of priestly ministry granted to Fr. Arévalo as teacher, theologian, consultant to bishops, writer, preacher, counselor, friend, and example of committed religious and priestly life as a Jesuit.

Victor C. de Jesus, S.J.

On C. G. Arévalo's Work and Life

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BIODATA
of Fr. C. G. Arévalo, S.J.

Personal Information

- Born: 20 April 1925, in Manila
- Parents: Ramon A. Arévalo and Clotilde Gomez, both from Manila

Early Education

- Kindergarten–Grade 4 at St. Theresa's College
- Grade 4–High School at the Ateneo de Manila, graduated 1941

Jesuit Formation

- Entered the Jesuit Order on 31 May 1941
- Obtained A.B. and M.A. from Jesuit Philosophate, Sacred Heart Novitiate (1948)
- Studied Theology at Weston College, Massachusetts (1951–1955) and finished an S.T.L. Degree from Boston College (1956)

- Ordained a priest at Fordham University Church, New York, on 19 June 1954
- Completed S.T.D. in Sacred Theology (Dogmatic/Systematic Theology) from the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome (1959) with a dissertation in ecclesiology

Academic Teaching and Other Theological Activities

- Taught systematic-historical theology in the United States, Woodstock College, Maryland (1959–1960) and in the Philippines (first at San José Seminary) since 1960
- Served as Prefect of Studies, Theology, San José Seminary (1962–1966)
- Was the Founding Dean and first President of the Jesuit theological college now known as the Loyola School of Theology (LST) in June 1965
- Lectured as Professor at LST mainly on Ecclesiology (especially Holy Orders), Mission, Christology and Redemption, Mariology, and Ignatian Spirituality
- Has lectured or taken part in seminars held in East Asia (Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and Thailand) and elsewhere (USA, Australia, India and Rome, Italy)
- Collaborated with the World Council of Churches (WCC) in seminars and workshops in Vancouver, Melbourne, Singapore, Lucerne and Geneva (Switzerland)
- Went for a two-month study-visit in 1971 to Latin America (Uruguay, Argentina, Peru, Chile, Mexico) to learn firsthand about Theology of Liberation
- Served as the overall program director/coordinator for two international seminars held in Manila: the International Mission Congress (1979), under the auspices of the Propaganda Fide Congregation and the CBCP, and the Theological/Pastoral

Congress on the Alliance of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary (1987), under the direction of Ambassador Howard Dee as a follow-up to the First International Theological Congress on the Two Hearts of Jesus and Mary (Fatima, 1985)

- Was also closely associated with Jaime Cardinal Sin (1984–2005) and other bishops (1960 onwards), helping them out through writing on theological issues

Religious Offices and Theological Appointments

- Elected Philippine Province delegate to 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus, Rome (1973–1974) where he headed the Congregation's Commission on Inculturation
- Served as Philippine Province Prefect of Studies and Province Consultor during the Provincialate of Fr. Horacio de la Costa (1964–1971)
- Has been theological advisor for the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) since 1960, especially the Commission *de Doctrina Fidei,* and the Second Plenary Council of the Church in the Philippines (PCP-II) in 1991
- Served as theological advisor and writer (general secretary for the drafting commission) for the FABC's first three General Assemblies (1st in Taipeh 1974, 2nd in Calcutta 1978, and 3rd Bangkok 1982)
- Was founding convenor of the Theological Advisory Commission (TAC) of the FABC (1983 onwards)
- Served as consultor for the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity (1974 onwards)
- Was the first "Asian-born" member of the (papal) International Theological Commission (Vatican City, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith), appointed by Pope Paul VI (from 1973 onwards) and renewed by Pope John Paul II (1981–1986)

Awards and Recognitions

- Honorary Doctorate in Humanities from the Ateneo de Manila University (1998)
- *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* medal from Pope John Paul II (1997)
- *Magnificat* Award from the Archdiocese of Manila (2005)
- Special FABC Award given by the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences on 15 August 2009 for his service to the FABC and Catholic theology in Asia and for the influence of his theological work on local churches in Asia, naming him the "father of Asian Catholic/FABC theology"
- *Noblesse Oblige* Award by Pasig Catholic College (March 2013) for his service to the Church in the Philippines, especially in theological reflection, teaching and Church orientation
- *"Cor ad Cor"* Award from the Sacred Heart Archdiocesan Shrine, Cebu in 2012 for promoting the spirituality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
- *Pro Deo et Patria* Award to be given by the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) in September 2013 for his educational, theological and priestly service to the Church in the Philippines and in Asia for over 40 years

Publication Activities

- Collaborated with *Philippine Studies*, then a Philippine Jesuit, and later an Ateneo de Manila, publication
- Served as Associate Editor of *The Philippine Jesuit* when Frs. Pascual Adorable and Luis Torralba were editors
- *And They Shall Name Him Emmanuel*, a collection of some of his homilies, edited by Sr. Aquinas Lluch, S.P.C., supported by the Ateneo Alumni 2B/3C Foundation, and published by Claretian Press, Quezon City, with about ten thousand copies sold

- Booklet on Pedro Calungsod, first published prior to the proto-martyr's beatification (1998) with over 30,000 copies sold; revised in 2012 and translated into Tagalog and Visayan in connection with his canonization, with some 30,000 copies sold

Retreats and Pastoral Activities

- Sought-after and well-known as an engaging retreat master and spiritual director to countless groups and individuals including bishops, priests, religious, and laity

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FABC SPECIAL CITATION 2009*
on Fr. C. G. Arévalo, S.J.

"Without a vision, the people perish." This brief quote from the Book of Proverbs (29:18) enables us to understand the pivotal role that the person we are honoring today has played in the assembly of the local churches of Asia. Father Catalino G. Arévalo, S.J., has served the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) since its beginnings in 1970. In November of that year, when Pope Paul VI visited Manila and gathered together 180 Asian bishops, Father Arévalo already served as *peritus* (resource person) for this first-ever Asian Bishops' Meeting. From this organizational gathering, the FABC would soon emerge—with a wide vision of service for all God's peoples of Asia.

In 1974, at the First FABC Plenary Assembly in Taipei, Taiwan, Father Arévalo was the principal writing consultant for the first

*On August 16, 2009, during the closing ceremonies of the Ninth Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), Father Catalino G. Arévalo, S.J., was recognized for the outstanding contribution he rendered to the FABC. This citation was read by Father James Kroeger, M.M., and a plaque of appreciation was presented by Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, FABC Secretary General, to thank Father Arévalo for his many years of generous service.

statement of the Federation, entitled *Evangelization in Modern Day Asia*. This visionary document has served the local churches in Asia so well; it remains the single most influential articulation of the "vision and mission" of Asia's churches in the post-Vatican II era. The depth of theological, pastoral, and missionary insight of this programmatic document has enabled Asia's missionary local churches to understand and implement a vision of integral evangelization through dialogue. It has facilitated the reception of the Second Vatican Council in the Asian continent. Indeed, today FABC can properly be called "Asia's Continuing Vatican II."

In fidelity to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and in communion and filial oneness with the See of Peter, the FABC has pioneered a "new way of being church" in Asia. As expressed in FABC I, "To preach the Gospel in Asia today we must make the message and life of Christ truly incarnate in the minds and lives of our peoples. The primary focus of our task of evangelization then, at this time in our history, is the building up of a truly local church" (9). "The local church is a church incarnate in a people, a church indigenous and inculturated. And this means concretely a church in continuous, humble and loving dialogue with the living traditions, the cultures, the religions [of Asia]" (12). The validity of this "triple dialogue" vision, enunciated in 1974, has been repeatedly reaffirmed at subsequent FABC Plenary Assemblies as well as in the pastoral praxis of Christian communities across Asia.

As an integral part of his service as theological advisor for the FABC bishops (1970–1995), Father Arévalo was named in 1985 the first convener and founding member of the Asian Bishops' Theological Advisory Commission (TAC). In 1986, the FABC:TAC met in Hong Kong to begin treating the subjects of the local church in Asia and interreligious dialogue. Participating in the conference were theologians of the different member countries of the FABC who had been appointed by their respective bishops' conferences.

Renamed the FABC Office of Theological Concerns in 1997, the basic aims of this FABC office are the following: 1) to foster Asian theological reflection on issues which are of special interest for the Asian Churches; 2) to be of assistance to the FABC in conceptualizing

and making policies for missionary and pastoral action; and 3) to bring relevant contemporary theological thinking into dialogue with "Asian" theological reflection emerging from within the FABC countries and then to mediate the results to the wider Church.

Father Arévalo shepherded the TAC for a decade. During this period, several insightful and in-depth studies were produced: *Theses on Interreligious Dialogue* (1987), *Theses on the Local Church* (1990), and *Asian Theological Perspectives on Church and Politics* (1992). In 1994, the FABC sponsored the first FABC International Theological Colloquium with the theme *Being Church in Asia: Journeying with the Spirit into Fuller Life*. These profound studies had as their central focus the development of an "ecclesiology of the Asian churches." Along with the plethora of FABC theological reflection, these materials are a privileged *locus* where the voice and experience of the local churches of Asia are heard.

The committed involvement of "Father Revs" (as he is known by his many students and friends) spans a wide spectrum of activity. He was the first and for many years the only Asian to serve on the Pontifical International Theological Commission. Through appointments by Popes Paul VI and John Paul II, he served on that commission for twelve years. He was executive coordinator and program director for two major theological conferences held in Manila: the International Congress on Mission (1979) and the International Conference on the Alliance of Two Hearts (1987).

In 1997, His Eminence, Jaime Cardinal L. Sin, Archbishop of Manila, conferred upon him the award *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* and identified him as "the Dean of All Filipino Theologians and the Godfather of hundreds of priests." When he received the degree of Doctor of Humanities, *honoris causa*, from the Ateneo de Manila University in 1998, Father Arévalo was identified as "Father of Asian Theology," owing to his more than 9,000 pages of theological writing "with an Asian emphasis." Speaking of his own prodigious theological output, Father Arévalo simply says: "All this writing has been done, I trust, in the service of the Church. My Jesuit vocation places my life completely at the service of the Church: her people, her communities, her leadership, her works."

Father Arévalo has always remained involved in pastoral ministry in a variety of apostolates. Former Philippine President Corazon Aquino has revealed that he has been her family's spiritual confidant since the assassination of her husband Ninoy Aquino in 1983. She related that during that time, she prayed at a church in Boston for a Filipino priest with whom she could talk. The following day, she said, Father Arévalo was at her doorstep. When Corazon "Tita Cory" Aquino was finally laid to rest on August 5, 2009, Father Arévalo preached her funeral homily—fulfilling her and her family's personal request.

Thus, with sincere appreciation, the Ninth FABC Plenary Assembly is pleased to recognize the invaluable and visionary contributions that Father Catalino G. Arévalo, S.J., has made both to the Filipino nation and, through the FABC, to all the peoples of Asia. In profound gratitude and prayer, we lift you, your loved ones, your intentions, your life and priestly ministry to the Father of Mercies. Father Arévalo, to you we extend our sincere, heartfelt thank you. *Maraming, maraming salamat!* Together we pray: *Misericordias Domini in aeternum cantabo.* Forever I will sing the mercies of the Lord. Amen.

Landas 25 (2011) 183–190

THE THOUGHT OF BENEDICT XVI ON CONSECRATED LIFE

Francis Gustilo, S.D.B.

Premises

Source Material

In asking myself what could be the thought of Benedict XVI regarding consecrated life, I searched the Vatican website and I decided to study the six (6) speeches of Benedict XVI for the Feast of the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem (February 2).[1] There are other sources[2] that I could have considered in writing about the thoughts of Benedict XVI on this theme but, for reasons of similarity of occasions when Benedict XVI shared his

[1]It has been fifteen years now since Blessed John Paul II in 1996 designated this date as the World Day of Consecrated Life.

[2]There are addresses to the participants of the plenary assembly of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (September 27, 2005), to men and women religious of the Diocese of Rome (December 10, 2005), to Canadian Bishops (May 11, 2006) and to the General Superiors (May 22, 2006). One may check references to consecrated life in his Encyclical Letter *Spe Salvi* (November 30, 2007), in a homily at St Patrick's Cathedral in New York (April 19, 2008), and so forth.

thoughts on this regard, as well for the sake of consistency of literary genre with which he addressed his audience, I thought to limit my study to these six addresses (February 2, 2006 to 2011).

In two of these six documents, mention is made regarding the threefold purpose for giving specific attention to consecrated life, namely: 1) to praise and thank the Lord for the gift of consecrated life, 2) to promote knowledge and appreciation of it among the People of God, and 3) to invite all those who have dedicated their life totally to the cause of the Gospel to celebrate the marvels the Lord has worked in them.

Literary Genre and Context

The six addresses made so far by Benedict XVI on consecrated life consist of three Homilies (during the Mass of 2006 and during Vespers of 2010 and 2011) and three Addresses in the special Audiences of 2007, 2008 and 2009. In all six occasions the addressees are the men and women of consecrated life and the members of the various Societies of the Apostolic Life.

Church events like the Synod on the Word of God (2008), the Year of St. Paul (2009) and the Year for Priests (2010) served as a backbone of the Holy Father's reflections in the years mentioned above.

Scriptures, Tradition and Magisterium

In his writings, the Holy Father has always relied on the three sources of Christian faith and so, theology.

Benedict XVI founds his reflection extensively on Sacred Scriptures. Due to the context of a Mass homily for the year 2006, the Holy Father dwelt on all liturgical readings offered for the feast of the Presentation of the Lord: Book of the Prophet Malachi, Psalm 24, Letter to the Hebrews and the Gospel of Luke. However, in the succeeding addresses, he would return only to the Gospel reading, particularly by analyzing the attitudes of the main characters (Mary and Joseph, Simeon and Anna) and referring these to the theme of consecrated life.

In 2009, being the Year of St. Paul, he used the letters of the great Apostle of the gentiles, namely: the First and Second Letters to the Corinthians, the Letters to the Galatians and to the Philippians, and the First Letter to the Christian community of Thessalonica.

Another source of the Holy Father's faith reflection is the Church's Tradition, expressed in the liturgy of the Presentation of the Lord and witnessed by the lives of the Founders and Foundresses of the Religious Orders. He also used a number of the Church's Magisterium, starting with the Vatican II document on Religious Life, *Perfectae Caritatis*, his immediate predecessor's Encyclical letter, *Vita Consacrata,* and his own Apostolic Exhortation, *Verbum Domini*. Other Church teachings on which he based his addresses come from the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life: "The Service of Authority and Obedience" and "Starting Afresh from Christ."

The Identity of Consecrated Persons

Dedication to God

In the light of the Child Jesus' dedication to God in the Temple on the fortieth day since his birth, the Holy Father holds that the essence of the consecrated life is the "concrete dedication of the consecrated persons to God and to their brethren." Because of this, consecrated life is an eloquent sign of the presence of God's Kingdom, a way of living and of working that vividly expresses one's full belonging to the one Lord. In placing oneself without reserve in the hands of Christ and of the Church, consecrated men and women are "[w]atchmen among the People of God who perceive and proclaim the new life already present in our history."

Spiritual Yearning

In the light of Simeon and Anna's longing to see the Lord, Benedict XVI states that consecrated persons are they "who make this spiritual longing their own in a definitive way, who have one

expectation which is 'that God reign in our will, in our hearts, in the world'." Simeon and Anna profess in their lives that someone "in whom burns a unique thirst for love which can be quenched by the Eternal One alone." Their examples proclaim to the world that God is the Lord of life and that his "steadfast love is better than life." Consecrated life, therefore, bears witness to the world that there are persons "who live a total and definitive, unconditional and passionate response to God, because in choosing Christ, they let themselves be conquered by him without reserve."

The Evangelical Counsels

In the light of the Year of St. Paul, the Holy Father sees in the great Apostle of the Gentiles one whose life was "inspired by the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience."

Benedict XVI qualifies the life of poverty in a twofold direction: a) for the sake of the Kingdom, that is, as a "guarantee of a Gospel proclamation carried out totally gratuitously," and b) for the sake of the people, that is, as an "expression of concrete solidarity to his brethren in need."

For him, the life of chastity also has the same twofold direction: a) to God, as a "gift of one's heart to the Lord in an undivided manner" and b) to one's neighbor, as a "service to one's brethren with even greater freedom and dedication."

Similarly, the life of obedience has a multi-pronged direction: a) God, "doing God's will as a sacrifice that found favor with God," b) Mission, "daily pressure of an anxiety for all the churches as the motivation, shaping and consummation of one's life," and c) Communion, "to wholly belong to Jesus in order, like Jesus, to belong to all, [that is,] to be Jesus for all: *I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some*."

The Essence of Life-Witness

Beyond the exercise of the evangelical counsels, the Holy Father emphasizes the distinct place of life-witnessing at the core of a person's consecration by God. S/he is a "Gospel witness," that is, "a response without reserve to the initiative of God who has consecrated you to Him with a special act of love." He maintains that consecrated persons "offer a supreme and faithful witness of love of God and brethren. So saying, consecrated life is to "make a gift of one's own charism and to witness in the first place to the greatest charism which is charity."

Referring to the Synod on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church in October of 2008, Benedict XVI points to the "witness to the importance of placing the Word of God at the center of all things." He stresses that this entails a "following of Christ without compromise as presented in the Gospel." Thus, consecrated life stands as a "witness towards an even greater fidelity to the Gospel," just as every founder/foundress of all orders of religious life has been inspired by a Gospel image and/or teaching of Jesus Christ and rooted his/her life to its *sequela*.

The Core-Ministry

If today's corporations insist on staying in their core competency, the Holy Father highlights what should be the main competency of men and women of consecrated life. They are those in whom "the fascination of the truth of Christ and the joy that derives from love for him" shine forth.

The main task of consecrated life is to witness to the "fact that God is love and that to love him is sweet." It is to manifest as well

> the vital importance of the Word of God: recalling that all Christians are brought together by the Word, to live of the Word and to remain under its lordship. Consecrated persons involve themselves in the Church's task of evangelization when they take the role of a much-needed incentive towards greater fidelity to the Gospel: becoming an eloquent, albeit often silent, proclamation of the Gospel.

In the Church, moreover, they show that the "greatest charism is charity which consists in the reciprocal seeking of God and man," "to the love that attracts them to each other," "to the special mercy of the Lord in which human beings find their salvation,"

> to the unbounded generosity and love of God: that superabundance of love that is an incentive to "lose" one's life in response to the superabundance of love of him who first "lost" his life for us, and ultimately, to the primacy of God, passion for the Gospel practised as a form of life and proclaimed to the poor and the lowliest of the earth.

Models of Consecrated Life

Personages in the Presentation at the Temple and St. Paul

Mary and Joseph in their observance of the Law are presented by the Holy Father "as living in accordance with and complying with the Law" as well as persons who are "listening attentively to the Word." Simeon and Anna are characterized by their "longing to see the Messiah," and in "looking for the redemption of their people." They are those whose "life [is] totally consecrated to the Lord." The qualities describing these four personages are models of consecrated life.

The same can be said of St. Paul who is the "father and teacher of those called by the Lord."

Mary

The Holy Father reserves to Mary the title of model par excellence for the consecrated life.

She is a "Most holy and consecrated Woman" (2006); she is *Totapulchra* and Teacher (2007), and "Protection" (2008).

Mary is the Consecrated one, Woman, the "Yes," our Mother, heavenly intercessor (2009), and in the light of the evangelical counsels, she is "Virgin, poor and obedient, totally dedicated to us because she belongs totally to God."

She too is the Mother of the Church, a school of motherly Help, the "Hear I am," and the "Fiat" (2010) and the Virgin (2011).

Conclusion

In these six addresses, we may say that the Holy Father sees consecrated life in three icons.

To be Light

This comes "from Christ, shining on Mary and Joseph, on Simeon and Anna, and through them, on everyone." To be light has the purpose to shine "for the spiritual journey, that is '*philokalia*'—love the divine beauty, [and be that] reflection of the divine goodness shining forth in the face of Christ."

To be Prophet

Consecrated life is a "gift of the Holy Spirit, foreseeing Christ's destiny of death and Resurrection." It is "born of God, from friendship with him, from attentive listening to his Word in the different circumstances of history." Prophetism consists in "displaying the Gospel and the Kingdom as already alive and present in one's daily experience on the roads of humanity."

To be Wisdom

Consecrated persons profess "a life completely dedicated to listening to and proclaiming his Word." In this way it is a "visible sign of this search for the face of the Lord and of the ways that lead to the Lord—witnessing to the task at once joyful and laborious, of the diligent search for the divine will."

A Prayer to the Blessed Mother

The last of the six discourses declares Benedict XVI's personal prayer to the Virgin who is poor and obedient, thus:

O, Mary, Mother of the Church,
I entrust all consecrated people to you,
that you may obtain for them the fullness of divine light:
may they live in listening to the Word of God,
in the humility of following Jesus, your Son and our Lord,
in the acceptance of the visit of the Holy Spirit,
in the daily joy of the *Magnificat*,
so that the Church may be edified by the holy lives
of these sons and daughters of yours,
in the commandment of love. Amen.

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PRIESTHOOD FOR COMMUNION

Ministry for the Church in Asia

Jeffrey G. L. Chang, S.J.

> *For Asian countries, may I submit that the question of the structures and shapes of ministry is of the very first importance. No discussion of the problems of evangelization in Asia can overlook this area.* —C.G. Arévalo[1]

The new way of being Church in the vision of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) implies and requires a new way of ministry. The relationship between theology of church and theology of ministry emerged clearly as a matter of first importance, even as the Asian theologians, in the renewal following the Second Vatican Council, fittingly focused first on the nature and mission of the Church as an entire community before turning to the roles of groups within the community. If the Church is to realize the calling to be a communion of communities, the Church's ministers, especially priests, must serve such communion with corresponding leadership. Although not adopting radically novel structures or shapes for ministry, the FABC, in communion with the universal Church, has developed a vision of priestly ministry as communion and spiritual leadership.

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[1]Catalino G. Arévalo, "A First Working-Paper on Some Aspects of Evangelization in Asia Today," in *Evangelization in Asia Today: Part One, A Compilation of Selected Papers for Use in Study and Discussion Groups in Preparation for the 1974 Synod* (Quezon City: Cardinal Bea Institute/Loyola School of Theology, 1974), 62, n. 40.

This essay will analyze the FABC vision of theology of ministry, particularly ordained priesthood, in four movements. First, the FABC theology of church characterizes the Church in Asia as a *communion of communities*. Second, theology of church also encompasses theology of ministry, a sub-area in ecclesiology which has received attention only relatively recently and modestly, at least in Roman Catholic theology. Third, the FABC theology of ministry is described as a *communion of service*, in which *communion and spiritual leadership* characterize ordained ministry. Fourth, the FABC theology of ordained ministry, one particular part of ministries in the Church, characterizes the ministerial priest as a *man of communion*, explained also as a man of the sacred, man of dialogue, and man of humble service. This organization locates priesthood within the larger framework of ministry, which, in turn, is located in the larger context of Church. What kind of priesthood and ministry, for what kind of Church for evangelization in Asia?

The Church in Asia as a Communion of Communities

The ecclesiology of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences emphasizes communion at all levels and in all areas of Church life. The importance of ecclesiology extends beyond internal self-centered Church issues, for the Church serves the Kingdom of God. How the community of faith organizes its own life, including how ministry is structured and exercised, has significance both for realization of the Church's identity and also for pursuit of the Church's mission in the world.

The FABC has reflected rather extensively on the nature of the Church in Asia, as a brief survey of relevant statements readily reveals. In 1982, the FABC declared: "the Church is at its deepest a *communion* (*koinonia*) rooted in the life of the Trinity, and thus in its essential reality a sacrament (*mysterium et sacramentum*) of the loving self-communication of God and the graced response of redeemed mankind in faith, hope, and love."[2] That response is both to God and also within the human

[2]"FABC Plenary Assembly III Statement," no. 7.1, in Gaudencio B. Rosales & Catalino G. Arévalo, eds., *For All the Peoples of Asia* I: *Federation of Asian Bishops'*

community, realized in Christian discipleship in "a community of authentic *participation and co-responsibility,* where genuine sharing of gifts and responsibility obtains, where the talents and charisms of each one are accepted and exercised in diverse ministries."[3] All of the members of Church share in a communion of faith and service.

Developing that communion ecclesiology further, the FABC, in 1990, called for a *new way of being church*, deepening communion at all levels. "The Church in Asia will have to be a *communion of communities*, where laity, religious and clergy recognize and accept each other as sisters and brothers."[4] "It is a *participatory* Church where the gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to all the faithful—lay, religious, and cleric alike—are recognized and activated, so that the Church may be built up and its mission realized."[5] "In an Asia marked by diversity and torn by conflicts, the Church must in a special way be a sacrament—a visible sign and instrument of unity and harmony."[6] Communion characterizes both the identity and the mission of the Church in Asia.

Church and Ministry

According to the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, the mission and ministry of the Church is embodied and realized in a communion of service in which the entire community of faith participates in various and complementary ways. The FABC convened

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Conferences Documents from 1970 to 1991 (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1992), 49–65 (here at 56 [emphasis in original]).

[3]"FABC Plenary Assembly III Statement," no. 7.6 (p. 56 [emphasis in original]).

[4]"FABC Plenary Assembly V Statement," no. 8.1.1, in Gaudencio B. Rosales & Catalino G. Arévalo, eds., *For All the Peoples of Asia* I: *Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Documents from 1970 to 1991* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1992), 273–289 (here at 287 [emphasis in original]).

[5]"FABC Plenary Assembly V Statement," no. 8.1.2 (p. 287 [emphasis in original]).

[6]"FABC Plenary Assembly V Statement," no. 4.2 (p. 282).

the Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church in 1977, responding to the needs of the Church's mission, along with renewal throughout the Church. The 1974 Synod of Bishops had focused on evangelization, with the Post-Synodal Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* encouraging the Church "to seek wisely and to discover the ministries which the Church needs and which many of her members will gladly embrace for the sake of ensuring greater vitality in the ecclesial community."[7] Moreover, the renewal following the Second Vatican Council opened the way for restoring diaconal ministry exercised on a permanent basis and also for instituting lay ministries, as part of reshaping structures of ministry within the evangelizing Church.

Clarification of some key terms may be helpful for reflection on the structures and shapes of ministry in the Church, as well as its evangelization in Asia. While recognizing the value of some variety in response to local needs, the basic framework of charisms, services, and ministries provides a starting point for understanding ministries in the Church.

Charisms are gifts of the Spirit, given in love for some good, by God's gracious initiative which is the originating source and ongoing standard for the ministries of the Church's members. The FABC explains: "*Charisms* are enduring gifts of the Spirit given to Church members to be put to use in services and ministries."[8] God who calls together and sends forth the community in service gives manifold charisms to community members for engaging in the ministry of the Church. "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.

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[7] *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 73.

[8] "Conclusions of the Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church," no. 31, in Gaudencio B. Rosales & Catalino G. Arévalo, eds., *For All the Peoples of Asia* I: *Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences Documents from 1970 to 1991* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1992), 67–92 (here at 73). On this point, see also *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 73–74, and *Lumen Gentium* 12.

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."[9] Diversity of gifts contributes to the Church's character as a communion of communities and responds to the diversity of needs in the world. Renewal of the Church's sense of mission requires renewed efforts to respond to the many gifts of the Spirit, allowing and urging charisms to blossom in service of the Church's mission.

Services are activities which manifest charisms, responding generously in gratitude to God's gift and also responding attentively to needs in the world. In this context, services have a specific, technical meaning: "We term *services* those ways of sharing in the Church's ministeriality which are undertaken spontaneously and on occasions."[10] In this definition, the qualifiers "spontaneously and on occasions" do not exclude planning, preparation, or even significant commitment of time. Rather, the Church distinguishes such services from instituted or ordained ministries which are established on a stable, even permanent, basis for the ongoing life of the community. Services denote the basic and general response of all Christians who participate in the one mission of the servant Church.

The Church designates certain of those services as ***ministries***, which are characterized by stability, continuity, and responsibility in the community of faith:

> *Ministries* apply more properly to those services which Church members undertake with a certain stability and exercise on a sufficiently broad basis, thus sharing formally in the Church's responsibility to signify the presence to men of Christ's saving action. All such ministries must be recognized by the community and authenticated by it in the person of its leader.[11]

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[9] 1 Cor. 12: 4–7.

[10] "Conclusions of the Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church," no. 31 (p. 74).

[11] "Conclusions of the Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church," no. 32 (p. 74). The modifiers "more properly," "a certain" and "a sufficiently broad" reveal some lack of specificity in this definition. Nonetheless, characterization of ministry serves as an adequate working definition. Although Roman Catholic

Diverse modes of service, including ministries, express the nature of the Church communion and respond to the many needs of the diverse situations in which the servant Church realizes the mission of Christ. The Church distinguishes two categories of ministries: lay ministries and ordained ministries.

Lay ministries involve Church recognition of particular charism-based services by lay people. The Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church specified:

> The services, based on personal charisms and rendered by lay people with a certain stability and on a sufficiently broad basis, are established today by the Church as ministries. The installation of lay people into those ministries supposes the recognition of their charism and services by the community and its confirmation by its leader.[12]

These ministries belong properly to lay people and are clearly distinguished from ordained ministries. Establishment of lay ministries remains at an initial stage of development. Thus far, in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, the only lay ministries formally instituted by the Universal Church are lector (reader) and acolyte, although local churches have been invited to propose establishment of other lay ministries.[13]

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literature on theology of ministry developed rapidly in the period following Vatican Council II, theologians still struggle to define "ministry" in a way which is more comprehensive than ordained ministry. One leading Roman Catholic theologian in this field defines it this way: "Christian ministry is the public activity of a baptized follower of Jesus Christ flowing from the Spirit's charism and an individual personality on behalf of a Christian community to proclaim, serve and realize the kingdom of God" (Thomas Franklin O'Meara, *Theology of Ministry,* rev. ed. [Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1999], 150).

[12]"Conclusions of the Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church," no. 33 (p. 74).

[13]Paul VI, "*Ministeria quaedam*," *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 64 (1972): 529–534; English translation: "Apostolic Letter Issued *Motu Proprio* by which the Discipline of First Tonsure, Minor Orders, and Subdiaconate in the Latin Church is Reformed," in *The Rites of the Catholic Church* II (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1991), 98–103. Given the apparent reluctance to institute lay ministries, it is pertinent to note that recognition of lay ministries is not intended to be

Ordained ministries are conferred by ordination, which recognizes a charism for leadership in the Church. Ordained ministry is structured in three orders: bishops, presbyters, and deacons. Bishops and presbyters share in the ministerial priesthood. Although the Second Vatican Council approved restoring exercise of diaconal ministry on a permanent basis, most Asian local churches have proceeded cautiously in this matter.

Although it may be unrealistic to expect dramatic changes or regional differences in these basic structures of ministry in the Church, this framework does allow for some diversity in exercise, similar to the way in which the one Church admits of some diversity in ecclesiologies. Shape and style may vary more than fixed structures, but all of those express, in some manner or another, particular understandings or theologies of Church. The analogy between diversities within ecclesiology and diversities within theology of ministry is appropriate, especially since theology of Church and theology of ministry are also intimately related with one another. A particular understanding of Church implies and involves a corresponding understanding of ministries in the Church; a theology of ministry forms a closely related and constitutive part of an ecclesiology.[14] The vision of the Church as a communion of communities and the concomitant renewal of the Church's evangelical mission bear significant implications for ministries in the Church. Regarding the intimate relationship between communion ecclesiology and ministries, one Asian bishop comments:

> Communion can become a concrete and pastorally meaningful conception of the Church only in relation to the understanding of the Church as a people, as a community with different charisms and ministries. Therefore, I find it appropriate that FABC has not spoken

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a clericalization of lay participation in Church life. Although the issue of lay ministries involves many factors which go beyond the scope of this present study, neither should communities refuse to recognize lay ministries as part of clerical monopolization of responsibility and authority in the Church.

[14]Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, exp. ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 161–175; Jacques Dupuis, "New Ministries: A Pastoral Approach," *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 40 (1976): 398–412.

> of communion in the abstract, but has spoken of the nature of our Asian Churches as a "communion of communities."[15]

Specifically the theology of Church as a *communion of communities* implies a theology of ministry which may be characterized as a *communion of service*.

Communion and Spiritual Leadership in a Communion of Service

This theology of ministry and the ecclesiology upon which it is based provide the appropriate framework for examining the ordained ministerial priesthood, which has special significance in relationship to the community of faith. In the Church as a communion of communities, ministries are exercised as part of a communion of service, and ordained priestly ministry serves communion and spiritual leadership.

The variety of charisms, services, and ministries in the Church form a ***communion of service*** in which all members participate. "The Church is a communion of service in which, even though there are a variety of functions, services and ministries, all persons are equal, co-responsible and interdependent."[16] In the Church which is a communion of communities, all of the community's members share in the Church's ministry through diverse services or ministries, manifesting Spirit-given charisms and coming together in a communion of service characterized by collegiality and co-responsibility. The Spirit gives diverse charisms for mutual service, and some members are confirmed with particular ministries for building up the community.[17] Diversity of charisms and contributions realizes communion in the Spirit of

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[15]Leon Augustine Tharmaraj, "Experiences in Communion and Collaborative Ministries," *Studia Missionalia* 49 (2000): 27.

[16]"Conclusions of the Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church," no. 30 (p. 73).

[17]1 Pt. 4: 10; and Eph. 4: 7–10.

God who creates not uniformity but unity in plurality.[18] It is not *in spite of* differences but precisely *in diversity* that the various disciples, as a communion of service, continue the mission of Christ.

In the context of participation by all members in Christ's mission, the community recognizes and confirms certain services as ***ministries***, which are distinguished by special responsibility, stability, and significance within the communion of service. The Church discerns and recognizes the manifestations of certain charisms as ministries, on the basis of sufficient stability, broad basis, and formal sharing in the Church's ministry. Discernment involves the community, including formal recognition by the community's leader who exercises special responsibility for unity.

Recognition of ministries does not diminish the importance of or need for services by the rest of the community. The FABC insists: "discernment and recognition of charisms in individuals do not dispense the rest of the community from its obligation to be ministerial but rather help articulate and give expression in a concrete manner to possibilities of ecclesial services by lay people."[19] An early FABC theological *peritus* explains further:

> the ministries, rooted in the charisms, are participations in the life and service of the Church, both *ad intra* and *ad extra*: no one (even the bishop!) has a monopoly of ministry, responsibility, etc., in the community, although the pastoral office demands the tasks of animation, leadership, direction from its holders.[20]

Those ministerial leadership tasks are ordered to animating the whole community's participation in Christ's mission.

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[18]Tharmaraj, "Experiences in Communion and Collaborative Ministries," 284.

[19]"Conclusions of the Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church," no. 52 (p. 78).

[20]C. G. Arévalo, "The Church as a Community of Faith: Some Points for Reflection at the Third Plenary Assembly," *FABC Papers* 29 (1982): 6 (punctuation in original).

In the communion of service, ministries serve as instruments for the ministerial activity of the whole community. According to the FABC, "ministries will become nerve centers of life for the ministerial action of the community."[21] The image of *nerve centers* connotes sensitivity, both to charism-based abilities distributed in the community and also to needs in the world. As *centers of life*, ministers animate activity throughout the community. While some apostolic services may be exercised individually, ministries require attention to facilitating *the ministerial action of the community*. Ultimately, ministerial action is ordered not to the individual minister's recognition or gain but to the participation and good of the community. In addition to directly serving particular needs, ministers also share knowledge and form teams, training and facilitating the participation of more Church members in service. Such servant leadership articulates and promotes possibilities for ecclesial services especially by lay people. Thus ministries are intrinsically relationship-oriented and community-focused.

Everything stated thus far regarding ministries applies both to lay ministries and also to ordained ministries. Within this theology of ministry, ordained ministry, in particular, serves ***communion and spiritual leadership***. The FABC is very clear on this point of central importance for understanding ordained ministry: "The specific charism of unity and spiritual leadership finds its full expression in the local Church in the ministry of the bishop."[22] "Common to the three forms of the ministry conferred by ordination, though differently realized in each, is a charism of unity and spiritual leadership."[23] "The specific function of the presbyter in the Christian community is that of unifying spiritual leadership."[24] In the Sacrament of Holy Orders, the

[21]"Conclusions of the Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church," no. 52 (p. 78).

[22]"Conclusions of the Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church," no. 110 (p. 88).

[23]"Conclusions of the Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church," no. 35 (p. 74).

[24]"Conclusions of the Asian Colloquium on Ministries in the Church," no. 103 (p. 86). Deacons also serve as ministers of unity and spiritual leadership (no. 99).

community confirms the presence of this charism from the Holy Spirit and, thereby, commissions the minister to formal service of unity and spiritual leadership, guiding the community in realizing its mission.

Ordained ministers form the Church community as a living sign of Christ's saving presence in the world. Communion in the life of the Christian community reaches climactic expression in the celebration of Eucharist, for which the priest plays a significant part. In sacramental ministries and, indeed, in the whole life of the community, the Church sacramentalizes Christ's promise of communion and harmony for the world. As sign and instrument, the minister makes sacramentally visible the hidden mystery of the Church, realizing communion and continuing Christ's mission.

Ordained ministers serve communion by discerning the activity of God's Spirit in the community and calling forth charisms from the community to blossom in manifold services, responding to the signs of the times and the needs of the community. While both lay and ordained ministers exercise some responsibility for animating ministerial activity among Christ's faithful, ordained ministers, acting broadly on behalf of the whole community, exercise a formal responsibility for animating a broad range of ministerial activity in the communion of charisms. In this capacity, the unifying spiritual leadership of ordained ministry is also charged with recognizing, encouraging, forming, and affirming services and ministries on behalf of the community, as well as ensuring unity within the Eucharistic community.

The Priest as a Man of Communion for the Church in Asia

The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences envisions the ministerial priest as ***a man of communion***. Communion characterizes the priest's identity, mission, and relationships. The charism of unifying spiritual leadership and the various activities in which the priest realizes that charism respond to the need for communion. The FABC vision of the Church in Asia as a *communion of communities* readily implies that the ordained minister should be a *man of communion*. Identifying a particular

ministry of communion in the Church has still deeper implications; priestly ministry, in all of its activities, is principally about building and supporting communion.

The ministerial priest serves as sign and instrument of the community's mission of establishing communion. Exercising unifying spiritual leadership, the priest discerns charisms, encourages the emergence of initiatives, and serves as a center of life for the ministerial activity of the local community. The priest leads by drawing out different gifts and drawing together diverse members into one body. The ministry of communion, forming the community as a living sign of Christ's salvific presence, then is the standard for expressing and evaluating the entirety of ordained ministry.

While unifying spiritual leadership may find expression in a myriad of different activities reflecting the integral nature of salvation, ordained ministry is primarily and fundamentally about communion, which provides the key for interpreting all other characteristics of ordained ministry. The FABC explains: "The future priest of Asia must be a man of communion: this means that the priest become a man of the sacred, a man of dialogue, and a man of humble service. All these define his identity."[25] This characterization does not mean that simply combining sanctity, dialogue, and humble service yields communion. Surely, communion is manifested in sanctity, dialogue, and humble service, but that does not exclude other manifestations as well. The Spirit leads all Christ's faithful in pursuing these goals, and the Spirit specially guides priests in pursuing these goals in, for, and through the community.

Accordingly, characterizing a priest as a man of the "sacred" does more than describe a condition of personal sanctity. Although

[25]FABC Plenary Assembly V, "Main Recommendations on Priestly Formation," in Vicente G. Cajilig, ed., *Clergy of Asia: Lights and Shadows*, Consultation on the Continuing Education for Priests, Nov. 30–Dec. 2, 1993 (Manila: FABC Office of Education and Student Chaplaincy, 1997), 169–176. The recommendations were prepared in preparation for the 1990 Synod of Bishops. Cf. Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, nos. 18, 43.

the priest's own intimate experience of the "sacred" is relevant and necessary, in the context of the ministry of communion the more important issue is how the priest functions as a center of life for the sanctity of the community. How does ordained ministry build up the community's sanctity, for example, by teaching others to pray? Similarly, how does ordained ministry draw out, develop, and draw together dialogue in the Church as a communion of communities proclaiming God's salvation? How does ordained ministry form the communion of communities in humble service in the image of Jesus Christ? The ministerial priest's own participation in all of these qualities and activities, even if still in a preliminary or partial manner, is only a necessary starting point.

Similarly, the priest's direct service of unity, such as in assembling the community and celebrating Eucharist, symbolizes the broader, even if sometimes more subtle, service of building up the communion of charisms. Even beyond prominent particular activities, the ministry of communion involves building up the community's participation in the mission of the servant Church. Hence, the priest, as a man of communion, exercises ministry in relation to the community, fostering the community's ministerial activity. As an instrument of the community's sacramentality of Christ's saving presence, ordained ministry's deeper significance is to be found in serving as a sign and instrument for realizing the mission of the Church as a communion of communities.

Conclusion

In the FABC vision of the Church as a communion of communities, all members are called to participate actively and in various ways in a communion of service, where ministries, especially ordained priestly ministry through the charism of unity and spiritual leadership, support the active participation of the entire community. As a sign and instrument of the community's mission to signify Christ's saving presence, the ministerial priesthood humbly builds up the Church in communion and mission. By discerning and supporting the gifts distributed by the Spirit throughout the community, priests guide

and promote the full and active participation of the people of God in celebration of the Eucharist and, indeed, in all of Christian life. Thus the sacramental significance of priesthood for communion is to be found in the unity and service of the community, where the priest, especially in Asia, is called to be a man of communion. In reflecting on "The Spirit at Work in Asia Today," the FABC sketches the following image which summarizes the role of priestly ministry's servant leadership:

> The people of God, being the mystical body of Christ gifted with charisms, freely offering themselves to the community through ministries, are like a variety of musical instruments. The multiplicity of ministries blended properly by the servant leadership plays a symphonic masterpiece called "life in communion and mission."[26]

Thus far, the Church in Asia has not established entirely new structures of ministry for the mission of evangelization in Asia. Nor should dramatically different structures be necessarily expected, of course, for the Asian local churches in communion with the Church universal. Nonetheless, the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences does envision a new way of ministry for a new way of being church, evangelizing in Asia. Distinctive emphasis may be more on shape and style than on innovative structures. Implications may not be fully explored yet, and implementation not quite realized now. Still, the theologizing reflection and activity continue, building upon an ecclesiological vision of the Church as a communion of communities. For this ongoing development in the theology and practice of ministry for communion in Asia, the early and, perhaps, even programmatic words of Rev. Fr. Catalino G. Arévalo, S.J., recognized by the FABC as the "Father of Asian Theology," offer inspiration:

> … theology is capable of development: it cannot be content with merely walking the well-worn ways, following the same old procedures, going

[26]FABC Office of Theological Concerns, "The Spirit at Work in Asia Today," no. 4.3.1.2, in *For all the Peopes of Asia* III: 311. The full document may be found in Vimal Tirimanna, ed., *Sprouts of Theology from the Asian Soil: Collection of TAC and OTC Documents (1987–2007)* (Bangalore: Claretian Publications, 2007), 167–254.

> by the same old methods, rehashing the old questions, parroting the old answers, mechanically repeating what has been said over and over again in the past.[27]

As with theology, the community of faith, including the ministerial priesthood, is capable of development. In this pilgrim Church in Asia, much remains to be done; the Spirit is still at work. Even if the project has only begun, the journey is, at least, commenced. The Church's prayer, especially for priestly ministry for communion in Asia, encourages: May God who has begun the good work in you bring it to fulfillment!

[27]Catalino G. Arévalo, *Some Aspects of the Theology of the Mystical Body of Christ in the Ecclesiology of Giovanni Perrone, Carlo Passagl[i]a and Clemens Schrader, Theologians of the Roman College in the Mid-Nineteenth Century*, S.T.D. diss. excerpta (Rōma: Facultate Theologica Pontificia Universitatis Gregorianae, 1959), 7.

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KARL RAHNER'S THEOLOGY OF GRACE

The Supernatural Existential

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

1. Introduction

Karl Rahner's theology of grace, which is the basic presupposition for many of his central thoughts and ideas, hinges on a very fundamental theological assertion—that God is always present, inescapably so, at the center of our human life.[1] In an almost lapidary statement, he asserts that "'God has given himself to man in direct proximity': perhaps the essence of Christianity can be reduced to this formula."[2] His key insight on the supernatural existential derives from his faith-filled conviction that God's grace, which is God's communication of his very self to man, is constitutive of human life, and that this radically and marvelously transforms the

[1]Almost like a paraphrase of Augustine's famous line about God being much closer to him (Augustine) than he is to himself, Karl Rahner, in his classic book, *Encounters with Silence*, addresses himself to God in these words: "You are the inmost center of my heart, closer to me than I am to myself" (K. Rahner, *Encounters with Silence* [Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 1999], 9).

[2]K. Rahner, "Anonymous Christians," in *Theological Investigations* VI (London: Darton, Longman &Todd Ltd., 1969), 394.

world into "a world of grace."[3] It is the truth of the ubiquitousness of grace that Rahner drives home again and again in many of his writings: that "every man who comes into the world is pursued by God's grace,"[4] and that "[t]he world is permanently graced at its root, the inmost center of the conscious subjects. It is born up by God's self-communication even before free creatures decide whether to accept this proffered grace. It is graced, whether or not it seems so to our jaded sensibilities."[5] Grace is neither detraction from, nor strange appendage to, the genuinely human, but the fulfillment of man's fundamental openness to the Mystery dynamically summoning him to self-realization. It is Rahner's conviction that the Mystery grounding all human striving for self-fulfillment is not indifferent but goes out of itself in its deepest yearning to lavish itself on humanity in radical self-bestowal, in total self-giving love.[6]

This paper is basically an exploration of Rahner's theology of grace, particularly his concept of the supernatural existential. It begins with an apt consideration of man whom Rahner sees as characterized by transcendence, as an infinite openness to the Absolute, as a being of unlimited transcendentality. It then examines the relationship between grace and nature, centering on Rahner's critique of the extrinsicist notion of grace and nature and his insistence on the necessity of the idea of "pure nature" for the defense of the gratuitousness of grace. The last section aims at articulating Rahner's basic insight on the supernatural existential (which is the foundation of, and, in fact,

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[3]This phrase is the very title of Leo J. O'Donovan's book. Cf. L. J. O'Donovan, ed., *An Introduction to the Themes and Foundations of Karl Rahner's Theology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980).

[4]K. Rahner, "Christianity and the Non-Christian Religions," in *Theological Investigations* V (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 1966), 130.

[5]K. Rahner, "How to Receive a Sacrament and Mean It," *Theology Digest* 19 (1971): 228–229.

[6]S. J. Duffy, "Experience of Grace," in D. Marmion & M. E. Hines, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Rahner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 44–45.

contains in germ, his entire theology of grace) by looking at grace as fundamentally God's self-communication to the human who is seen as the event of such a gracious divine self-bestowal and which renders the whole of human existence touched and permeated by God's grace as a result of God's universal saving will.

2. Man as Infinite Dynamism and Openness Towards the Absolute

In Rahner's theology of grace, the human being is seen as basically a creature whose life and existence is ontologically grounded in and dynamically oriented towards God. He suggests then that theology as a whole may be properly called *anthropocentric*, and argues that such an emphasis, instead of spelling the end of theocentrism in theology, actually expresses theology's theocentric character.

> As soon as man is understood as the being who is absolutely transcended in respect to God, "anthropocentricity" and "theocentricity" in theology are not opposites but strictly one and the same thing, seen from two sides. Neither of the two aspects can be comprehended at all without the other.[7]

Rahner thus regards his theology as characterized by "transcendental anthropology."[8] He begins with the human being whom he sees as characterized by transcendence, a term which indicates that "the human being is a propulsion beyond himself,"[9] "an ever greater openness to God."[10] In every human act, God is implicitly revealed

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[7]K. Rahner, "Theology and Anthropology," in *Theological Investigations* IX (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 1972), 28.

[8]Rahner, "Theology and Anthropology," 29.

[9]J. J. O'Donnell, *The Mystery of the Triune God* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1988), 27.

[10]J. J. O'Donnell, *Life in the Spirit* (Roma: Gregorian University Press, 2004), 6. "To transcend means simply to go beyond: transcendental experience is the experience of going beyond all the things we know and choose and love, even

as the term of transcendence. There is, thus, a religious dimension to all human experience and the totality of human existence, although this dimension is hidden, anonymous and nameless. Since God is undeniably present in all human experiences, there is therefore a natural revelation of God to every human being. For Rahner, man is a dynamism towards the Absolute: "he is from God, and directed towards God,"[11] and thus all his acts are an implicit affirmation of God. "The infinite horizon affirmed in all knowing and loving is nothing other than the absolute being of God."[12] It is along these lines that Rahner understands man as a "spiritual" being who exists with an absolute supernatural orientation. In his *Hearer of the Word*, he writes: "Human persons are spirits and, as such, we always already stand before the infinite God …. [I]n the daily drift of our existence … we continually reach out into the domain that only the fullness of God's absolute being can fill."[13] Calling it the "basic make-up" of the human person, affirmed in all his acts of knowledge and freedom, Rahner describes man's spiritual nature as

> … [a] … life … reaching [out] ceaselessly for the absolute, in openness toward God … [which] … is not something that may happen or not happen to us once in awhile, as we please. It is the condition of the possibility of what we are and have to be and always also are in our most humdrum daily life. Only that makes us human: that we are always already on the way to God, whether or not we know it expressly,

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as we are knowing and choosing and loving them—and when we go beyond all particular things, what we go towards is, on Rahner's account, God" (K. Kilby, "Karl Rahner," in D. F. Ford & R. Muers, eds., *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian Theology Since 1918*, 3rd ed. [Victoria (Australia): Blackwell Publishing, 2007], 99).

[11]K. Rahner, "The Dignity and Freedom of Man," in *Theological Investigations* II (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 1974), 238.

[12]Duffy, "Experience of Grace," 48.

[13]K. Rahner, *Hearer of the Word* (New York: The Continuum Publishing Company, 1994), 54. As spirit, a human being is "a being of unlimited openness for the limitless being of God" (Rahner, "Anonymous Christians," 392).

> whether or not we will it. We are forever the infinite openness of the finite for God.[14]

For Rahner, "it is obvious that human beings are constituted as religious beings. God belongs inescapably to human experience."[15] Whether we open ourselves to or shut ourselves from its presence, our entire life is dynamically oriented towards this holy Mystery which is the absolute ground and horizon of our existence. "Generally pre-reflexive[,] this primal awareness of God may be ignored, suppressed, even denied, which easily happens since it comes in spatio-temporal experience whose depth may elude us," yet, "[even] in the absence of reflective awareness of the existential, humans remain nonetheless, always graced by an inner dynamism thrusting toward the God who calls and gives Godself."[16]

Not only in the totality of man's being is man searching beyond himself to a transcendent ground; particularly his acts of thinking and choosing are grounded in the absolute reality of God. Take, for instance, man's acts of thinking. Rahner proposes that man is a "transcendental consciousness" and asserts that within the operations of the mind we can find a dynamic movement oriented towards an infinite being which transcends the mind. Rahner looks to the actual functioning of the mental act, on the dynamic process of what occurs in particular acts of thinking, and discovers that the very act of asking questions, for example, about the things that are beyond man presupposes an infinite ground, such that in the possession of knowledge or intelligent apprehension, man goes beyond himself and moves towards an infinite being who is the source of everything that he finds in the world. William Dych explains this quite simply:

> All the knowledge we acquire always gives rise to further questions. When pushed far enough all our clarities trail off into obscurity; the chain of scientific logic hangs loose at both ends. The more we know,

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[14]Rahner, *Hearer of the Word*, 53.

[15]O'Donnell, *Life in the Spirit*, 17.

[16]Duffy, "Experience of Grace," 49 and 47.

> the more we know we don't know, and in this known unknown we have transcended our knowledge.[17]

In that very performance of his intellectual life, man comes, however faintly, to the consciousness that his entire life is not only permeated but also and especially sustained by the hidden presence of grace. Implicit within all acts of the mind, indeed, is man's immediate and unthematic knowledge of his transcendent ground. Indeed, Rahner's "transcendental anthropology" provides us a picture of a human being who is an absolute openness in his unrestricted transcendence.

> That God is obliquely anticipated whereunto … of human knowing and loving is derived by Rahner from his transcendental analysis of human being …. Not only are humans open to and in quest of the infinite, they are also drawn by it in self-bestowal.[18]

3. Re-conceptualizing the Relationship between Nature and Grace

3.1 Critique of the Neo-Scholastic, Extrinsicist View of Nature and Grace

The driving force that impelled Rahner to introduce and develop the concept of the supernatural existential was provided by what he believed to be the essentially erroneous doctrine of nature and grace prevalent in the Church since the mid nineteenth century, conceptualized in a doctrine called "extrinsecism"[19] (more commonly spelled as "extrinsicism," the spelling thus adopted in this work), or

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[17]W. V. Dych, "Theology in a New Key," in L. J. O'Donovan, ed., *An Introduction to the Themes and Foundations of Karl Rahner's Theology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), 6.

[18]Duffy, "Experience of Grace," 43–44.

[19]Cf. K. Rahner, "Concerning the Relationship Between Nature and Grace," in *Theological Investigations* I (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 1974), 298. Henceforth referred to as "Relationship Between Nature and Grace."

the "textbook" understanding of grace and nature,[20] and characterized by the neo-scholastic *duplex ordo* theology.[21]

Patrick Burke, in his book *Reinterpreting Rahner: A Critical Study of His Major Themes*, sums up what probably are the two most fundamental features of this neo-Scholastic concept of the relationship between nature and grace from the Rahnerian point of view.[22] First,

> [a]ccording to this view, grace often appears as a mere superstructure, imposed on nature by God's free decision in such a way that the relationship between the two is no more intense than noncontradiction, no more than a *potentia oboedentialis* understood purely negatively.[23]

To employ Rahner's own words, grace, in this extrinsicist view, "appears … as a mere superstructure, very fine in itself certainly, which is imposed upon nature by God's free decree,"[24] "as being merely a superstructure imposed from without upon a nature in itself indifferent with regard to it,"[25] "a superstructure beyond the realm of consciousness, … though … acknowledged to be the most sublime and divine element in man, his only salutary possession."[26]

In this two-storied world, grace is considered an accidental add-on, remaining beyond human experience, and superimposed on nature viewed as self-sufficient and self-contained, and nature is "merely

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[20]Cf. P. Burke, *Reinterpreting Rahner: A Critical Study of His Major Themes* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 54. Henceforth referred to as *Reinterpreting Rahner*.

[21]D. Coffey, "The Whole Rahner on the Supernatural Existential," *Theological Studies* (Milwaukee) 65/1 (2004): 103. Henceforth referred to as "The Whole Rahner."

[22]Cf. Burke, *Reinterpreting Rahner*, 54.

[23]Burke, *Reinterpreting Rahner*, 54.

[24]Rahner, "Relationship Between Nature and Grace," 298.

[25]Rahner, "Relationship Between Nature and Grace," 303.

[26]K. Rahner, "Nature and Grace," in *Theological Investigations* IV (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 1974), 166.

'disturbed' by the purely external 'decree' of God commanding the acceptance of the supernatural."[27] Such a relationship between nature and grace "depended on a non-repugnance in nature understood in scholastic terms as an 'obediential potency', a capacity to receive gifts not incompatible with nature,"[28] as an element that does not contradict the elevation of nature. Indeed, nature was related to grace only extrinsically, by divine decree, and negatively, by a non-repugnance.[29] Nature was understood, at best, as tolerant or as being non-repugnant towards grace.

The problem is that, when presented in this way, with grace as a mere superstructure added to the soul or as an adornment extrinsic to nature, God cannot, even if such an addendum may bring ultimate perfection to human nature, be considered as the innermost goal and ultimate yearning of man.[30] "It is also difficult to conceive the desirability of such gifts to a nature already complete in itself without grace."[31] As Burke, reflecting Rahner's insight, comments, even if

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[27]Rahner, "Relationship Between Nature and Grace," 299.

[28]Duffy, "Experience of Grace,"46.

[29]Rahner, "Relationship Between Nature and Grace," 309. In Rahner's own words:

> Grace is, it is true, an unsurpassable perfection of nature; God as the Lord of this nature can command man to submit to his *de facto* will and to be receptive to his grace, which direct man to a supernatural life and end. But of itself nature has only a "*potentia obedientialis*" to such an end, and this capacity is thought of as negatively as possible. It is no more than non-repugnance to such an elevation. (Rahner, "Nature and Grace," 167)

[30]K. Weger, *Karl Rahner: An Introduction to His Theology* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1980), 105. Henceforth referred to as *Karl Rahner*. Duffy brings to the surface what is fundamentally at stake in this argument: "[Were] grace an alien superstructure imposed on self-enclosed nature from outside history and experience by divine decree, it could only appear as an intrusion responding to no felt need or yearning in humanity" (Duffy, "Experience of Grace," 50–51).

[31]Duffy, "Experience of Grace," 46.

"[nature] acknowledges the end and the means of the supernatural order as, in themselves, its highest goods, … it is not at all clear why it should be much concerned with these goods."[32] It is not surprising then that man should take very minimal interest in this graced superstructure of his being. "After all he does not find grace where he finds himself, in the immediate activation of his supernatural being."[33] And because "this supernatural was displaced into a region beyond consciousness, as an unconscious modality of what was spiritual and moral in nature, … it was very hard to say what use it was at all."[34] Indeed, man's vocation to supernatural communion not only appears, in this conception of grace, as a disturbance to pure nature, which otherwise acts in its own domain, but the theory also risks ascribing all that man experiences to nature even though all are *de facto* experiences of grace or of graced nature.

Secondly,

> according to this textbook view, man can know what *precisely* pure human nature is and how far *precisely* it extends. It is tacitly presupposed that whatever man comes to know, independently of revelation, about himself or in himself belongs to this nature and, therefore, that a sharply circumscribed concept of man's pure nature can be produced out of the anthropology of everyday experience.[35]

For Rahner, however, "this 'pure' nature is not for that reason an unambiguously delimitable, de-finable quantity," and man "can never find the nature he wants in a 'chemically pure' state, separated from its supernatural existential."[36] In its strictly theological understanding, nature "does not mean a state of reality, intelligible in itself and experienced by us separately … on top of which … an additional higher

[32]Burke, *Reinterpreting Rahner*, 54.

[33]Rahner, "Nature and Grace," 168.

[34]Rahner, "Nature and Grace," 168.

[35]Burke, *Reinterpreting Rahner*, 54.

[36]Rahner, "Relationship Between Nature and Grace," 314 and 315.

reality would be superimposed."[37] Considering that all men in their concrete existence live within the ambit of the supernatural existential, no clear and absolute division can be drawn between nature and grace, and one can never easily delineate what in human life is of nature and what of grace.[38] Pure human nature never existed in a time before grace was "superimposed" on it.[39]There is no such thing as a natural human existence, for the whole human life is permeated by grace. We cannot speak, then, of what human being or human life would be without God's grace because we do not have any experience of ourselves and our life without that grace, and because we are also conditioned by that grace even when we refuse it in sin or guilt.[40] Indeed,

> [m]an's factual nature … is never "pure" nature, but nature situated in a supernatural dispensation from which man—even unbelieving and sinful man—cannot escape the nature that is always being transformed

[37]K. Rahner, "Grace," in *Sacramentum Mundi* II (New York: Herder and Herder, 1968), 417.

[38]Rahner, "Relationship Between Nature and Grace," 314.

[39]"It is not as though pure nature existed first in its own right and was then determined … Nor is the existential simply added to nature: it transforms nature in its own coming into being, and the transformation will remain forever, unrelated by anything the person may or may not do subsequently" (Coffey, "The Whole Rahner," 101).

[40]Weger, *Karl Rahner*, 108. For Rahner, though, this existential order is not the only imaginable order, for human beings could also lead meaningful lives in an order devoid of grace where they encounter only divine silence (Duffy, "Experience of Grace," 51). Such a supernatural fulfillment is not owed to man, and he seemingly can attain fulfillment in his life in a lesser natural good, for "[o]f itself, nature would find its perfection just as readily and harmoniously in its own proper realm, in a purely natural end, without an immediate intuition of God in the beatific vision" (Rahner, "Nature and Grace," 167). Yet, even though God could have created human beings without the vocation to a supernatural life and destiny with him, in reality he has never done so, and the only human being who exists is the creature under the influence of grace.

> (not, it should be noted, necessarily justified) by the supernatural saving grace offered by God.[41]

Rahner thus dismantled this double-decker world and purged the dualism of extrinsicism bedeviling Catholic theology by pointing out to the transcendental structure of man, that man is not simply natural but rather one

> who has been called by God to supernatural salvation … [a] … state of being called by God—or by grace, which is God himself … [which] … forms a permanent and ontological factor which determines man's being, with the result that man's experience of himself is also an experience of God and at the same time an experience of grace.[42]

The human person, then, bears an intrinsic dynamism to God which, "far from being a mere non-repugnance to grace, is an openness to, a hunger for God. Humanity is unrestricted desire for God."[43]

3.2 The Necessity of the Theoretical Concept of "Pure Nature" For the Defense of the Gratuitousness of Grace

In reaction to the extrinsicist view of the relationship between nature and grace by the proponents of the neo-scholastic tradition, the *Nouvelle Theologie* "sought to emphasize the intrinsic desire of man for God and the orientation of nature to grace, for which it was created …

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[41]Weger, *Karl Rahner*, 106–107. In speaking about the relationship between nature and grace in an interview, Rahner said:

> There is no single human action in which God does not communicate himself to us, in which, in other words, his grace is not, either reflectively or unreflectively, at work and aspects of revelation are involved. It is simply not possible for man, who has grace as an existential aspect of his existence that cannot be avoided, to make a clear distinction … between … what is natural freedom and what is freedom as a result of grace. (Weger, *Karl Rahner,* 108–109)

[42]Weger, *Karl Rahner*, 88.

[43]Duffy, "Experience of Grace," 51.

[claiming that] … the inner reference of man to grace is constituent of man's nature in such a way that the latter cannot be conceived without it."[44] Against the *Nouvelle Theologie*,[45] Rahner insists that the absolute gratuity of grace must be the starting point for all Catholic discussions of grace.[46] He formulates the issue at stake: "But is this inner reference of man to grace a constituent of his 'nature' in such a way that the latter cannot be conceived without it, i.e., as pure nature, and hence such that the concept of *natura pura* becomes incapable of complete definition?"[47] As John Galvin, echoing Rahner's criticism of the *Nouvelle Theologie*, argues: "If God's self-communication were part of the nature of a given creature, or if a creature had by nature a right to grace, then God's offer of himself to that creature would not be free to a freely chosen partner."[48] The precise point at issue in this particular theology is not only that grace can no longer be said to be gratuitous, but also that grace is not gratuitous for an imagined or hypothetical human being as it is for the human being already in actual existence.[49]

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[44]Burke, *Reinterpreting Rahner*, 55.

[45]Coffey, comparing the theology of the *Nouvelle Theologie* with that of Rahner, rightfully observes:

> The precise point of difference between Rahner and the *nouvele theologie* was that while the latter regarded the unconditional desire as belonging to human nature as such, Rahner maintained that it was already a gift of grace and hence was supernatural. For him the unconditional desire was the immediate consequence of the supernatural existential and hence shared its supernatural character. (Coffey, "The Whole Rahner," 102)

[46]Burke, *Reinterpreting Rahner*, 55. In footnote no. 20 of Burke's article, the author notes that "[the] preservation of the absolute gratuity of grace is one of Rahner's central concerns" (Burke, *Reinterpreting Rahner*, 55.)

[47]Rahner, "Relationship Between Nature and Grace," 303.

[48]J. P. Galvin, "The Invitation of Grace," in L. J. O'Donovan, ed., *An Introduction to the Themes and Foundations of Karl Rahner's Theology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), 71.

[49]Burke, *Reinterpreting Rahner*, 55–56.

For Rahner, grace is a free and gratuitous gift of God, who is under no obligation to give himself as a gift. It is therefore supernatural, that is, no way owed to man. In his own words:

> In this sense, the grace of God's self-communication is supernatural, in other words it is not owed to man (or to *any* creature) even prior to his unworthiness as a sinner. It is not posited with man's inalienable essence (his "nature"). Consequently in itself even in the absence of sin it could be refused to man by God (yet if offered it could not be refused by man without guilt). It is unmerited because it is a participation in the reality which in itself is solely that of God himself. Moreover, it can only be received if its very reception is made possible by God. And this is again not due to man.[50]

Still, the fact that grace is free and gratuitous does not mean that it is not given to some, for we know by faith and revelation that God desires the salvation of all humans.

Rahner, then, suggests a more subtle distinction, not only between nature and grace but also between pure nature and concrete nature:[51] the latter being human nature as it exists as a result of God's acts of creation and grace, and the former being a theoretical concept that refers to what is minimally required for a being to be human. The value of such a distinction is that in upholding that human beings are graced in their actual nature, Rahner agrees with the *Nouvelle Theologie*. However, in holding fast to pure nature as a theoretical concept, he tries to integrate into his theology the encyclical *Humani Generis* which declares that in order to protect the gratuity of grace, that God is free to give or withhold grace, we must affirm that God could have created human

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[50]Rahner, "Grace," 417. In the same article, even prior to this quotation, Rahner writes:

> God's self-communication in his own divine life, both as given, and as accepted by man, is essentially God's free, personal, uncovenanted favour. In itself it is a free gift in relation to man, not merely insofar as he is a sinner (i.e., someone who culpably shuts himself to God's offer of himself and to God's will as this is expressed in the whole of human reality), but even prior to this. (Rahner, "Grace," 416)

[51]Cf. Burke, *Reinterpreting Rahner*, 69–70.

beings without giving them any grace or ordering them to a supernatural destiny with him in beatific vision, even if in the present dispensation, no human being exists that has only pure nature as its essence since all men are permeated by grace in their very essence. Indeed, in order to show the unexactedness of grace, Rahner conceives of the possibility of "pure human nature," a nature devoid of God's grace, and

> … insists on the possibility of a pure human nature that has not been finalized supernaturally and in this way ensures that God's grace is free and gratuitous. At the same time, however, he maintains that this possibility has never been a reality. In concrete terms, this means that man, in his factual existence, is not pure nature and does not experience himself as such.[52]

For Rahner, the concept of pure human nature

> is not an empty concept of otiose theological speculation but a concept which, in the long run, is the necessary background against which one recognizes that the beatific vision is a gratuitous grace, not merely not due to man as a sinner, but not due to man even as a creature.[53]

In the concrete economy of human existence, however, this "pure human nature" is nothing but a theological construct, a "remainder,"[54] or "a 'remainder concept', … what is left over as remainder when this inmost centre is subtracted from the substance of his concrete

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[52]Weger, *Karl Rahner*, 106–107. For Eamonn Conway,

> [a] merely theoretical assumption rather than an assertion of a state which was once realized in history, "pure nature" describes nature as unaffected by grace, even though we have no experience of this. According to Rahner, there was never a human being who was ungraced as such … In our actual experience we know nothing of what comes from nature alone. (E. Conway, *The Anonymous Christian—A Relativised Christianity?: An Evaluation of Hans Urs von Balthasar's Criticisms of Karl Rahner's Theory of the Anonymous Christian* [New York: Peter Lang, 1993], 14, henceforth referred to as *The Anonymous Christian—A Relativised Christianity?*)

[53]Rahner, "Nature and Grace," 185.

[54]Rahner, "Relationship Between Nature and Grace," 302.

quiddity, his 'nature',"[55] or "a reality [that] must be postulated in man which remains over when the supernatural existential as unexacted is subtracted, and must have a meaning and a possibility of existence even when the supernatural existential is thought of as lacking."[56] Pure human nature, then, is "what remains when one theoretically, and impossibly in the present economy, subtracts the supernatural existential"[57]; "a residual concept, what is left if we mentally bracket the supernatural existential."[58]

Yet, again, pure nature refers to no actually existing condition, for nature never exists on its own, but only and always under the influence of the divine self-communication, which is grace. It is

> only a contrasting concept and not a reality in man, within which it is no longer possible to distinguish between what man is in the light of pure nature, and what he is *de facto*, and therefore what he experiences as the supernatural raising up of his experience: in other words as the supernatural existential element in his life.[59]

Nature, then, "in this sense continues to be a remainder concept, but a necessary and objectively justified one, if one wishes to achieve reflexive consciousness of that unexactedness of grace which goes together with man's inner, unconditional ordination to it."[60] It remains a necessary conceptual construct pointing up the gratuitousness of God's grace by calling to mind a world that could have been without grace had God willed it.

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[55]Rahner, "Relationship Between Nature and Grace," 313.

[56]Rahner, "Relationship Between Nature and Grace," 313–314.

[57]M. G. Lawler & T. A. Salzman, "Karl Rahner and Human Nature: Implications for Ethics," *Irish Theological Quarterly* (Maynooth) 74/4 (2009): 391. Henceforth referred to as "Karl Rahner and Human Nature."

[58]Duffy, "Experience of Grace," 51.

[59]Weger, *Karl Rahner*, 107–108.

[60]Rahner, "Relationship Between Nature and Grace," 315.

> Our actual nature is *never* "pure" nature. It is a nature installed in a supernatural order which man can never leave, even as a sinner and unbeliever. It is a nature which is continually being determined (which does not mean justified) by the supernatural grace of salvation offered to it. And these "existentials" of man's concrete, "historical" nature are not purely states of being beyond consciousness.[61]

Man is indeed "a being which is absolutely ordained for the immediate possession of God," and man "will only be mistaken if he maintains that this unconditional longing is an essential element of 'pure' nature or if he says that such pure nature, which does not exist, *could* not exist."[62]

4. A Theology of Grace: The Supernatural Existential

4.1 Uncreated Grace as God's Offer and Bestowal of Self to Man

One of the most significant contributions of Rahner in the theological discussion about grace, years before the Second Vatican Council, was his reinterpretation of the traditional understanding between created grace and uncreated grace and his proposal for the realignment of the widespread understanding of this relationship. In the neo-Scholastic theology that dominated the pre-Vatican II Church, "heavy emphasis was laid on the role of created grace as that which qualitatively modified man, enabling him to receive the divine indwelling, known as uncreated grace."[63] Even if differences among various scholastic theories may be found,

> it is true of all the scholastic theories that they see God's indwelling and his conjunction with the justified man as based exclusively upon

[61]Rahner, "Nature and Grace," 183.

[62]Rahner, "Nature and Grace," 185.

[63]Burke, *Reinterpreting Rahner*, 48.

> created grace. In virtue of the fact that the created grace is imparted to the soul, God imparts himself to it and dwells in it. Thus what we call uncreated grace (i.e., God as bestowing himself upon man) is a function of created grace.[64]

For Rahner, though, such an understanding of the relationship between created and uncreated grace does not do justice to the evidence of the Scriptures and the Church Fathers. For St. Paul (and also for St. John, according to Rahner), "man's inner sanctification is first and foremost a communication of the personal Spirit of God, that is to say, in scholastic terms, a *donum in creatum*; and sees every created grace … as a consequence and a manifestation of the possession of the uncreated grace."[65] For the Church Fathers, "the created gifts of grace [are] a *consequence* of God's substantial communication to justified men."[66] Burke thus concludes: "The sources of revelation show that we fail to do justice to the essence of uncreated grace if we hold that man has uncreated grace only because he first possesses created grace."[67] God's presence in man as uncreated grace is not the result of an efficient causation of created grace, but is "logically and really prior to created grace," such that it really "precedes created grace, which, as the ultimate disposition to the union, can exist only when God's formal causality is actually being exercised upon man."[68]

However, though the primary gift is God himself (the uncreated grace), the divine presence is inevitably accompanied by effects (created grace) in the recipient of God's bestowal of self. "[This] divine self-communication, in which God makes himself a constitutive principle

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[64]K. Rahner, "Some Implications of the Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace," in *Theological Investigations* I (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 1974), 324. Henceforth referred to as "Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace."

[65]Rahner, "Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace," 322.

[66]Rahner, "Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace," 322.

[67]Burke, *Reinterpreting Rahner*, 51.

[68]Burke, *Reinterpreting Rahner*, 52.

of the created existent without thereby losing his absolute, ontological independence, has 'divinizing' effects in the finite existent in whom this self-communication takes place."[69] These effects are not identical with God himself, for, being created gifts, they are finite. Hence, the Scholastic tradition has distinguished between uncreated grace and created grace. Uncreated grace is God himself in his loving self-communication to man; created grace is a divine gift, other than God but above man's natural powers, freely offered to us by God as transforming effects of his divine indwelling. For Rahner, the primary understanding of grace, a conception that marks a sharp departure from the scholastic tradition, is that of the uncreated grace which is the uncreated gift of God's own life bestowed upon man (and created grace as a consequence of uncreated grace, that is, of God's offer of his divine self to human beings), and his emphasis that the giver and the gift are identical.[70]

Rahner succeeds in establishing the concept of God's self-communication in a Scholastic language by reviving the Patristic notion of uncreated grace and incorporating that into a Scholastic conceptual structure as a quasi-formal cause. Simply put, this means that God communicates his very self to man and in this divine self-bestowal God becomes the intrinsic, co-constitutive principle of the human subject himself. The most distinguishing aspect of God's self-communication, then, is that it points to a relationship between God and man which can and must be understood analogously to a causality in which the cause becomes the intrinsic, constitutive principle

[69]K. Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd., 1978), 120. Henceforth referred to as *Foundations of Christian Faith.*

[70]The identity between the giver and the gift will be discussed in the next section, but by God's self-gift, Rahner means that God bestows himself to us in unsurpassable closeness: the giver is himself the gift. God does not merely bestow on us finite, created gifts, or transmit to us truths about himself; he gives us his very self.

of that which is being caused.[71] In explaining the mystery of God's self-communication, Rahner has recourse to the distinction between formal and efficient causality. In efficient causality, God brings forth something different from himself, such as in the act of creation. But in the gift of grace, when God acts supernaturally in the world, he exerts a different kind of causality, which Rahner calls "quasi-formal causality." Rahner stresses that this new "relationship" of God to the human cannot be brought under the category of efficient causality but only of formal causality:

> … for all the strictly supernatural realities with which we are acquainted (the hypostatic union, the *visio beatifica* and—as we shall go on to show here—the supernatural bestowal of grace) have this in common, that in them there is expressed a relationship of God to a creature which is not one of efficient causality (a production *out* of the cause …), and which must consequently fall under the head of formal causality (a taking up *into* the ground …): the ontological principle of the subsistence of a finite nature in the one case, the ontological principle of a finite knowledge in the other.[72]

In formal causality, "a particular existent, a principle of being is a constitutive element in another subject by the fact that it communicates itself to this subject, and does not just cause something different from itself."[73] God, the uncreated grace, becomes the formal cause of our graced acts; he becomes a co-constitutive element of the human subject. Rahner, however, appends the prefix *quasi* in order to ensure that in spite of God acting as the formal cause of human supernatural acts, he still remains the wholly infinite, transcendent and sovereign God. For Rahner, this is not exceptional from a theological point of view because whenever we apply to God a category formed from our human experiences in the world, we have to modify it and use it in

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[71]Weger, *Karl Rahner*, 109–110. Cf. Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 120–122.

[72]Rahner, "Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace," 329–330.

[73]Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 121.

an analogous way. In his own words, he says: "The only reason why it is specially to be recommended in our case that the *quasi* should be explicitly added is that it provides an emphatic reminder of the analogical nature of our concepts in the matter of a relationship to the world known only through Revelation."[74]

Rahner's use of the prefix *quasi* is indeed his solution to the problem of how we can understand God's offer of himself to man without compromising his absolute divine immutability and transcendence or without making grace purely accidental or extrinsic to the creature, since the category of formal causality can seem to imply a reduction of God's transcendence. It is also his manner of pointing up the analogical character of God-talk. Moreover, it is his way of understanding the dynamics of grace as man's elevation to participate in God's bestowal of himself without ceasing to be a creature and God's communication of himself to become a constitutive dimension of the creature's fulfillment without ceasing to be God. Though an inexpressible union takes place between God and man in this divine self-communication where God becomes a co-constitutive dimension of human subjectivity, man is not absorbed into God and God does not cease being transcendent. Human subjectivity though is modified by God's indwelling presence. Human being remains an openness to God (transcendence) but now that openness to God is transformed by God's self-bestowal, by God's unsurpassable nearness. The horizon of human transcendence is transformed, lived *now* under the new modality of God's loving nearness.[75]

4.2 Man as the Event of God's Free and Forgiving Self-communication[76]

For Rahner, human salvation consists of no other than God himself, present to us in an absolute, unsurpassable proximity, a God

[74]Rahner, "Scholastic Concept of Uncreated Grace," 330–331.

[75]O'Donnell, *Life in the Spirit*, 24.

[76]The title of this section is derived from the very title of Chapter IV of Rahner's *Foundations of Christian Faith* (p. 116); consequently, the discussion in this section will rely heavily on Rahner's ideas in that chapter.

who is not just the holy mystery, the incomprehensible, the radically remote, always distant, ever-receding horizon and *telos* of human transcendence but also the absolute nearness, offering himself in self-communication as the *a priori* horizon of human existence and fulfillment.[77] It is along these lines that he defines man as "the event of a free, unmerited and forgiving, and absolute self-communication of God,"[78] a creature who "always and everywhere stands before the claim of God's self-communication in grace."[79] In this self-communication, "God in his most proper reality makes himself the innermost constitutive element of man."[80]

Since the goal of God's self-communication is to enable each human being to enter into a loving relationship with him and thus experience salvation, it does not achieve its purpose until freely accepted by man in knowledge and freedom. Indeed, uncreated grace, God's self-communication, is always offered to us for our free acceptance, whose absence will continue to render our account of human reality incomplete. Along these lines, Rahner insists that God is not just the giver and the gift all at the same time, but also the ground or the condition for the acceptance of the gift which is himself. God, the giver, offers himself not only as "gift" but also as the very condition that makes the acceptance of the gift possible, which thus implies that God's self-communication must be present in us "as the prior condition of possibility for its acceptance."[81] In a very famous

[77]"God himself as the abiding and holy mystery, as the incomprehensible ground of man's transcendent existence is not only the God of infinite distance, but also wants to be the God of absolute closeness in a true self-communication, and he is present in this way in the spiritual depths of our existence as well as in the concreteness of our corporeal history" (Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 137).

[78]Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 116.

[79]Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 157.

[80]Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 157.

[81]Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 128. "Consequently, man can never even begin to have anything to do with God or to approach God without being

line, God, for Rahner, "is at once giver and gift and the ground of acceptance of the gift."[82]

As regards the identification between the divine giver and the divine gift, Rahner writes: "It is decisive for an understanding of God's self-communication to man to grasp that the giver in his own being is the gift, that in and through his own being the giver gives himself to the creatures as their own fulfillment."[83] Yet, Rahner also stresses that such an acceptance of the divine self-offer is itself God's grace, that God's bestowal of himself makes its own acceptance possible through the initial effects of his presence in the recipient. "[The] acceptance of God's self-communication must be based upon and is based upon God's offer itself, and hence … the acceptance of grace is once again an event of grace itself."[84] It is purely and ultimately God's prerogative "since only the absolute being of God can not only establish what is different from himself without becoming subject to this difference

already borne by God's grace" (Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 146).

[82]Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 125. In a more elaborate language, Rahner writes:

> God's self-communication is given not only as a gift, but also as the necessary condition which makes possible an acceptance of the gift, which can allow the gift really to be God, and can prevent the gift in its acceptance from being changed from God into a finite and created gift which only represents God, but is not God himself. In order to be able to accept God without reducing him, as it were, in this acceptance to our finiteness, this acceptance must be borne by God himself. God's self-communication as offer is also the necessary condition which makes its acceptance possible. (Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 128)

[83]Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 120.

[84]Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 118.

from himself, but can also at the same time communicate himself in his own reality without losing himself in that communication."[85]

If God's bestowal of self, then, is given not only as a gift but also as the necessary condition that renders possible the acceptance of the gift, then God's self-communication must be present in and available to *every* person because it is at the same time the very ground that makes man's acceptance of it possible. "God's offer of himself belongs to all men … and something … given prior to man's freedom as a task and as the condition of freedom's highest possibility."[86] However, it does not mean that because this grace of God's self-communication is offered to all, it is no longer gratuitous. Universality does not diminish the gratuitousness of grace. As Rahner laments: "Theology has been too long and too often bedeviled by the unavowed supposition that grace would be no longer grace if it were too generously distributed by the love of God!"[87] The grace of God's self-offer does not lose its supernaturality or gratuitousness and does not become "merited" and "natural" simply because it is present in *all* human beings as an existential condition of their actual existence, and "is present prior to their freedom, their self-understanding and their experience."[88] God's love, for Rahner, does not become less miraculous simply because it is given to all people at least in the mode of an offer. Therefore, "the statement that man as subject is the event of God's self-communication is a statement which refers to absolutely all men, and which expresses an existential of every person."[89] Viewed from this perspective, "everyone, really and radically every person must be understood as

[85]Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 121.

[86]Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 129. Indeed, "by making the offer of grace intrinsic to human existence, it makes it universal" (Dych, "Theology in a New Key," 14).

[87]Rahner, "Nature and Grace," 180.

[88]Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 127.

[89]Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 127.

the event of a supernatural self-communication of God, although not in the sense that every person necessarily accepts in freedom God's self-communication to man."[90]

[90]Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 127–128. According to Karen Kilby,

> [i]t is worth making clear that in speaking of a universal elevation of human nature, Rahner is not declaring that all are in a state of sanctifying grace and therefore justified. He wants to steer a delicate course, in fact, between maintaining that sanctifying grace is universally present, and everyone is in a state of grace (which would be to say too much), and maintaining that sanctifying grace is universally offered, but *given* only to those who accept the offer (which would be to say too little). His solution is to describe grace as universally present, but present as *offered*. It is, one might say, "there" in all of us, but we have a role in that we accept or reject it, and only if we accept it can we be said to be in a state of sanctifying grace, justified, saved. (Kilby, "Karl Rahner," 98)

For Galvin,

> the divine offer may be present in us in three different ways. First, it may be present simply as offer and appeal to human freedom, but as yet without personal response on our part. Even in this initial stage it has certain effects which transform the situation in which we exist. The two remaining forms presuppose our response. The offer may be present and accepted in an act which is both an event of grace and a deed of human freedom. The purpose of the divine offer is to achieve this result, which is often called the 'state of grace' in traditional terminology. But, finally, the offer may be present in rejection by our freedom. Yet, even in this instance, the offer does not vanish without a trace but remains, providing the possibility of forgiveness and involving the unrepentant sinner in a fundamental self-contradiction, since the God whom the sinner rejects is the One who offers fulfillment of the sinner's basic human longing. To guard against a possible misunderstanding, it must be stressed that neither acceptance nor rejection of the divine offer should be imagined as necessarily taking place in an explicit manner, nor as occurring in a single, clearly defined event which could be isolated from the rest of life and recognized as decisive upon subsequent reflection. (Galvin, "The Invitation of Grace," 69)

4.3 Man's Graced Existence Borne Out of the Supernatural Existential

In order to elucidate the free character of God's grace and its universal presence in all human beings, Rahner coined the expression the "supernatural existential," a language he partly borrowed from the philosopher Martin Heidegger.[91] For Heidegger, every human being possesses certain inalienable structures which he calls "existentials." An "existential," for Heidegger (and it is in this sense that Rahner, according to Conway, uses the term),[92] is "a permanent determination penetrating all elements of human existence, which reveals its meaning and structures, characterizing the human being before he engages in any action."[93] It refers to "a fundamental element in human existence, something which is a feature of all our experience rather than one object of our experience or one experience among others."[94] Simply put, it is a generic term applied to those fundamental, ontological characteristics

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This grace, which, owing to God's universal salvific will, must be proffered to every man, is best understood not as merely an occasional, intermittent intervention of God, but more correctly as something which is permanently offered to a human being in his moral freedom. Thus the supernatural horizon of transcendence towards the God of grace stands permanently open for man as he is enveloped by God's salvific will taking concrete shape in the offer of grace. This proffered grace, which enables man adequately to accept the God who communicates himself in word and action, already contains in itself some kind of (inner, not public) revelation. Thus man lives within the range of God's salvific will revealing itself in the tender of grace. (K. Riesenhuber, "Afterword: The Anonymous Christian According to Karl Rahner," in A. Roper, *The Anonymous Christian* [New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966], 160. Henceforth referred to as "The Anonymous Christian According to Karl Rahner.")

[91]Cf. O'Donnell, *Life in the Spirit*, 23.

[92]Conway, *The Anonymous Christian—A Relativised Christianity?*, 14.

[93]M. Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 44.

[94]Kilby, "Karl Rahner," 98.

or capacities of human existence which makes it specifically human and distinguishes it from other modes of existence.[95]

Rahner argues that human beings not only have natural existentials but also a supernatural one, hence a supernatural existential. The supernatural existential is the initial effect of the offer of grace, of the permeation of our entire existence by the gratuitous divine self-communication which is present even prior to human response to God's self-offer, and is operative everywhere and universally, and in fact makes human response possible. It is a fundamental structure of human life which is inescapably part of us, so primordially intrinsic to our existence that it is considered a permanent structure of human being.[96] "[It is] … 'supernatural' because it is the initial step in God's gratuitous self-communication, and [it is] … 'existential' because, abidingly present to all, it permeates the totality of life."[97] For Rahner, this supernatural existential is a result, a consequence of God's universal salvific will.[98] Since God wills all human beings to be saved, the effect of such a saving will is our being born into a human condition in which everyone is touched and permeated by God's grace, called to a supernatural destiny. Humanity is what it is because of its supernatural finality, and man lives always in creation in which grace is ubiquitous.

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[95]Lawler and Salzman, "Karl Rahner and Human Nature," 390.

[96]A. E. Carr, "Starting with the Human," in L. J. O'Donovan, ed., *An Introduction to the Themes and Foundations of Karl Rahner's Theology* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), 27.

[97]Duffy, "Experience of Grace," 46.

[98]Coffey, "The Whole Rahner," 96.

> The process begins with the universal saving will of God. This produces in each person the supernatural existential, which is the *beginning* of God's self-communication in grace. God then awaits our free decision of faith, which is at the same time the product of the permanent offer of grace and our own authentic act. This beginning of faith is fulfilled, partially in the grace of justification, and ultimately in the beatific vision. (Coffey, "The Whole Rahner," 109)

The supernatural existential, then, the initial disposition to graced union with God, which alone brings the completeness humans desire, is humanity's most intimate dimension, source and center of what human personhood is called to be.[99] The concept of supernatural existential points to the reality that in this world as it is known to us through faith and revelation, every human being exists in relation to the God who freely and gratuitously communicates his very self to humanity. The logical conclusion that can be drawn from the discussion of the supernatural existential element in every man, therefore, is that

> there is no such thing as the "natural" person, because everyone (not merely Christians) is graced with the offer of God's self-communication even prior to any human response. This means that there was never a time or a place in which God did not offer himself to all persons.[100]

While the concept of the supernatural existential resolves the extrinsicist problem of grace without compromising its freedom and gratuity, it does not solve the problem of the relationship of grace to nature.[101] To address this issue, Rahner draws on the traditional Scholastic idea of "obediential potency." "An obediential potency is a capacity which is open to fulfillment yet not frustrated or meaningless if the fulfillment is not granted."[102] Rahner regards our openness to being and our existence as spirit in world as obediential potency for the self-communication of God, as part of our nature as human being.

> If the divine self-communication did not occur, our openness toward being would still be meaningful as the condition for the possibility of human knowledge and human self-disposal in freedom. We would still have to do with God, though only as the distant horizon of our existence. But because of this same openness we are by nature possible recipients of God's self-communication, listeners for a possible divine

[99]Duffy, "Experience of Grace," 52.

[100]H. D. Egan, "Theology and Spirituality," in D. Marmion & M. E. Hines, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Rahner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 16–17.

[101]Galvin, "The Invitation of Grace," 72.

[102]Galvin, "The Invitation of Grace," 72.

> word. While the actual offer of grace transforms our concrete existence, it does not destroy that which characterizes us specifically as human—our finite openness as spirit in world. And since the obediential potency for grace is precisely human nature as such, God's free fulfillment of this capacity through his self-gift automatically becomes the most central factor in human existence.[103]

Indeed, "should God not reveal himself, the openness of man for God's transcendence would still have a positive meaning: man would note the very silence of God, which is also a free action of his with respect to his creature, and thus a kind of communication."[104]

The supernatural existential, therefore, presupposes an obediential potency, yet an obediential potency that is no longer merely a non-repugnance of grace, but an absolute and transcendental orientation towards the absolute. With the help of these two concepts, Rahner is able to uphold the freedom of grace without making grace extrinsic to human life. Because of the supernatural existential, grace permeates the whole of human existence and is operative in everything that we do. Human nature, then, as unlimited openness to being, is obediential potency for the bestowal of grace: open and even oriented towards it, yet not absolutely demanding this highest fulfillment of its potency. Grace thus remains a free divine gift which, when freely given, takes its place at the very depth and core of human existence. Man, then, may be

> free to accept or reject God's gracious self-offer, but the supernatural existential, being a permanent disposition or determination of his ontological state, continues to exercise an influence which implies that the human being must adopt a stance which is ultimately for or against God.[105]

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[103]Galvin, "The Invitation of Grace," 72. In Rahner's *Hearer of the Word*, he asserts that as "spirits," "we have an open ear for every word that may proceed from the mouth of the eternal" (Rahner, *Hearer of the Word*, 54).

[104]Riesenhuber, "The Anonymous Christian According to Karl Rahner," 158.

[105]Conway, *The Anonymous Christian—A Relativised Christianity?*, 14.

> The supernatural "existential" cannot be refused by man; it is given to him, whether he accepts or rejects the gift of grace, along with

If man decides to go against God, then he is also going against his own ontological state.

5. Conclusion

The horizon of the human spirit is transformed by the supernatural existential borne out of God's universal saving will. As a result, human intellect and will, the way we see and experience ourselves, the world and God, has been transformed by God's supernatural grace. Hence, we can and do experience, albeit often only in an indirect and hidden way, grace itself, or God himself. It is, nevertheless, experienced, unthematically, pre-reflexively, preconceptually. That is why, when asked about their experience of grace, people may truthfully deny that they have such an experience, because they may be—as Rahner formulated the controversial expression—"anonymous Christians." "[This] means in principle that the original experience of God even in his self-communication can be so universal, so unthematic and so 'unreligious' that it takes place, unnamed but really, wherever we are living out our existence."[106]

The supernatural grace which is God himself dwelling at the very core of man's existence, for Rahner, is bestowed in the mode of an offer which is not extrinsic to man but determines him to such an extent that it continues to determine his existence even when he rejects it. It is always present to every human as an offer that precedes every act and decision made by man in all his knowledge and freedom. As an offer made by God arising from his will to save all men, this supernatural existential is a concrete human reality, so that every human person is ontologically directed and dynamically oriented towards God, and this finalization

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his nature. Inasmuch as man's whole nature is permeated by it and culminates in it, the person who rejects his supernatural vocation stands with his whole being in the shadow of doom and is unable to keep any remnant of his nature sound and unscathed. (Riesenhuber, "The Anonymous Christian According to Karl Rahner," 159.)

[106]Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 132.

happens in the inmost depths of his being, something that no man, even if he rejects the offer or is guilty of sin, can escape from.

Since God calls all human beings to a supernatural end, human existence is other than it might have been without that divine call. God's offer of grace, which is himself, is present all throughout our life, transforming our consciousness. Since all our human acts which engage the depth of our freedom have an effect in our relationship with God, acceptance or rejection of grace takes place not just when we perform "religious" acts.[107] It occurs every time we truly exercise our human freedom, even if the act seems to have nothing to do with God. Echoing Rahner's thought, Egan could only say, and rightly so: "[That] God is in fact with us, we have no choice. One may be able freely to say no to God with one's entire being, but one can never separate oneself from God's self-communication."[108] In Rahner's own beautiful words: "It is both terrible and comforting to dwell in the inconceivable nearness of God, and so to be loved by God that the first and last gift is infinity and inconceivability itself. But we have no choice. God is with us."[109]

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[107]Rahner explains that

> [the] experience we are appealing to here is not primarily and ultimately the experience which a person has when he decides to explicitly and in a deliberate and responsible way upon some *religious* activity, for example, prayer, a cultic act, or a reflective and theoretical occupation with religious themes … [but] rather the experience which is given to every person prior to such reflexive religious activity and decisions, and perhaps in a form … which seemingly are not religious at all. (Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 132)

[108]Egan, "Theology and Spirituality," 17.

[109]K. Rahner, *Prayers for a Lifetime* (New York: Crossroad, 1984), 3.

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COMMUNION IN THE WORD THROUGH MARY*

Luis Antonio G. Tagle, D.D.

The 50th International Eucharistic Congress has been providing us with a wealth of reflection on the Eucharist: Communion with Christ and with one another. Having explored communion in baptism, in marriage and family, in the priestly ministry, in reconciliation and in suffering and healing, we now turn to communion in the Word through Mary. Allow me to develop this fascinating theme in two parts. In the first section I will dwell on communion in the Word of God, and in the second I will meditate on Mary's experience of communion in the Word as a model for the Church.

Part I: Communion in the Word of God

How will we approach this topic? It might help to turn to ordinary human experience. One common way of establishing a connection with another human being is through conversation or dialogue. This occurs so often that we seldom notice its significance. Take a person who sees a good movie, excitedly shares it with a friend, who in turn goes to the cinema to watch it due to the friend's satisfying experience.

*Lecture given at 50th International Eucharistic Congress, Dublin, Ireland, on July 16, 2012, by Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle, Archbishop of Manila.

Then they spend hours talking about the film, digressing many times to the stories of their lives. Or take another person whose marriage is falling apart, calls up a friend who becomes equally distressed after listening intently. Then they spend hours talking about the sorrows of life, finding hope in each other's presence. We now see that human communion ordinarily happens when someone begins to tell a story to another person who listens, enters the experience, and makes it one's own. In the exchange that follows, their roles shift and alternate: the one who narrates also listens, the one who listens spontaneously narrates. Two persons and their unique worlds meet in a unity that goes beyond them.

This simple process called communion in the word is at the heart of the mystery and mission of the Church. St. John vividly portrays it in his first letter (1:1–4):

> What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we looked upon and touched with our hands concerns the Word of life—for the life was made visible; we have seen it and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was made visible to us —what we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have communion with us; for our communion is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. We are writing this so that our joy may be complete.

Human communion. What St. John is describing is similar to the ordinary experiences of communion between two or more human beings we mentioned earlier. But St. John's account involves a special person, called an apostle who proclaims a special word to a listener. Their converse blossoms into communion with each other, which in reality is their communion with the Father and with Jesus Christ, the Word made visible in the flesh. What a great mystery unfolding in a quite ordinary human experience! Let us delve deeper into this beautiful text.

What word does the apostle share with his listener? It is the Word of life, present with the Father and made visible. The word that the apostle proclaims is Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Simply put, the apostle's word is Jesus Christ. We can see it plainly in the New Testament. After Pentecost, Peter proclaimed to his hearers the person of Jesus the Nazorean sent by God, crucified but whom God raised

from the dead, making him Lord and Messiah (Acts 2:22–24, 36). Peter declared that salvation comes to us in the name of Jesus (Acts 4:12). But let us not forget that Peter was able to proclaim Jesus because he had heard, seen and touched Jesus.

Another great apostle, Paul tirelessly spoke of nothing but Jesus Christ. Not being a member of the Twelve, he nevertheless was graced by a special revelation from the Risen Lord that changed his life radically (Acts 9:1–19). But he received his knowledge about the earthly life and ministry of Jesus from others who had spoken to him about Jesus. In 1 Corinthians, he said, "For I handed on to you as of first importance what I also received" (1 Cor. 15:3). His encounter with the living Lord and the story of Jesus transmitted to him have equipped him to proclaim Him as the Messiah and Lord.

In a nutshell, the apostle proclaims the person of Jesus Christ, the story of his ministry, preaching and healing centred on the Reign of God. He narrates how people rejected and crucified Him and how God raised Him from death. At His resurrection, Jesus was revealed as the Anointed One of God, indeed, the divine Son of God who exercises full dominion over the world and its future. Whether it is Peter, Paul, Stephen, Philip or Mary of Magdala, the joyful story told is that of Jesus Christ and the destiny of the world in Him who is Divine Saviour and Messiah.

We must note that the apostle renders an objective account concerning Jesus. But he can hand on facts about Jesus because he has experienced Him personally. He has heard, seen, looked upon and touched Jesus. Thus an apostle's familiarity with Jesus enables him to be the source of a historical proclamation about Him. Here the objective and the subjective, the factual and the personal meet. Those who have listened to Jesus can tell this story to others in a credible way. Then their listeners accept Jesus into their dreams, joys, pains, hopes, frustrations, questions and wisdoms. They bring all these that comprise their worlds as they listen towards communion.

You might say, "Well and good for the original companions of Jesus. They saw Him firsthand. But how can we who are separated from Jesus by centuries talk meaningfully about Him?" Let us not

forget that Jesus is alive. He is truly raised from the dead! He is with us now. He rules the world. He continues to visit the homes of many Marthas and Marys of our time to enjoy a restful meal. He continues to weep at our tombs the way he did at the tomb of Lazarus his friend. He continues to quietly call on the Zacchaeuses of our age to pay back what they have stolen. He continues to have compassion for widows who carry their children to the grave. He continues to see the hungry crowds and asks us to feed them with our five loaves and two fish. He continues to welcome the weary and heavy burdened to find rest in Him. He continues to cry out to God with the suffering victims, "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" My brothers and sisters, please do not say we have not seen, heard, looked upon and touched Jesus. Yes, we have. If only we could listen to Him more attentively, we will have stories of Jesus to tell.

Communion with Christ and the Father. St. John claims that the human communion between the messenger and listener centred on the Word of life is not merely a human transaction. It is at the same time their communion with Jesus Christ and with the Father. In other words, this quite ordinary human togetherness has a transcendent dimension.

We already said that the word proclaimed by the apostle is not only a historical fact that could be verified by scientific methods but also an experience of the mystery of the Word of God made flesh and who now lives eternally with the Father. Where two or three are in communion with each other on account of Jesus, He is in their midst. This is not just a sociological fact. We believe that this communion with Christ is the action of the Holy Spirit who teaches and reminds us of all that Jesus taught (John 14:26). The same Holy Spirit enables us to confess "Jesus is Lord" (1 Cor. 12:3). The Spirit "assimilates" us with Jesus Christ so that as children in the Son we can also cry out "Abba, Father" (Romans 8:14–15). Now it is clear that communion with Jesus in the Holy Spirit brings about communion with the Father. Jesus reveals the Father to us so that whoever sees Him sees the Father also (John 8:9). As the Way (John 14:6), Jesus gives us access to the Father (Ephesians 2:18) and to the Father's house where he prepares a place for us (John 14:2–3).

What a marvellous communion in the Word that gives us weak and sinful human beings a participation in the eternal communion of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit! This is the mystery of the Church celebrated in the Eucharist where the Word proclaimed and received is the same Word become flesh, eaten as the Bread of life. Communion in the Word, experienced at every Eucharist, is one contribution of the Church to the building up of a world of unity and peace.

We see in our time so much exchange of words happening at high speed and across national boundaries. But unfortunately the world is as divided as ever. Why is communion not achieved in spite of the exchange of words? Because Jesus is not the word they share and receive. When financial wizards talk about ways of manipulating the economy for their own profit, you do not call that communion—that is corruption! When politicians talk to people about grand promises without intending to fulfil them, you do not call that communion—that is cheating! When the powerful "negotiate" among themselves while neglecting the weak, you do not call that communion—that is oppression! When so-called enterprising persons deal with each other on how women and children could be profitable merchandise, you do not call that communion—that is slavery! When communion consists in Jesus who is the Word of Life then the common good becomes central. And that is pleasing to God's eyes.

To close this section, let me tell you a story. On my way back to the Philippines from one of my trips to Rome, I had a lay-over of more than three hours in an airport. To while away the time, I went around looking for a coffee bar. I found one, placed my order and paid. This is a normal human transaction, so I thought. The man who handed the coffee and the receipt asked, "Are you a priest?" A bit surprised, I said, "Yes." Then the next question, "Are you a Filipino?" Now truly amused, I smiled and said, "Yes." He turned to one corner of the store, and while waving to some people hidden from my sight, said, "He is the one! Come!" A group of Filipinos working in that airport came rushing to me. They said that they followed on YouTube or Facebook my weekly reflections on the readings for Sunday Mass shown on television, entitled *The Word Exposed*. Due to their irregular

work schedule, they could not always be present at Mass. Through the Word they experience some form of communion with Jesus, they said. One woman commented, "Through your stories, we feel united with our families back home. How we miss them!" Communion in the Word can happen on-line and in unexpected places. We shared our stories until my coffee turned cold.

Part II: Communion in the Word through Mary

The Blessed Virgin Mary experienced communion in the Word in an utterly unique way. As a listener to and the bearer of the Word made flesh, she is the model and teacher for the Church. Let us contemplate her Immaculate Heart, where she guarded and pondered the mystery of the Word.

In her journey of faith, Mary initially received proclamations about Jesus, the Word of God who will become her son in the flesh. God sent messengers or "apostles" to her. From them she heard about her Son.

A. In the annunciation (Luke 1:26–28), the angel Gabriel sent by God proclaims a word to Mary. The very greeting "Rejoice!" signals that a special moment is about to happen to Mary and her people Israel that awaits the promised Messiah. Gabriel tells Mary that she will bear a son. But who is this child? In the words of the angel, Mary learns that her son will be great, for he is the Son of the Most High, the Son of David who will rule forever. This child will be holy, the Son of God. She who is a virgin will conceive by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. His name shall be Jesus, for God saves.

The angel proclaims to Mary a word about the Son of God. She listens intelligently, accepts in faith and utters her word, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word!" This is a singular moment of communion between God and Mary. By calling herself the handmaid of the Lord, she does not debase herself but accepts the grace of being part of God's saving action. She speaks in union with her people Israel in welcoming the Messiah that

they have been pining for. Mary becomes Daughter Zion, the Ark of the New Covenant, by her communion with God in the Word.

By being in communion with the Word, the Church like Mary will actively promote God's saving plan in the world—not advancing its own projects but the will of God.

B. Let us now follow Mary as she visits her kinswoman Elizabeth, known to be barren but who is now with child (Luke 1:39–56). Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth tells Mary that the fruit of her womb is the Lord. She is the bearer of the Lord! As David danced before the Ark of the Covenant, now the baby in Elizabeth's womb dances before the Ark of the New Covenant.

Mary listens, accepts and utters her word, a song in praise of the merciful God, the immortal Magnificat. She sings of God's mercy in her life and through her, in the life of the poor and the oppressed of Israel. In her prayer she gives voice again to Sarah, Leah and Judith. In her song, we hear Miriam, Deborah and Hanna singing once more. Accepting the revelation about her son through Elizabeth, Mary becomes the mother of grace and hope for the poor.

By being in communion with the Word, the Church like Mary will be the companion of the poor so that they could recover their voice and sing for joy.

C. Then the time for Mary to give birth to her Son comes (Luke 2:1–20). They are in Bethlehem, the city of David. The Son of the Most High God is born in a manger. God sends messengers to tell Mary about her Son; they are the lowly shepherds. An angel that appeared to them at their night watch said that a Savior who is Messiah and Lord was born in Bethlehem. This birth would be news of joy to all the people. Indeed, a multitude of the heavenly host appeared to them in joyful praise of God.

Mary, with Joseph by her side, listens, accepts and responds in silence. What mother would not be rendered speechless by such a report about her son? Amazed like the rest who hear the story of the shepherds, she keeps all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.

The most meaningful word is uttered in silence. Gazing upon the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes, she nurtures her communion in the Word through silence.

By being in communion with the Word, the Church like Mary will gladly listen to the lowly and the poor with reverential silence, listening to God speaking through them.

D. With Mary's ritual purification over, it is now time to present the Child Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:22–38). God sends another poor man to utter a word about Jesus to Mary and Joseph—Simeon, filled with the Holy Spirit. With him is Anna, a poor widow. Like the many poor people of Israel, they search for freedom and joy in the promised Messiah. They recognize the Child. Simeon tells his parents that he is salvation (his name is Jesus), a light for revelation to the Gentiles and glory for Israel. In this Child, the nations of the world and Israel will be gathered in communion. But he will also be a sign to be contradicted, destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel.

Mary and Joseph are amazed at these words. She comes to the Temple to offer to God no less than what God has given her, namely God's Son who is her son. But the news of joy from Simeon is coupled with the disturbing word of contradiction that will not spare Mary, for she will be pierced by a sword. What is this sword? It is the Word of God, living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword penetrating even between soul and spirit (Hebrews 4:12). The sword is Jesus, the Word of God. She is the mother of the One who will bear the cross. Mary listens, accepts and responds in amazement. She goes home to Nazareth where the Child grows in wisdom and grace. She nurtures Jesus her son, who will bring her both joy and sorrow.

By being in communion with the Word, the Church like Mary will proclaim Jesus in season or out of season, whether accepted or rejected, joyful with Him, sorrowful with Him (2 Timothy 4:2).

At this point, a shift occurs. From now on, the messenger who will speak to Mary about Jesus is Jesus Himself.

E. The scene is the annual Passover Feast. The family joins many pilgrims to Jerusalem. The boy Jesus is twelve years old (Luke 2:41–52).

After completing their duties in the festivities and offering of sacrifice, Mary and Joseph return to Nazareth but Jesus stays behind, unknown to them. After three days of searching, they find him in the temple, listening to the teachers and asking them questions. Mary asks the boy why he did it to her and his father, to which he responds, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" The Mother now listens to the stunning word of her Son. "Who is this boy?" she must be asking. Maybe thoughts like these cross her mind: sitting with the teachers in his Father's house, Jesus will surely fulfil the Law and the Prophets. Seeing the blood of the animals offered in his Father's house, he knows that the sacrifice of a pure heart is more pleasing to the Father than burnt offerings of animals.

Mary listens and accepts Jesus' enigmatic word to her, even if she does not understand. As before, she keeps all these things in her heart. In that immaculate heart overflowing with faith, she knows that one day her Son will disappear again. She knows that her heart will be pierced when that day comes. She knows that she will see him again after three days. She knows her heart will rejoice on that blessed third day.

By being in communion with the Word, the Church like Mary will look for Jesus among the lost, wounded, tired and abandoned, and lead them with rejoicing to the Father's house.

F. Let us now turn to the public of ministry of Jesus. The wedding at Cana is the site of his first "sign" (John 2:1–12). Mary tells Jesus that they have run short of wine. He utters a word to his mother that unsettles us: "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come." For Jesus, his hour is the moment of glorification on the Cross, when life that is given up produces much fruit unto eternity (John 12:23–26). Maybe out of lack of understanding or out of helplessness, Mary listens, accepts and utters her own words to the servers: "Do whatever he tells you." They obey her and Jesus. And the miracle happens. It is the beginning of Jesus' hour after all. The wine is God's word and wisdom that will flow in abundance at the coming of the Messiah. Mary, who is obedient to her Son's word, now asks the servers to give Jesus full obedience as well. In the communion of obedience to the word, miracles happen.

We run out of wine too: the wine of wisdom, understanding, insight, energy and meaning. God seems to be unreachable at times. When those moments come, know that Mary is close by. She sees our empty jars. She approaches Jesus for us. If we listen to Jesus and do what he tells us, those jars will overflow with unbelievably good wine.

By being in communion with the Word, the Church like Mary will be attentive to the emptiness experienced by our age and lead people not to us but to Jesus, for he alone can make miracles happen through his word.

G. According to the gospels, the last time Jesus talks to Mary is before he breathes his last on the cross (John 19:23–28). Jewish thought teaches that death disrupts communion, but not so for Jesus. On this hour of his glorification, with the four pagan soldiers vying for his tunic, and four women, with the beloved disciple mourning at the foot of his cross, he tells his mother, "Woman, behold your son." Then he says to the disciple, "Behold, your mother." Jesus reveals and creates his mother as the mother of the new family of disciples, of those who hear the word of God and act on it (Luke 8:21). Jesus' death, freely embraced in communion with God and with sinners, does not destroy community but gives birth to a new family. By the word of Jesus, Mary becomes the mother of both his disciples and the people called to believe in him. She responds to Jesus by doing what he says—she goes to the home of the beloved disciple.

Even now, Jesus beholds mothers and fathers who lose their children to hunger, diseases, wars, illegal drugs, sex tourism, immorality, false philosophies, and empty utopias. Jesus tells us to take care of the sorrowful mothers and fathers for they are our parents too. He tells us to look after the lost children of the world, for they are our daughters and sons too. No wound is so great that it could not be healed by love. By being in communion with the Word, the Church like Mary will be the seed of the new family of justice, healing and peace.

I recall a dark day when I was still a priest serving in my home diocese. One morning a young priest, 32 years of age, was found dead.

His body, stabbed 32 times, was left in a rice field. He was a former student of mine. At the wake, I walked his mother toward the coffin. Upon seeing her lifeless son she shed tears of sorrow and cried out in prayer, "My God, you know how heavy my heart was when my son entered the seminary. But you prevailed. So I surrendered him to you. Now you took him again from me. If it is your wish, then I give him totally to you. He is all yours." I could not believe what I was hearing. A few days later, in a forum on justice that we attended, someone asked her, "What would you do if the killer of your son is presented to you?" I thought it was an insensitive question but before I could stop her, she already responded, "Dear police, do not hesitate to bring my son's killer to me. Do not fear. I will not hurt him. I just want to know why he did it. I will observe the dictates of justice but deep in my heart, I will forgive for Jesus tells me to forgive. My love might help make the killer a better person." Once again, I could not believe what was happening. But I know we were again at the foot of the cross and hearing the same words, "Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother." Those days were followed by many more weeks of listening to the stories of the priest's mother about her son and her family, stories that I would hear for the first time. I could not help but think then that I have come to know the priest much better now that he is gone but made more vividly present by his mother's stories.

H. I believe this also happened to Mary and her new family. After Jesus' ascension into heaven, the extended family of disciples with Mary went to the upper room to await the promised Holy Spirit who would remind us about Jesus (Acts 1:13–14). I would like to think that with the help of the same Spirit that overshadowed her at the annunciation, Mary could now understand better the things about Jesus that she had kept in her heart. Now she could proclaim her stories to her new sons and daughters: what she has heard, seen with her eyes, looked upon and touched with her hands concerning her Son, the Word of life. She must have ended every story by saying, "Do whatever he tells you." Like Mary, go and tell the good news of Jesus to the ends of the earth. And do whatever he tells you. Amen.

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HOW DOES JESUS CHRIST SAVE US?

An Indian Approach

Michael Amaladoss, S.J.

The question that Asians are often asked to answer is "How is Jesus the Universal Saviour, even of people who do not accept him in faith?" The underlying concern is the need to proclaim the good news of Jesus to everyone so that all may be saved. The sub-theme, of course, is that they will be converted and join the Church. "How does Jesus Christ save us?" is a question that is rarely discussed. It is taken for granted. It has been so from the beginning of the Church. The Christians in the early centuries had heated debates about *who* Jesus Christ was. This led to the definition in Chalcedon that Jesus Christ is one person in two natures. But its implications for salvation were not much discussed.

Though there were many explanations, as we shall see, the theory of his death as a vicarious expiatory sacrifice became the common belief in the Latin Church. Jesus was said to have suffered, shed blood and died for our sins. This view finds expression in the liturgical prayers and celebrations. The suffering body of Jesus starts to appear on the cross only in the 10th century C.E.[1] St. Anselm provides the theological

[1]See Rita Nakashima Brock & Rebecca Ann Parker, *Saving Paradise: How Christianity Traded Love of This World for Crucifixion and Empire* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2008).

foundations for the theory. In the Latin tradition, two other theories were also popular. One saw salvation as the victory of Jesus over the powers of evil. The other suggested that Jesus has set before us an example that all have to follow. This last theory was proposed by Peter Abelard and was considered inadequate, though some theologians do use it even now. The death of Jesus was not merely a historical fact. It becomes a theological fact and affirmation when we say that Jesus died "for our sake."[2] "What does this mean?" is the question.

The Greek Fathers also used similar theories to explain the process of salvation. But they had an important addition. They spoke of salvation as "deification"—*theosis*. Irenaeus said: "Jesus Christ became what we are in order that we might become what he himself is."[3] Athanasius declared: "The Word became man so that we might be deified."[4] Sometimes it may have been just a metaphor; at other times, more real. As an Indian, I find this theory more attractive. I shall suggest later that such a theory will find a deeper meaning in the perspectives of *advaita* or aduality of the Indian tradition. But at the moment let us get back to history.

Many Theories

Jesus was condemned to death, tortured and nailed to the cross leading to his death. His rising again did not cancel out his suffering and death. The apostles had to find a meaning for this event. They obviously went back to their socio-cultural and religious experience looking for models. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, writing on Pauline theology in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*, suggests that Paul is focusing only on Jesus' death, resurrection and exaltation. He continues:

> When Paul looked back at these moments, he realized what Christ Jesus accomplished for humanity, and he spoke of the effects of that accomplishment (the "objective redemption," as it has often been called)

[2]The Nicene Creed.

[3]*AdvHaer.* 5, preface.

[4]*De incarn.* 54.

> under ten different images: justification, salvation, reconciliation, expiation, redemption, freedom, sanctification, transformation, new creation, and glorification. For each of these images expresses a distinctive aspect of the mystery of Christ and his work …. The multiple images have been derived from his Hellenistic or Jewish backgrounds and have been applied by him to that Christ-event and its effects.[5]

Paul also mixes metaphors. In a single passage, he can evoke more than one. He tells the Romans:

> Much more surely then, now that we have been justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life. (Rom. 5:9–10)

Commenting on this passage, Stephen Finlan remarks:

> Paul often uses one metaphor to interpret another. Believers were: justified (judicial) by his blood (sacrificial or martyr image, or both), saved from the wrath of God (at Judgment Day), were reconciled (social/diplomatic) to God through the death of his Son (sacrifice and martyrdom).[6]

It is not my aim here to go into the complexities of Pauline theology of salvation. I just wish to point out that Paul uses images that would have been familiar to Jews and Greeks to explain a mystery, perhaps not giving any of them a special importance.

A modern theologian, Edward Schillebeeckx, says:

> The salvation brought by Jesus was not directly depicted as a birth from God or an adoption, but first and foremost as a new way of life and fulfillment, as redemption and forgiveness of sins …. Sixteen key concepts, which occur repeatedly in all parts of the New Testament are enough to give us a good idea of the New Testament understanding of what redemption through Christ Jesus is from and what it is for.[7]

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[5]*The New Jerome Biblical Commentary,* 1397.

[6]Stephen Finlan, *Problems with Atonement* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2005), 58. See also 2 Cor. 5.

[7]E. Schillebeeckx, *Christ: The Christian Experience in the Modern World* (London: SCM Press, 1980), 477.

These key concepts are: salvation and redemption, being freed from forms of servitude and slavery, redemption as liberation through purchase or for a ransom, reconciliation after dispute, redemption as satisfaction, peace, redemption as the expiation for sins through a sin-offering, redemption as the forgiveness of sins, justification and sanctification, salvation in Jesus as legal aid, being redeemed for community, being freed for brotherly love, being freed for freedom, renewal of man and the world, life in fullness, and victory over alienating "demonic powers."[8]

I just want to point out that many images have been used in the Bible to understand how Jesus Christ saves. It is a pity that the Latin Church privileges one of them, namely that of expiatory sacrifice. However it may be explained and spiritualized, it presents to us an image of God who is a vindictive and wrathful judge who imposes punishment and demands blood. In a feudal culture, such an image may have been compulsive. But such a God is quite unlike the Father of Jesus, who is loving and forgiving, waiting, like the "prodigal Father," for the least sign of repentance on our part. Jesus demonstrates this in his life and miracles (e.g., Mt. 9:2–8), making it very clear, quoting Hosea: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice" (Mt. 9:13).

The sacrificial image of salvation has not gone uncontested.[9] Ernst Käsemann wrote: "If we have any concern for the clarity of the Gospel and its intelligibility to the present generation, theological responsibility compels us to abandon the ecclesiastical and biblical tradition which interprets Jesus' death as sacrificial."[10] Having expressed my dissatisfaction with the predominant Latin image, it is not my intention here to examine and evaluate all the images of the

[8]Schillebeeckx, *Christ: The Christian Experience in the Modern World*, 477–512.

[9]Cf. N. Schreurs, "A Non-Sacrificial Interpretation of Christian Redemption," in T. Merrigan & J. Haers, eds., *The Myriad Christ* (Leuven: University Press, 2000); E. Käsemann, *Perspectives on Paul* (London: SCM Press, 1971), 42–45. S.W. Sykes, ed., *Sacrifice and Redemption* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) presents both sides of the debate—especially the last two papers.

[10]Ernst Käsemann, *Jesus Means Freedom* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 114.

biblical and Latin tradition. But tradition shows that, at the level of images, a pluralism is certainly possible. The images may often be complementary. They are necessarily incomplete. They may be more or less adequate. It is significant that *theosis* does not figure in the list of Schillebeeckx. Such a situation allows me to propose one more image coming out of the Indian religious context. But before doing so let me look at the Greek tradition.

Deification or *Theosis*

The Greek Fathers of the Church also use many of the biblical images to understand the mystery of salvation. But in addition, they also speak of *theosis* or deification. The image of "deification" may be traced back to Peter's second letter where he speaks of God's great promises "so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4). Commenting on this, James Starr concludes, offering us also a description of *theosis*:

> Does 2 Peter mean deification? … If the term means equality with God or elevation to divine status or absorption into God's essence, the answer is no. If it means the participation in and enjoyment of specific divine attributes and qualities, in part now and fully at Christ's return, then the answer is—most certainly—yes.[11]

For the Greek Fathers, deification is not a mere metaphor but indicates a real participation. This is possible because God is seen, not merely as a static essence, but as a dynamic source of "energies." God has created humans in God's image and according to God's likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26–27). The goal of deification is not, therefore, an afterthought. It is there already in creation. It finds expression in the Incarnation and is communicated to everyone in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Its fullness is achieved in the Eucharistic

[11]James Starr, "Does 2 Peter 1:4 Speak of Deification?" in Michael J. Christensen & Jeffery A. Wittung, eds., *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 90.

communion in which everything becomes the body of Christ. Such a vision distances itself from the narrow and unilateral emphasis on the death of Jesus. Sergius Bulgakov says:

> The Incarnation is the interior basis of creation, its *final cause*. God did not create the world to hold it at a distance from him, at that insurmountable metaphysical distance that separates the Creator from the creation, but in order to surmount that distance and unite himself completely with the world; not only from the outside, as Creator, nor even as providence, but from within: "the Word became flesh."[12]

The Greek Fathers, like Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory of Nyssa and Maximus the Confessor, explore the image of deification with the help of Platonic philosophy. Gregory of Nyssa speaks of the human's connaturality for the divine.

> Since he was created to take part in divine blessings, man must have a natural affinity with that object in which he has participation. It is just like an eye which, thanks to the luminous rays which nature provides it, is enabled to have communion in the light …. It is just so with man, who since he was created to enjoy the divine blessings must have some affinity with that in which he has been called to participate. And so he has been endowed with life, reason, wisdom, and all those truly divine advantages so that each one of them should cause that innate desire of his to be demonstrated within him. Since immortality is one of those benefits that are appropriate to deity, it follows that our nature cannot be deprived even of this in its constitution, but must possess within itself the disposition to immortality in order that (thanks to this innate capacity) it might be able to recognize that which is transcendent far beyond it and might thus experience the desire for divine eternity.[13]

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[12]S. Boulgakoff, *Du Verbe incarné* (Paris: Aubier, 1943), 98, quoted in Michael J. Christensen & Jeffery A. Wittung, eds., *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 36.

[13]Gregory of Nyssa, *Catechetical Oration 5*, quoted in J.A. McGuckin, "The Strategic Adaptation of Deification in the Cappadocians," in Michael J. Christensen & Jeffery A. Wittung, eds., *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 104.

Maximus the Confessor sets deification in the context of Trinitarian *perichoresis*. This brings out the reciprocal relations. Summarizing his thoughts, Elena Vishnevskaya writes:

> Maximus's idea of divinization subsumes a genuinely reciprocal relation between the believer and God, or rather the entire Trinity whereby the divine Persons, while three, operate and will as one. Maximus firmly upholds the Trinity, itself a "personal reality of perichoretic activity and supreme union. It is the mystery of love and the mystery of freedom which is the mystery of God, three in one."[14] And it is in keeping with this Trinitarian ineffability that God, in the greatest act of self-donation, interpenetrates into human existence and, at the same time, opens himself up for human participation, that is, the Trinitarian Godhead creates conditions for mutual indwelling in divinization. The believer reciprocates in love by entering into the life of the divine Persons—even while here on earth—and fulfills the human vocation of divinization as intended by God from eternity.[15]

A Brief Comparison

The Greek Fathers, though they were using the image of *theosis*, did not abandon the transactional theories familiar to the Latin tradition, but compared to *theosis,* the transaction theories look quite inadequate. There have been efforts to make them more palatable, but without much success in my opinion.[16] What is the reason? The Latin tradition is dualistic, distinguishing sharply the Creator from the creature. The

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[14]George C. Berthold, "The Cappadocian Roots of Maximus the Confessor," in F. Heinzer & C. von Schönborn, eds., *Maximus Confessor, Actes du Symposium sur Maxime le Confesseur* (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1982), 56.

[15]Elena Vishnevskaya, "Divinization as Perichoretic Embrace in Maximus the Confessor," in Michael J. Christensen & Jeffery A. Wittung, eds., *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 142–143.

[16]See Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall & Gerald O'Collins, eds., *The Redemption* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Gerald O'Collins, *Jesus Our Redeemer: A Christian Approach to Salvation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

distance is further increased by sin. The human is totally helpless. There is also the dualism between God and the personified evil powers. The Greek Fathers too may have used these dualistic images, but they transcend them when they speak of *theosis*. There is a basic relationship between God and humans created in God's image. Humans, of course, will have to keep growing into this image. But a foundation has been laid in creation. Besides, the Word and the Spirit are in them, empowering them. Of course, everything is God's gift, including the interaction in love between God and humans. But the interaction is part of the growth process. We see this in the human and the divine in Jesus. This makes human participation easier since it passes through the Incarnate Word in the indwelling Spirit. Such a perichoretic vision is available in the New Testament. But it is usually ignored.

The Biblical Basis

Creation is not something projected outside God. A meditation on John's gospel will be helpful.

> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it …. The true light, which enlightens every one, was coming into the world. … He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God. … And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. … From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. (Jn. 1:3, 5, 9, 11–12, 14, 19)

Creation is seen as participatory. Everything comes to be in and through the Word and is destined to share in its glory. It is a process and this includes a possible dissension that will have to be overcome. But the fullness of glory is promised to all who believe. Jesus speaks of his death on the cross as a "lifting up" when he will draw all things to himself (Jn. 12:32). His death is his own glorification and his glorification of his Father (Jn. 17:1). This glorification is the mutual indwelling. "As you,

Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us" (Jn. 17:21). For John such glorification starts with the incarnation (Jn. 1:14).

Paul has his own image of deification.

> Now the Lord is Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Cor. 3:17–18)

The freedom of the Spirit enables us to address God as "Abba" with the same intimacy as Jesus, becoming joint-heirs with Christ (Rom. 8:1–17). Creation also is yearning to participate in this communion (Rom. 8:19–20). Another Pauline image for salvation is fullness. In his letter to the Colossians, Paul evokes this image and also shows how it is linked to Christ himself as the image of God and as the realization of the cosmic fullness.

> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominations or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of the cross. (Col. 1:15–20)

While Paul manages to slip in the "blood of the cross" at the end, his image of cosmic and divine-human fullness, centered on Christ, starting with creation and reaching out to the last days, is breath-taking. Both John and Paul envisage this communion in which "God is all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28), not in juridical terms, but in organic images, borrowed from Jesus himself: the Vine and the branches for John (Jn. 15:1–10) and the body of Christ for Paul (1 Cor. 12:12–31; Eph. 4:1–16). In the context of this New Testament tradition it is more appropriate to speak of salvation in a participative rather than transactional language. The participative language also embraces the whole of history and not merely the particular event of the death of Jesus on the cross.

A Philosophical Orientation

It is true that the Greek Fathers were guided by Platonic philosophy in exploring the event of salvation. One of the consequences is that they stress formal rather than efficient causality. Gösta Hallonsten comments:

> *Theosis* is connected to a certain anthropology, often based on the distinction between image and likeness and always teleologically oriented in a dynamic way toward the prototype. This prototype, the real Image of God, is Christ. Thus the importance of the Incarnation as the central point in the economy of salvation. This anthropology, further, is based on or implies a view of the relation between creation and its Creator that is characterized by formal causality and implies the continual presence and action of grace or the energies of God from the beginning to the end.[17]

This comment leads us to raise and clarify the philosophical question and also link it to the Indian philosophical tradition. In the Latin tradition, creation is understood in terms of efficient causality. The created world is projected out there, autonomous in its own functioning. The interaction between beings, including the Creator, is explained in terms of causality, specially efficient and instrumental. The Greek tradition uses, rather, formal causality, especially when "spiritual" beings capable of knowledge and love are involved. While expressing a preference for the Greek tradition, I would like to suggest here that the Indian vision of *advaita* or aduality can be useful for Indians (and other Asians familiar with Taoism) to explore the mystery of salvation.

The *Advaita*

In talking about the *advaita*, I shall follow a common-sense approach rather than the numerous philosophical schools in India

[17]Gösta Hallonsten, "*Theosis* in Recent Research: A Renewal of Interest and a Need for Clarity," in Michael J. Christensen & Jeffery A. Wittung, eds., *Partakers of the Divine Nature: The History and Development of Deification in the Christian Traditions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 287.

which talk about it.[18] *A-dvaita* means not-two. The Absolute (God) and the universe are not-two. It does not say that they are "one." It seeks to avoid both monism/pantheism and dualism. It denies an exclusive focus either on the One or the Many. It affirms an inner differentiation and relationship.

An easy way of understanding the principle of *advaita* is to look at the human. The human is a spirit in a body. I am my body. I am not only my body. I am not in my body. The body is not an instrument. I do not simply have a body. The body is more my self-expression. My body also relates me to the others and the world. The spirit has a certain priority. It can act alone. It can also act with the body. The body is dependent on the spirit. It is nothing by itself. While the dependence is total at the level of being a body, it has a certain autonomy of functioning. The body reacts to internal and external stimuli, sometimes automatically. A tasty dish makes the mouth water. A sudden noise makes the body shudder. The spirit and the body are not two beings. They are not simply "one" either. There is a duality in unity. There will be no body without the spirit. There will be no human either without the body. There is a relationship. But the body can hinder the smooth functioning of the spirit. The spirit can affect the body. We speak of psychosomatic diseases. The integration between the spirit and the body is not a given. It can grow. The yoga tries to do this. The human person is an advaitic union of the spirit and the body. As a matter of fact, the Vaishnavite theologian Ramanuja uses the human as a symbol to understand the Absolute in relation to the universe. He calls the world as the body of God. There is a dependent relationship. But it is one-sided. In the growth of the person the relationship can have a history. We Christians think that we cannot be really human without a body. That is why we believe in the resurrection of the body.

We can now project this composite image on Jesus. He is divine and human. His divine nature is eternal. He becomes human in time. The

[18]For a simple philosophical exposition, see Eric Lott, *Vedantic Approaches to God* (London: Macmillan, 1980); John Braisted Carman, *The Theology of Ramanuja: An Essay in Interreligious Understanding* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).

humanity is totally dependent on the divinity, while the divinity can act alone. Jesus today is the incarnate Word. The unity between the divinity and humanity is not such as to deny the double principle of action. Jesus has two wills. The humanity conforms itself to the divinity, but in full freedom. The difference of natures has not been much understood in the Latin tradition which focuses on the unity of the person. Let me simply quote Karl Rahner without elaborating this point.

> In accordance with the fact that the natures are unmixed, basically the active influence of the Logos on the human "nature" in Jesus in a physical sense may not be understood in any other way except the way this influence is exercised by God on free creatures elsewhere. This of course is frequently forgotten in a piety and a theology which are tinged with monophysitism. All too often they understand the humanity of Jesus as a thing and as an "instrument" which is moved by the subjectivity of the Logos …. The human nature of Jesus is a created, conscious and free reality to which there belongs a created "subjectivity" at least in the sense of a created will, a created *energia*. This created subjectivity is distinct from the subjectivity of the Logos and faces God at a created distance in freedom, in obedience and in prayer, and it is not omniscient.[19]

Traditionally, one speaks of the unity-in-duality in Jesus as being one person in two natures. We can see that the relationship is advaitic, as I have described it. While the unity is strongly affirmed, the duality is not denied, and the relationship between the divine and the human in Jesus must have grown throughout his life.

Based on these models, we can see the mystery of salvation as advaitic. There is an advaitic relationship between God and humans in creation. This is foundational. But this does not exclude an internal differentiation between God and humans. Humans are free and have to conform themselves to the divine will. Such an integration is not given but to be achieved and can grow (or deteriorate). It is actually a communion in love. The advaitic mystery of Jesus is a model for us. "If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as

[19]K. Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith* (New York: Seabury Press, 1978), 287. See also 290–291.

I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love" (Jn. 15:10). While the advaitic unity is foundational, it does not exclude a relationship of love, obedience and communion.

An Empowering Symbol

Dualism is avoided because the humans are not totally outside God and independent of God: "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 19:28). Paul tells the Romans: "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words" (Rom. 8:26). He writes to the Galatians: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). As Jesus himself tells the disciples: "No one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn. 14:6). Again, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (Jn. 12:32). This means that Jesus is not merely a model or a symbol or an exemplar, in the manner of Abelard. He is not simply an outsider to us. Even as we are trying to respond to God's love, he is within us, empowering us. This is the mystery of the *advaita* between the divine and the human in each one of us. That is why the incarnate Word is more than a type. We are advaitically in communion with God in and through the Word, and so the prayer of Jesus is fulfilled: "As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us" (Jn. 17:21).

Our advaitic unity with God in and through Jesus Christ also unites us advaitically with all the others. Now, however, the communion is mutually inter-dependent. This communion acquires a symbolic form and realization in the Eucharist. But the Eucharist takes us a step further. It unites us advaitically also with the cosmos, made present to us by the food and drink, and so salvation becomes a mystery of *cosmotheandric* communion, as Raimon Panikkar would say.[20] I have envisaged it as a cosmic dance.[21]

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[20]Cf. Raimon Panikkar, *The Rhythm of Being* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 2010).

[21]See Michael Amaladoss, *The Dancing Cosmos* (Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 2003).

History, Symbol of Mystery

One of the problems in understanding salvation as an expiatory sacrifice is reducing it to a particular action in history, namely Jesus' death on the cross. Efforts have been made to include the whole life of Jesus as salvific action.[22] The challenge is to make this salvific life relevant to the whole of human history, before and after Christ.[23] This can be done if we look at history as an actualizing symbol of mystery.[24] An example will make this clear. A man and a woman are in love. Their love transcends time and space. It is enduring and it grows. They manifest their love by particular words, gestures and actions at particular times. The actions may involve not merely making gifts, but also caressing, kissing, etc. Their loving relationship reaches a climax in an act of love. The love continues and finds expression in various ways also after the act of love. When a child is born, it too becomes a symbol of that love. In this relationship, love is an enduring reality and experience. It finds expression in various ways, more or less intense. Every expression also contributes to the growth of that love. There may be occasional tensions, estrangements and reconciliations. But a basic relationship continues. The expression reaches a climax in the act of love. But it is not fully meaningful taken by itself, but only when related to its past and to its future. The loving relationship between a man and a woman becomes in this way a history with a climax.

The love between God and the humans is also a history. It starts with creation which lays a strong foundation with the humans being in the image of God. This community is never broken. Within this framework, the love grows and wanes. God animates the people through the Spirit and continues to send leaders and prophets (Heb.

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[22]See Gerald O'Collins, *Jesus Our Redeemer: A Christian Approach to Salvation*.

[23]See I.U. Dalferth, "Christ Died for Us: Reflections on the Sacrificial Language of Salvation," in S.W. Sykes, ed., *Sacrifice and Redemption* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 299–301.

[24]M. Amaladoss, "The Symbolic Dimension of Christianity," *Indian Theological Studies* 14 (1977): 39–50.

1:1–2). People continue to be disloyal. Finally God—the Word—becomes flesh and enters history so as to give a push from within, by starting a movement of people towards the kingdom. The death and resurrection are an expression of total self-gift from both directions. The Word empties itself in the human Jesus, who in his turn empties himself on the cross. Such mutual self-emptying seals a new bond that sprouts forth as the new life of the resurrection. The love story is marching along towards its final consummation when "God will be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). Jesus can integrate in himself the universal story of humankind only because he is also the Word, enlightening every one (cf. Jn. 1:9). The history of the world is also the mystery of God's presence and action in that world. We can say that history and mystery have an advaitic relation between themselves. History and mystery are not-two. History is the progressive manifestation of the mystery. History will thus lead to the fullness of mystery when God will gather up all things in Christ (cf. Eph. 1:10).

Conclusion

What is new in this advaitic perspective is to deny duality and affirm the basic unity that exists between the Creator and creation. It is not a unity of being, as in the Trinity, but an asymmetric inter-dependence, as in the incarnate Word. Thich Nhat Hanh, a Buddhist scholar from Vietnam, talks of inter-being. To be is to inter-be. The relationship can undergo all kinds of modifications. But it is never broken. The Spirit of God does not abandon even the sinner. If the sinner converts, s/he is inspired and empowered by the Spirit. If we are in solidarity with Adam's sin, we are also in solidarity with the second Adam's salvation (cf. Rom. 5:12–21).

Given this basic relationship, salvation cannot be a transaction between two individuals like satisfaction, expiation, redemption. It can only be an inner transformation through participation—a *theosis*. It is the realization of a basic relationship that already exists. The participation of the human in the divine is possible only because the gift from God and the capacity of the humans are already inbuilt in creation. Sin may

make this dysfunctional, but does not totally destroy it, because God's love, mercy and grace are greater than human sin. This transformation is signified by the death and resurrection of Jesus. It acquires a cosmic outreach, transcending space and time, because Jesus is also the Word. This is assured already by creation, further strengthened by the incarnation and definitely confirmed by the resurrection. Death, even the death of Jesus, is only a necessary passage. Ultimately it is God who saves, sharing with us the fullness of God's life. Death can only be a necessary self-emptying to receive God's grace and glory in its fullness (cf. Phil. 2:6–11). It is total self-surrender, made poignant by the sufferings imposed by sinful humans, but necessary for the creative and absolute fullness of new life in the resurrection.

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ON PRIESTLY HOLINESS*

Fernando Preckler Guillén, Sch.P.

The priesthood is one of the favorite topics of Fr. Catalino Arévalo, S.J.[1] We intend to explain this short statement about priestly holiness as clearly as possible: The configuration to the Christ-Shepherd and the constant exercise of ministerial functions of preaching, sanctifying and pastoral care constitute the source and the requirement for the holiness of the priest, who as such is called to reach the summits of the mystical experiences of divine love.

[1]Fr. Arévalo dealt with the theology of priesthood since his doctoral thesis on the "Collegio Romano in [the] 19th century" (1959), but he published *The Priest and the Priesthood after Vatican II* (Quezon City: Loyola House of Studies) in 1971. See also, by Arévalo, *Evangelization in Asia Today* (Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, 1974) and *And they shall Name Him Emmanuel* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1999).

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Introduction: A Distinct Priestly Holiness

Holiness is a category that we apply only to *persons*. If we say that *things* are holy they are considered as such in relationship with persons. We could describe the notion of holiness like this: the perfect coincidence between being and action of the person that prevents any kind of voluntary failure, and shows the truth of his sanctified being in God and the fullness of his shining bounty.

This holy fullness exists in an absolute and eternal manner only in the three persons of the Most Holy Trinity and their eternal charity. In a derived and shared way, holiness exists also in angels and blessed humans in heaven for ever. Amidst the risk, and with the possibility of increasing, holiness is also present in Christians and human persons during their earthly pilgrimage.

In the History of Salvation, whose summit is the Paschal Mystery of Christ, holiness of human persons appears first as the grace that forgives sins and grants the inhabitation of the Holy Spirit, with the new dynamism of adoptive sonship. It is called to develop according to the measure of God's grace with the complete collaboration of the person.

Christian holiness is first ontological—the grace of justification that follows faith and baptism—but it is also ethical through the conscious and persevering answer to the first and succeeding graces in order to reach the fullness of charity.[2] We shall not touch the aspect of the holiness outside of Christianity.[3]

We shall give the biblical and traditional answer to these questions with regard to the present conditions of the priest, especially focusing on Vatican II positions.

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[2]"The followers of Christ, called by God … have been made sons and daughters of God by the baptism of faith and partakers of the divine nature, and so are truly sanctified. They must therefore hold on to and perfect in their lives that holiness which they have received from God" (*Lumen gentium* 40).

[3]This aspect has attired the attention of theologians in recent times. As an example, we quote "Mysticism in Christianity and other Religions," *Studia Missionalia* 26, special issue (Gregorian University Press, 1977).

Biblical Foundations

Holiness is one of the key concepts of the Old Testament not only in regard to God, but also in regard to Israel, the People of God. Holiness especially embraces persons, times, places and objects. In *Leviticus,* "basically holiness means the mysterious *transcendence* of God, which is absolutely distinct, incomparable, ineffable, and inaccessible to man."[4]

However, we can say that in general the Bible, far from reducing its message to separation or transcendence, includes in the divine holiness the entire richness and life possessed by God, his power and mercy. Holiness is more than just one attribute among others; rather, it is the entire characteristic of God in himself—so his Name is Saint (Ps. 34:21; Am. 2:7; Ex. 3:14), the Lord swears by his own holiness (Am. 4:2).[5]

But God will reveal and shine his holiness in the election of Israel: "The Lord spoke to Moses and said: 'Speak to the whole community of Israelites and say: Be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy'" (Lev. 19:1–2). This election gives to Israel the prerogative to be a "holy nation" (Ex. 19:6; 33:12–17) and demands ritual purification for holy worship, and also moral observance of the Law that sanctifies the heart. This twofold dimension on the one hand explains the multiple prescriptions about purity (Lev. 11–16), and on the other the call to the "Law of holiness" (Lev. 17–20) and the words of the prophets (Is. 1:4–20; Ps. 50).

In this context we understand very well the rules of holiness concerning the priests (Lev. 21:1–22)[6] in general and particularly the high priest (Lev. 16f). Let us quote some significant texts about priests:

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[4]See Introduction to the *Leviticus,* in *Traduction œcuménique de la Bible* (*TOB*) (Paris: Cerf, 1988).

[5]Cf. J. de Vaux, "Holy," in X. Leon-Dufour, ed., *Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Pasay City: Paulines, 1998), 236–237.

[6]"Priests have the task of putting the people in contact with the living and holy God. So they must avoid as [much as] possible the contact with death and the profane defiled things (Lev 21: 1–15). In this perspective, an infirm member of a priestly family must be excluded for ever from the priestly exercise (21:

> Speak to Aaron and his sons. They must be consecrated by the holy offerings of the Israelites and must not profane my holy name; for my sake they must sanctify it; I am the Lord. (Lev. 22:1–2)

To the high priest:

> The Lord spoke to Moses and said: Tell Aaron your brother that he may not enter the sanctuary inside the curtain in front of the mercy-seat on the ark whenever he chooses, in which case he incurs death, for I appear in a cloud on the mercy-seat. (Lev. 16:2)

The sense of the necessity of holiness for priests appears very evidently through the description of the sins of the sons of Eli, the high priest of the shrine of Silo, and in their punishment (1 Sam. 4:11). Indeed, they sent servants to collect the uncooked meat (against Lev. 3:3–5, 9–11, 14–16), and they slept with the women at the entrance to the tent of meeting (1 Sam. 2:22). The text comments: "The young men's sin was very great in the Lord's eyes, because they treated with contempt the offering made to the Lord" (1 Sam. 2:17).

Similarly, kings and prophets and other great personages in Israel ought to show themselves worthy of their function through the holiness of their life and their fidelity to their mission (Ps. 101).

In summary, we can say that God, *The Holy* par excellence, by election and covenant made Israel as a "holy People" (Ex. 19:5–6). The ceremonial prescriptions intend the fulfillment of the moral holiness of the Law, and that is constantly recalled by the prophets (Is. 1:4–20). The High Priest, Priests and Levites have particular obligations toward the law of holiness.[7]

In the New Testament, let us first recall the holiness of *Jesus*. In fact, since his conception we hear: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and

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15–24), and it is forbidden to the priest in [an] impure state [to consume] the holy offerings (22: 1–16)" (*TOB,* in Lev. 21:1).

[7]J. Jeremias explains in detail the risk of the High Priest on the Day of Expiation during the times of the New Testament (cf. *Jerusalem in the Times of Jesus* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishing, 1975]). See Rita J. Burns, *Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1983).

the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be *holy*; he will be called Son of God" (Lk. 1:35).

Anointed by the Spirit at his baptism (Acts 10:38), proclaimed "beloved Son" (Lk. 3:22) and called "Holy One of God" (Mk. 1:24), Jesus crosses paths doing good (Mk. 7:37), and could claim, before the Jews, "Which of you convicts me of sin?" (Jn. 8:46).

The holiness of Jesus appears then not only under the moral aspect—the man who is good in his deeds—but especially under the ontological and exemplary aspect of his being. He is holy in his being and the source of holiness in his mission to apostles and men:

> *Sanctify* them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I *sanctify* myself, so that they also may be *sanctified* in truth. (Jn. 17:17–19)[8]

Seated at the right hand of the Father, he is truly called "the *Holy*" (Rev. 3:7; 6:10) and the faithful proclaim him "*holy* servant of God" (Acts 4:27), "the *Holy*" and "the Righteous" (Acts 3:14).

In his Paschal Mystery, Christ constitutes the source of human sanctification (cf. Rom. 6:1–11 with allusions to the baptism); the Holy Spirit sent by him at Pentecost becomes the main cause of Christian sanctification.

> You will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. (Acts 1:5)

> But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. (Rom. 8:9)

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[8]The consecration-sanctification is the work of the Father (Jn. 17:11). The instrument of this sanctification is the truth of God which is manifested in the incarnate Word. The consecration-sanctification renders the disciples capable for mission because it puts them aside but without retiring them from the world. The consecration to God engages the whole being and action of man. It involves the oblation of the death. Jesus expresses the will of freely offering his life for the consecration of his disciples—"priestly prayer." Finally, the sanctification of the disciples is based on the sacrifice of the Cross and in the gift of the Spirit by the glorious Christ (Cf. *TOB,* in Jn. 17:17–19).

> But you have been anointed by the Holy One. (1 Jn. 2:19).

Suitably, the New Testament calls Christians the *holy ones*: "To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be *saints*" (Rom. 1:7).[9] Therefore, we have the expression in the second letter of Peter: "You may become *participants in the divine nature*" (1:4).

In addition, Paul stresses very well the passive aspect of the gift we receive for our sanctification, and also the active aspect, i.e., the answer of the Christian putting in practice the virtues that assimilate him to Christ by the dynamism of the Spirit:

> … Clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true righteousness and *holiness.* (Eph. 4:24)

> I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Eph. 4:1–3)

But the fullness of sanctity of the People of God will appear only in the "holy city" (Rev. 21:2), the heavenly Jerusalem, where every impurity and defilement will be excluded (Rev. 21–22) and the hymn to the holiness of God will be lifted up by the renewed creation (Is. 6:3; Rev. 4:8).

Within the general sight of Christian holiness with baptismal roots, what can we say about the holiness of the ministers of the New Covenant?

Jesus called twelve apostles from among his disciples and he instructed them in a particular way with his teachings. He proposed to them an ideal of holiness that overcomes the Jewish practices of purity that were often marked with abhorrent hypocrisy (cf. Mt. 5:20).[10]

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[9]See also Acts 9:13; 20:32; 1 Cor. 14:33.

[10]Regarding the seven maledictions against the hypocrisy of Pharisees and Scribes (Mt. 23), Fr. C. Spicq writes:

> Never have we seen Jesus at such [a] point of rage. Why? First, because the focused hypocrisy belongs to the doctors of the Law and they

Jesus makes his apostles witnesses of his miracles and appoints them co-workers in the preaching of the Kingdom. He draws them to a radical fidelity to their mission, and demands of them the giving up of all earthly goods and the confident following of the Master (cf. Mt. 10).

The last supper and the subsequent events—Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost—have extraordinary significance for the apostles. These culminate in their first vocation to be set apart for the Lord. In the apostolic ministry, Christ entrusts them with the true sanctification of their beings for the goal of their mission. The words of Jesus quoted above can be especially applied to the apostles: "And for their sakes I *sanctify* myself, so that they also may be *sanctified* in truth" (Jn. 17:17–19).

Let us give some samples.

Above all, the Apostles must assure "prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4).

Peter traces an image of the apostle in his first letter. Certainly it matches with his life:

> Now as an elder—"presbyter"—myself and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as one who shares in the glory to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you to tend the flock of God that is in your charge, exercising the oversight, not under compulsion but willingly, as God

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> are supreme[ly] responsible; but they do not enter the Kingdom and they prevent the people that would like to enter. They put their own authority instead of God's authority and make his disciples worthy of the Gehenna. Moreover, they talk and they do not act. They do not observe the prescriptions they impose [on] others. They are impostors. In addition, full of malice, and spite of fine appearance, their innermost is dirty like the sepulchers with bones and dirtiness. Finally, and above all, these hypocrites are godless; they accomplish the legal rites but Isaiah had good prophesized: 'These people draw near with their mouths and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me.' This is the point! Pharisees represent the sclerosis of revealed religion, a cult of the Law which is against the New Covenant, i.e. a lived in the Holy Spirit religion …. (under "Hypocrisy," in *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994])

> would have you do it—not for sordid gain but eagerly. Do not lord it over those in your charge, but [be] examples to the flock. And when the chief shepherd appears, you will win the crown of glory that never fades away. (1 Pt. 4:1–4)

Paul feels himself called to be an apostle (Rom. 1:1), "to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God" (Rom. 15:16). In the midst of the trials of his ministry, he boasts: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace towards me has not been in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any other of them—though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me" (1 Cor. 15:10).

Paul considers himself "minister of Christ and steward of God's mysteries" (1 Cor. 4: 1). He opposes the snares of Satan (2 Cor. 12: 7–10). He completes in his body the sufferings of Christ for the Church (Col. 1:24) and he does not hesitate to claim: "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ" (1 Cor. 11:1). His testament is still a confession of faithfulness to his ministry: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have kept the faith" (2 Tim. 4:7). Even his discourse of farewell to the presbyters of Ephesus becomes a witness of the holiness of his apostolic ministry (Acts 20:17–35).

From the ministers after the apostles we find similar statements: the granted ministry is holy and demands personal virtues, thus in the election of Matthias (Acts 1:15–16) and in the election of deacons (Acts 6:1–6).

The pastoral letters draw up the image of the ministers of the Church: bishops, presbyters and deacons, and the moral qualities and charity demanded by the exercise of the ministry (1 Tim. 3:1–7; Titus 1:7–9; 1 Tim. 5:17–21; Titus 1:5–6; 1 Tim. 3:8–13).

Nevertheless, the foundation is the "spiritual gift" (*charisma*): "I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands" (1 Tim. 1:6). This demands the attentive choice of future ministers: "Do not ordain—lay hands on—anyone hastily, and do not participate in the sins of others" (1 Tim. 5:22).

On ministerial holiness, Fr. C. Spicq writes:

> If simple Christians are able to make the beauty of Christianity shine and then to argue in favor of the truth of their faith, all the more the priest who is in a prominent place as the house [on] the top of a mountain. He cannot remain hidden from the sight of people. Thus, he is capable of preaching through the holiness of his life Jesus' doctrine and morals.
>
> Beholding his life the people will indeed understand the divine revelation or they will perceive a caricature. If he lives like his Master who was always going truth (Jo 10: 31) he can be sure of removing objections and dissipating critiques. He will draw many souls to faith. The beautiful life is the first means for the conversion of world.[11]

Tradition and Magisterium

We cannot make a complete journey through patristic sources on priestly holiness. We will be content in pointing to some examples within the uninterrupted Catholic tradition.

We already find excellent descriptions of Episcopal holiness in the letter of Ignatius of Antioch to Polycarp.[12] In the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus of Rome it is written that ministers must be "blamelessly and in purity of heart."[13]

A clear example of the care for priestly holiness in the Ancient Church is given to us by some disciplinary canons of the Council of Nicaea (325). In regard to the clergy we find these aspects: castration (canon 1),[14] neophytes and ministry (canon 2),[15] on women who abide

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[11]Translated by author from Ceslas Spicq, *Spiritualité sacerdotale d'après Saint Paul* (Paris: Cerf, 1949), 199.

[12]*The Epistles of St Clement of Rome and St Ignatius of Antioch*, Ancient Christian Writers, trans. James A. Kleist (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1961), 96–99.

[13]See Gregory Dix, ed., *The Treatise on Apostolic Tradition of St Hippolytus of Rome* (London: SPCK, 1968), 18.

[14]See N.P. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* Vol. 1 (Washington: Sheed & Ward/Georgetown University Press, 1990), 6. Remember the problem of Origen.

[15]*Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*. Remember the problem of Cyprian of Carthage, who was elected bishop a short time after baptism.

with clerics (canon 3),[16] on ministers who were promoted without examination (canon 9),[17] on the apostates during persecution who later were promoted to orders (canon 10),[18] on the clerics who are moving from city to city (canon 15), on those who do not abide in the churches where they have been assigned (canon 16),[19] and the clerics who loan with interest (canon 17).[20]

In a yet young Church (although established throughout the Roman Empire), these canons show on the one hand the care of the Church for the holiness of her ministers, and on the other hand the virtues that were mostly lacking in the clergy: humility, chastity, fidelity, and justice.[21]

We have preserved some patristic homilies for the day of the ordination or for its anniversary. They are living witness in favor of priestly holiness.

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[16]Only a mother, sister, aunt or a woman exempt of all suspicion are allowed (cf. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils,* 7).

[17]It deals with the moral quality of the candidates. If they later confess their sins, they must be excluded according to the ecclesiastical law (cf. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 10).

[18]Cf. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 11.

[19]These two canons are similar. They demand the stability of the ministers (cf. *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 13).

[20]The canon is very strict:

> Since many enrolled (among the clergy) have been induced by greed and avarice to forget the sacred text, "who does not put our money at interest," and to charge one per cent (a month) on loans, this holy and great synod judges that if any are found after this decision to receive interest by contracts or to transact the business in any other way or to charge (a flat rate of) fifty per cent or in general to devise any other contrivance for the sake of dishonorable gain, they shall be deposed from the clergy and their names struck from the roll. (*Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 14)

That should be usury.

[21]See J. Gaudemet, "L'Ordre dans la legislation conciliaire de l'Antiquité," in *Etudes sur le Sacrement de l'Ordre* (Paris: Cerf, 1957), 233–256.

Thus, we still possess the homily of the priestly ordination of John Chrysostom (Antioch, 386). The newly-ordained praises his bishop, Flavianus, and concludes asking for prayers for himself: "Since we are given this heavy and grave yoke, copious hands must lift in prayer that we may render to the Lord intact the content that was entrusted to me on this day [or 'be raised in prayer that we may render to the Lord intact, the deposit entrusted to me on this day']."[22] Similarly we have some homilies of Augustine for the anniversary of his Episcopal ordination.[23] From Leo the Great, we keep sermons uttered at the occasion of his episcopate. He stresses the grace of the priesthood: "The Church welcomes as leaders those whom the Holy Spirit has prepared. Therefore, in the priestly and royal people adopted by God it is not an earthly privilege that leads to the anointing, but the worthiness of the above grace that begets the priest."[24]

At the beginning of the Middle Ages, Gregory the Great wonderfully explains the struggle for holiness of the good shepherd.[25] Let us recall the "Gregorian Reform" in the 11th century, so called in honor of Saint Gregory VII. Its origin is, however, in the Benedictine reform of Cluny (910) and in the attempts of the Roman pontificate since Pope Leo IX and other Popes, with the significant help of Saint Peter Damian (†1072). We recall that one of the works of this doctor of the Church is the *Liber Gomorrhianus*, about the sexual sins of the clergy.[26] In fact, the reform focused above all on concubinage, simony (payment for ecclesiastical charges), and investiture (the choice of

[22]The complete doctrine of Chrysostom is to be found in his treatise *De Sacerdotio,* and also in his homilies on the Letter to Hebrews.

[23]Patrick Chauvet, ed., *Sacerdoce des baptisés, sacerdoce des prêtres. Textes de l'antiquité chrétienne* (Paris: Migne, 1991), 79.

[24]Cf. Chauvet, *Sacerdoce des baptisés, sacerdoce des prêtres. Textes de l'antiquité chrétienne*, 84–92.

[25]We refer to Gregory's homily on Ezekiel that has been chosen as a reading for his feast in the Breviary (September 3), but we also point to his classical book on priestly concerns, the *Regula Pastoralis.*

[26]Cf. *Book of Gomorrah: An Eleventh-century Treatise against Clerical Homosexuality Practices*, trans. P.J. Payer (Ontario: Wilfred Laurier University, 1982).

the hierarchy by the kings and nobles of the time). Through councils and sanctions, the reform was very effective. Later on, we have the foundation of the Cistercian Order and their champion St. Bernard of Clairvaux (†1153). He was very attentive to all kind of priestly defects and sins. Among his works we have *On the conduct and duties of Bishops*.

In the 13th century, the new mendicant Orders will deepen the reform of the Church under different aspects, and, being mostly clerical, they will influence the improvement of the spirituality of the clergy and the pastoral ministry. As a sample of his period we study a fragment of the Testament of Saint Francis of Assisi:

> And the Lord gave me such faith in churches that I prayed simply, saying, "I adore you, Lord Jesus Christ, with all your churches throughout the world, and we bless you because you redeemed the world through your holy cross." Later God gave me and still gives me such faith in *priests* who live according to the form of the Holy Roman Church that even if they persecuted me I would still run back to them, because of their position. And if I had all the wisdom of Solomon and came upon some poor little *priests* in their parishes, I would preach there only if they wished me to do so. And I want to fear, love and honor these and all others as my *lords*. And I do not even want to think about there being any sin in them, because I see the Son of God in them and they are my *lords*. And I do this because in this world I physically see the most high Son of God only in his most holy body and blood, which they receive and they alone administer to others.[27]

This vision of the priest from faith and focusing on the Eucharist will pervade the spirituality of this period. Beyond the falls of the clergy, this Franciscan devotion will help the people of God to keep their trust in their pastors. In fact, we will find the same spirit in a very difficult and somehow dissolute moment of the 14th century, when the Popes were in Avignon and Saint Catherine of Siena strove for their return to Rome. Again, the scandals in clergy life were frequent and public. Catherine showed boldness in decrying them, but with a very deep sense of their dignity and respect. Let us see this sample of a

[27]Paul Halsall, *Medieval Sourcebook: Testament of St Francis of Assisi* (January 1996), http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/stfran-test.html (accessed July 28, 2013).

letter addressed to Gerard du Puy, relative of Gregory XI and Papal Legate to Tuscany:

> In reply to the first of the three things you ask me, I will say that I believe that our sweet Christ on earth should do away entirely with two things which ravage the Bride of Christ. The first is the over-great tenderness and care for relatives, which ought to be entirely mortified. The other is that excessive good nature which is founded on too great mercy …. Christ holds three vices as especially evil—impurity, avarice, and swollen pride, which reign in the Bride of Christ among the prelates, who care for nothing but luxuries and honors and vast riches. A strong justice is needed to correct them, for too great pity is the greatest cruelty. As to the other question, I say: When I told you that you should toil for Holy Church, I was not thinking only of the labors you should assume about temporal things, but chiefly that you and the Holy Father ought to toil and do what you can to get rid of the wolfish shepherds who care for nothing but eating and fine palaces and big horses. Oh my that which Christ won upon the wood of the Cross is spent with harlots! I beg that if you were to die for it, you tell the Holy Father to put an end to such iniquities. And when the time comes to make priests or cardinals, let them not be chosen through flatteries or moneys or simony; but beg him, as far as you can, that he notice well if virtue and a good and holy fame are found in the man; and let him not prefer a gentleman to a tradesman, for virtue is the thing that makes a man gentle.[28]

Another very important step in the reform of the clergy is found after the Protestant Reformation, in the foundation of the "Clerks Regular." This is a vast movement in the Church of the 16th century. The first example is the Order of Theatines, followed by the Barnabites, Somaschi, Jesuits, Caracciolini, Camillians, and Piarists, and especially the Society of Jesus. This is a new form of religious consecration in which to be in community under a Rule and with the religious vows is the way to support the priestly ministry in its original splendor and apostolic effectiveness. These clerics, sometimes called "reformed priests," contributed to the formation of new patterns for the Catholic

[28]Vida Dutton Scudder, ed. & trans., *Saint Catherine of Siena as Seen in Her Letters* (London/New York: J.M. Dent and E.P. Dutton, 1905), www.onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/gutbook/lookup?num=7403 (accessed July 28, 2013).

Priesthood.[29] In Spain, we have the important attempts St. John of Avila for priestly spirituality.[30] In a global way, we stress the institution of Seminaries for priestly formation by the Council of Trent. The decree is from 1563, during the 23rd session. We should underscore the first paragraph of this important decree:

> Whereas the age of youth, unless it be rightly trained, is prone to follow after the pleasures of the world; and unless it be formed, from its *tender years*, unto piety and religion, before habits of vice have taken possession of the whole man, it never will perfectly, and without the greatest, and well-nigh special, help of Almighty God, persevere in *ecclesiastical discipline*; the holy Synod ordains, that all cathedral, metropolitan, and other churches greater than these, shall be bound, each according to its means and the extent of the diocese, to maintain, to educate religiously, and to train in ecclesiastical discipline, a certain *number of youths* of their city and diocese, or, if that number cannot be met there, of that province, in a *college* to be chosen by the bishop for this purpose near the said churches, or in some other suitable place. Into this college shall be received such as are at least twelve years old, born in lawful wedlock, and who know how to read and write competently, and whose *character and inclination* afford a hope that they will always serve in the *ecclesiastical ministry*.[31]

We underline the "tender age" (since twelve years old), the moral purpose of the training and education (avoid vices and foster the ecclesiastical discipline), the previous preparation in studies, and the good character and inclination.

The implementation of this decree took much time, and we find important differences according to countries. Italy tried to be the first, and important personalities like St. Charles Borromeo were appointed by Pius IV for this mission. Among the characteristic saints and institutions that shaped the ideal pattern of Catholic priesthood

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[29]Cf. Luis De Diego, *La opción sacerdotal de Ignacio de Loyola y sus compañeros (15-15-1540)* (Caracas: Centrum Ignatianum, Universidad Catolica Andres Bello, 1975).

[30]See John of Avila, *Escritos sacerdotales* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1969).

[31]http://www.the counciloftrent/ch.23.htm (accessed Sept. 11, 2013).

in these centuries after Trent, we count first in Rome St. Philip Neri (1515–1595) and his Oratory, with very flexible structures but a high quality of priestly holiness. In fact, he became the "confessor" of the city and his pedagogical and artistic activities contributed in a deep way to the Catholic Reformation.[32] His Eucharistic celebration was often interrupted by ecstasies of love, and thus took considerable time. But these high mystical graces were lived by him in a very simple and almost humorous way.[33]

A little later, in France, we note the foundation of the French Oratory by Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle (1575–1629). In fact, this fervent priest introduced the Carmelite Reform in France with enormous success. In 1611, he founded the French Oratory of Jesus and Mary. This was not a religious order, but a society of priests that lived in community under some Rules while remaining diocesan clergy. They stressed the acts of ministry and they started the "popular missions" and schools. The intention was the holiness of priesthood. Success was enormous. We also observe a vast movement with other founders and congregations. We especially pay attention to St. John Eudes (1601–1680), a former Oratorian,[34] and also to Jean Jacques Olier (1608–1657), the founder of another priestly society, called Saint Sulpice, for the formation of seminarians. In fact, this society for centuries guaranteed the preparation of future priests in France and other countries.

In this same line, we have the impressive figure of St. Vincent de Paul (1581–1660). He was for a while under the spiritual direction of Bérulle, but later discovered his own vocation through direct contact with the poor and farmers in their extreme ignorance of

[32]Fr. Louis Bouyer, of the French Oratory, has written in his honor the book *La musica de Dio. San Filippo Neri* (Milan: Jaka Book, 1980). The best biography until now is the first one written by P. G. Bacci, and published in 1642.

[33]We have analyzed John of Avila, Ignatius of Loyola, and Philip Neri in the article "Situación de la espiritualidad sacerdotal en tiempos de Calasanz," *Analecta Calasanctiana* 50 (1083): 295–336.

[34]He is known in the Philippines through the Religious of the Good Shepherd that consider him their founder.

faith.[35] His sacerdotal concern came also through his encounters with poorly-trained priests in the French countryside. A practical genius, he organized spiritual retreats for candidates to the priesthood, and even gave conferences for them. His style was always simple, rather moral, deeply spiritual and pastoral. With the Sulpicians, the so-called Lazaristes or Vincentians undertook the task of priestly formation since the 17th century.[36]

In the Philippines, their contribution to priestly formation is very noticeable. In fact, since their arrival in 1863, they took over the direction of many seminaries and formed the new generations of priests, at a time in which the Filipino dioceses were to increase in a very spectacular way.[37]

We can thus say that the Tridentine ideal of the priesthood was a reality in the Church through the efforts of a holy generation of Founders and Pastors at the grass-roots of the People of God.

After the turmoil of the French Revolution and its "Civil Constitution of the Clergy" (1790), we know the difficult situation of priests accepting the revolutionary oath and priests who refused it.[38] But in 1801, the Concordat between Napoleon and Pius VII changed the scene. We observe the restoration of old Orders and the foundation of new Congregations, especially with missionary purpose. The 19th century and the first half of the 20th century were again a great period of priestly spirituality in Europe. Spain, for example, saw the foundation of the "Hermandad de Operarios Diocesanos" by Blessed Manuel Domingo y Sol in 1883. This "Fraternity" tries to be at the service of priestly formation in Spain and other Spanish-speaking countries.

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[35]The best biography is André Dodin, *Saint Vincent de Paul and Charity* (La Rochelle, New York: New City Press, 1993).

[36]For the situation in France, see Y. Krumenacker, *L'école française de spiritualité* (Paris: Cerf, 1999).

[37]We have the excellent study of Rolando Dela Goza and Jesus M. Cavanna, *Vincentians in the Philippines* (Manila: Adamson University, 1985).

[38]"Mutatis mutandis"—that should be the situation of Chinese clergy after the creation of the Patriotic Church.

In recent times, the Roman Pontiffs showed special attention to priestly spirituality. We give the list of the most important documents with this purpose: Pius X, *Haerent animo* (1908), Pius XI, *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* (1935), Pius XII, *Menti nostrae* (1950), and John XXIII, *Sacerdotii nostri Primordia* (1959).[39] But now let us explain the horizon of priestly holiness in the Council Vatican II, namely in *Presbyterorum Ordinis*.

Vatican II and Priestly Holiness: A Synthesis

Vatican II issued the Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests on December 7, 1965. We intend to present only three paragraphs of chapter three: "The Life of Priests." The sub-titles are eloquent: n. 1: "Priests' Call to Perfection," n. 12: "Call of Priests to Holiness," n. 13: "The Exercise of the Threefold Priestly Function both Demands and Fosters Holiness," and n. 14: "Unity and Harmony of Priests."

"Priests' Call to Holiness" (n. 12)

Christian vocation to holiness has baptismal roots (LG 40). But the priest has a special title: he is consecrated to be a living instrument of Christ the Eternal Priest; therefore, he receives "particular graces":

> Since every priest in his own way assumes the person of Christ[40] he is endowed with a special grace. By this grace the priest, through his service of the people committed to his care and all the people of God, is able the better to pursue the perfection of Christ, whose place he takes. The human weakness of his flesh is remedied by the holiness of him who became for us a high priest "holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners" (Heb. 7:26). (PO 12)

This should be the ontological aspect of priestly holiness.

The priest must correspond to this grace of mortifying the flesh in order to foster the "perfect man" (Eph. 4:13). Hence, the virtues of

[39]The encyclical of Paul VI, *Sacerdotalis caelibatus* (1967), explains this specific point, even if it contains many spiritual advices.

[40]The council avoids the expression "alter Christus." Here, it explains the sacramental nature of this personal identification.

humility and obedience (n. 15), celibacy (n. 16), and voluntary poverty (n. 17)[41] are especially stressed. This should be the moral aspect of priestly holiness.

How to Reach this Perfection? (n. 12,3 and 13)

"Through the exercise of the ministry of the Spirit and justice" (2 Cor. 3:8–9), the Council stresses first the liturgical acts of every day—namely the Eucharist and the Divine Office—but adds the entire ministry. It specifies the dimension of "ecclesial communion."

This is an essential point of our document, whose sources are in *Lumen Gentium* (no. 41, 3). Indeed, our chapter tries to develop in a systematic way "the exercise of the threefold priestly function that demands and together [fosters] holiness" (n. 13). Thus, the first source of priestly sanctification is the ministry of the Word of God—teaching, the second, the ministry of the sacraments and prayer—sanctifying, and finally, the pastoral ministry to the people of God—leading.

Preaching demands the reading of the Word (1 Tim. 4:15–16). We find the famous idea of St. Thomas's *contemplata aliis tradere* (to give the others your own contemplation).[42] The Council argues:

> By the keeping in mind that it is the Lord who opens hearts and that the excellence comes not from themselves but from the power of God, they will be more intimately united with Christ the Teacher and will be guided by his Spirit in the very act of teaching the word. (PO 13)[43]

The Eucharistic celebration leads the priest "to imitate the things he is accomplishing";[44] hence, we have the sacrificial aspect of the ministry, which was explicitly aimed at by the French School of spirituality.[45] The words of the Council are:

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[41]Observe the classical religious vows as virtues for the diocesan priest.

[42]*Summa Theologica* (S.T.) IIa–IIae, q. 188, a. 7.

[43]See also *Dei verbum* 25 and *Pastores dabo vobis* 26, 1.

[44]Formula of the ritual of ordination.

[45]The successor of Bérulle, Father de Condren excels in this aspect.

> As they celebrate the mystery of the Lord's death they may take care to mortify their members from the vices and concupiscence (…). When priests unite themselves with the action of Christ the priest they daily offer themselves completely to God, and by being nourished with Christ's body they share in the charity of him who gives himself as food to the faithful. (PO 13)

The council alludes also to the sacrament of Penance and to the Divine Office.[46]

Lastly, the exercise of pastoral care is a source of priestly sanctification. Here again is the example of the Good Shepherd who leads until the sacrifice of his own life. But in a common way it demands

> the asceticism suited to pastors of souls, renouncing their own convenience, seeking not their own good, but that of the many, that they may be saved, always making further progress towards a more perfect fulfillment of their pastoral work and, where the need arises, are prepared to break new ground in pastoral methods under the guidance of the Spirit of love who breathes where he wills. (PO 13)[47]

The Council crowns this section with a paragraph dedicated to the "Unity and Harmony of Priests." In fact, the present demands of the

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[46]See *Pastores dabo vobis* 26, 4 and *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 83–87.

[47]The corresponding paragraph in *Pastores dabo vobis* is very complete:

> This *munus regendi* represents a very delicate and complex duty which, in addition to the attention which must be given to a variety of persons and their vocations, also involves the ability to coordinate all gifts and charisms which the Spirit inspires in the community, to discern them and to put them to good use for the up-building of the Church in constant union with the bishops. This ministry demands of the priest an intense spiritual life, filled with those qualities and virtues which are typical of a person who "presides over" and "leads" a community, of an "elder" in the noblest and richest sense of the word: qualities and virtues such as faithfulness, integrity, consistency, wisdom, a welcoming spirit, friendliness, goodness of heart, decisive firmness in essentials, freedom from overly subjective viewpoints, personal disinterestedness, patience, and enthusiasm for daily tasks, confidence in the value of the hidden working of grace as manifested in the simple and the poor. (26, 6)

ministry makes priests "perplexed and distracted by the multiplicity of tasks facing them and may be very concerned about how they can unify their interior life and their program of external activity" (PO 14, 1). Beyond the "purely external organization"—the priestly agenda—and the "practice of exercises of piety," the council proposes the example of the unity of Christ in his messianic task: the accomplishment of the Father's work (Jn. 4:34). Here is the key text about this very deep vision of priestly existence:

> Priests will unify their lives by uniting themselves in recognition of the Father's will and in the gift of themselves to the flock entrusted to them. In this way, by adopting the role of the Good Shepherd they will find in the practice of the pastoral charity itself the bond of priestly perfection which will harmonize their lives and activity. (PO 14, 2)

The paragraph ends with an appeal to the evangelical discernment of pastoral activities by the priest and to the communion with the bishop and the presbyterium.

Let us consider also paragraph 18, "Helps for the Priest's Life." Overall, the text reflects the tradition of the Church: Bible, Eucharist, frequent sacramental Confession, devotion to the Virgin Mary, Eucharistic worship, spiritual direction, retreats, prayer and the spirit of adoration.

During the post-conciliar period, priestly spirituality has been dealt with by the Synod on priestly formation and thereafter by the exhortation *Pastores dabo vobis* of John Paul II (March 25, 1992).[48] Pope John Paul II published in 1996 the history of his own priestly vocation. The English title is *Gift and Mystery: On the Fiftieth Anniversary of My Priestly Ordination.* It constitutes a living witness of priestly life.

Secularized civilization after Vatican II deeply affected the clergy especially in Western Europe and the United States. We do not intend

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[48]The Congregation for the Clergy gave a *Directory for the Life and Ministry of Priests* in 1994 and later the document *The Priest, Teacher of the Word, Minister of the Sacrament and Guide of the Community toward the Third Christian Millennium* (1999). We do not intend here to deal with the abundant literature about the sexual abuses of priests that has pervaded the media during these last years.

to describe the crisis and its possible sources. However, around the Jubilee Year 2000 and with the constant efforts of John Paul II (priestly ordinations during his journeys, letters to priests every Holy Thursday, World Day of Prayer for Vocations, etc.), we have been detecting a new situation in Latin America since the 1980's and a real flourishing of priestly spirituality in Asia and Africa. The meetings of the FABC through its Office of Education and Student Chaplaincy, published by Fr. Vicente G. Cajilig, OP, are eloquent in this sense: *Clergy of Asia: Lights and Shadows* (1997), *Clergy of Asia: More Lights than Shadows* (2001) and *Theology in Context: Forming Evangelizers* (2002) (Manila: University of Sto. Tomas Press). The "priestly year" (2009–2010) proclaimed by Benedict XVI on the 150th death anniversary of St. John Mary Vianney had the same purpose, and in spite of many scandals discovered during this time, it had a really good impact on the clergy of the world.

Theological Reflection

What should be the theological reasons for priestly holiness?

An appeal to the holiness of Christ, Messiah of God and Savior of man, will help us to explain these reasons in a concise way.

Christ is holy by his *being*, by his *acting*, and by his *shining*. The human nature of Christ was sanctified in a singular mode in its being, since the existence act of this human nature—its *esse*—is just the existence act of the Son of God, who personally assumes it. This is the *grace of the hypostatic union*.[49]

The human nature of Christ is holy in a unique way in its acting—*agere*—since all the human faculties of Jesus and all his actions belong to the divine person of the Word. Therefore, they are the perfect exercise of all moral virtues. This is the *sanctifying grace of Christ*.[50]

[49]Cf. S.T. III, q. 2, a. 6.

[50]Cf. S.T. III, a. 7, a. 9–11.

The human nature of Christ is shining holiness in a unique way since it is the source of all sanctification. It is in Him and through Him that the Father will bless mankind and lead men and women to justification, holiness and eternal salvation. This is the *capital grace of Christ*, the Head of rescued humanity—*caput*—, and Spouse of his Church.[51]

Let us now apply this to the priest and *a fortiori* to the bishop.

By his ordination the priest is configured in his *being* according to Christ, Head and Shepherd of his Church. That means that the priestly character he received from the Holy Spirit is sanctifying him ontologically in order to accomplish his ministry. This is the perpetual gift of his ordination, and the sacred character of his person. The priest is already united to Christ through the ministerial participation in his priesthood.[52]

The priest must confirm this given holiness in his *actions*, i.e., in the exercise of his ministry that becomes source and exigency of holiness.[53]

In a specific way, the ministry of the Word demands and fosters the living assimilation of the message of the Christ-Prophet. The ministry of Sacraments demands and fosters the sacrificial attitude of total love that the Christ-Priest showed for the Father and mankind. The ministry of Pastoral Care demands and fosters the specific virtues of the Christ-Good Shepherd in his generosity to the faithful, filled with prudence, courage, moderation, justice, and responsibility.[54] This is the sanctifying grace of the priest. It must always grow through his fidelity to the current graces granted to him all through his pastoral ministry.

Finally, there is the pastoral *shining* of priestly holiness through his action. The essential efficacy of the ministerial acts in which the priest is pure instrument of grace—the sacraments—is granted by the Holy Spirit, and accordingly is beyond the personal holiness of

[51]Cf. S.T. III, q. 8, a. 5–6.

[52]Cf. *Pastores dobo vobis* 21–23 (and also 15, 5; 16, 5 and 18, 4).

[53]*Pastores dobo vobis* 24–25.

[54]*Pastores dobo vobis* 26.

the minister. Nevertheless, the spiritual efficacy normally is the fruit of pastoral service and priestly witness and it is this that shines upon souls, drawing them to conversion, to sanctification and to apostolic commitment. This is the grace of the priest as instrument of Christ, Head of his Mystical Body.

We have to recall the distinction between the different "instrumentalities" according to the different ministerial acts. Only in sacraments does the minister have this privilege of acting "in persona Christi." In the ministry of the Word, neither the bishop as individual nor the priest has the charism of infallibility in their preaching.[55] Their homilies depend on their preparation. Similarly, in the pastoral dispositions and in the way of leading the flock, there is no absolute supernatural assistance. It is the prudence of the shepherd, with the prayer and help of the pastoral council and other canonical means, that will shape the living community of disciples. Therefore, in the ministries of preaching and governing, the responsibility falls on the priest, even as he can trust in the actual graces of the Lord and must humbly pray for them.

What can we say about possible weaknesses and sins of the priest?

The Church is holy, but she has sinful members. The priesthood is holy, but priests are subjects to temptations and sin.

Let us explain.

Studying the teachings of Cardinal C. Journet, we can say that the Church "which is not without sinners, is however without sin."[56] Indeed, sinners are such in spite of and against their belonging to the Church, which remains the holy and immaculate Spouse of Christ (Eph. 5:25–27), and, as such, is the sacramental source of sanctification in Christ.

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[55]This especial charism is reserved to the solemn acts of the Ecumenical Council—Episcopal college—and to some acts of the Roman Pontiff—*ex cathedra* teachings.

[56]Charles Journet, *L'Eglise du Verbe Incarné* Vol. II (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1962), 904.

In an analogical way, we say that the priesthood is holy in spite of the sins of ordained priests.[57] Indeed, the priestly infidelities to the will of God are not at all consequences of the grace-given character, but they are voluntary contradictions to this grace. This places the conscience of the priest in a crucial dilemma: hypocrisy unto the stubbornness of the heart, or repentance and conversion.

However, we would like to make this very clear. We point to the conscious, free, voluntary, and grave transgression of God's Law, and to the attitude refusing conversion, as in the case in which sacramental confession is not possible (before the celebration of the Mass or other ministerial acts, for example). A liturgical celebration in the state of mortal sin constitutes a new sin specifically called sacrilege.

We thus understand the sublime synthesis of respect and deep regret that led the saints to sacrifice and intensive prayer during the periods of grave decay of priestly holiness.[58]

The priestly life is not called to the abyss of sin but to the summits of grace. What then can we say about priestly prayer? Is it not the privileged means in the itinerary of ministerial holiness?

Prayer belongs to the priestly ministry according to a specific explanation of Louis Bouyer.[59] The Church requires him to pray on her behalf in a precise and solemn way, and if possible even with the

[57]Historically, the common sins of the priests have been concubinage, simony, irresponsibility (absence), arrogance, and sometimes alcoholism. Some other abuses can be specific of regions or cultures, e.g., the ministry of exorcism with considerable income, the multiplication of Masses for economic reasons, the connivance with superstitions, etc.

[58]We focus on the figure of Catherine of Siena during the Avignon and Schism periods. In this time of sexual abuses of priests, I visited in Javier (Spain) the convent of the contemplative Oblates of Christ Priest. The superior was absolutely living this attitude of prayer and reparation, and declared to me that it is better for the Church to clear the situation and stop the scandals.

[59]"Le ministère de la prière," in *Le sens de la vie sacerdotale* (Tournai, Belgium: Desclée, 1960), 165–183.

people of God. What, then, is the meaning of the Divine Office for deacons, priests and bishops?

Let us quote the *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*:

> The Liturgy of the Hours is entrusted to sacred ministers in such a special way that even when the faithful are not present it should be recited by individuals with the adaptations necessary under these circumstances. The Church commissions them to celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours in order that, at least in their persons, the duty of the whole community may be carried out regularly and reliably, and the prayer of Christ continue unceasingly in the Church.
>
> The bishop represents Christ in an eminent and visible way and is the high priest of his flock; the life in Christ of his faithful people may be said to derive from him and depend on him. He should then be the first of all the members of his Church in offering prayer. In the recitation of the Liturgy of the Hours his prayer is always in the name of the Church and on behalf of the Church entrusted to him. Priests, united as they are with the bishop and the whole presbyterium, are themselves representative in a special way of Christ the priest, and so share the same responsibility of praying to God for the people entrusted to them, and indeed for the whole world.
>
> All fulfill the ministry of the good Shepherd who prays for his sheep, that they may have life and so be brought into perfect unity. In the Liturgy of the Hours, which the Church sets before them, they are not only to find a source of devotion and a strengthening of personal prayer but must also nourish and foster pastoral and missionary action by abundant contemplation, and so bring joy to the whole Church of God.[60]

The reform of the Breviary by Vatican II—vernacular language, psalms distribution in a new translation, intercessions, biblical and patristic readings—rendered the Breviary a very well-adapted means for the ministry of priestly prayer.

Priestly prayer must also include silent meditation and contemplation to reach the summits of spiritual life. Let us introduce

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[60] *General Instruction of the Liturgy of the Hours*, n. 28, in *The Liturgy of the Hours* I (Bangalore: N.B.C.L.C., 2005), 36–37. This new edition tried to correct the criticisms formulated against the classical Breviary edited by St. Pius V after the Council of Trent.

a brief consideration on this aspect by following the teachings of the French School of Spirituality. In fact, its founder, Cardinal Pierre de Bérulle, put the summit of the spiritual life in the mystical passivity in Christ, according to the expression of Paul: "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me" (Gal. 2:19–20).

> The passive state or the mystical union should be the normal universe of the priest. Indeed, only this state fits with the way in which the High Priest Jesus takes possession of his person through priestly ordination. When this mystical union between the function and the life is reached, the minister of Christ becomes priest not only through the exercise of his priestly power and the granted authority, but through the state and condition of his being and his interior and exterior life. His whole life becomes priestly since the everlasting Priest Jesus is all his life.[61]

Conclusion

In the logic of our exposition we could say that the personal and mature decision on proper sanctification would coincide with priestly ordination. Thus the sacrament becomes the personal acceptance of the priest's own spiritual path. Indeed, we ought to give our personal answer to the divine gift of God who is granting us a sharing in the eternal priesthood of his Son. The consciousness of this grace should stir the responsibility of avoiding its uselessness or sterility in us. Paul expresses this precise experience as he says: "So I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box as though beating the air; but I punish my body and enslave it, so that after proclaiming to others I myself should not be disqualified" (1 Cor. 9:26–27).

The Fathers of the Church following St. Paul compare this struggle with the effort of athletes. Frequency in the sacrament of reconciliation, spiritual direction, retreats and recollections, spiritual readings, and deep dialogues with confreres of presbyterium can help foster perseverance in the spiritual fight.

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[61]P. Cochois, *Bérulle et l'Ecole Française* (Paris: Seuil, 1963), 130.

A journey through biblical and patristic tradition points, therefore, to priestly holiness as gift and as personal answer; movements of ecclesiastical reformation, new Orders and Institutes, and spiritual masters are constantly giving advices along the same lines. Vatican II and posterior documents until the last "Year of the Priest" unanimously work with the same intention. The Council specially focuses on the three aspects of the priestly ministry as sources and exigencies of holiness. This is somehow new and maybe the intention was to distinguish the active sanctification of a minister from the contemplative life of a monk. We tried to explain this threefold aspect in our study without forgetting the contemplative source and final goal of Christian life.

In a specific way, the Council stresses the responsibility of bishops for the sanctification of priests.

> Their priests (…) should be the objects of their particular affection. They should regard [them] as sons and friends. They should always be ready to listen to them; in an atmosphere of mutual trust (…). Bishops should be solicitous for the welfare—spiritual, intellectual and material—of their priests, so that they live holy and pious lives and exercise a faithful and fruitful ministry.[62]

Finally, we added some theological reflections from the three aspects of the Christ's grace according to St. Thomas. That gave us a basic analogy to understand the holiness of the priest in his being, in his acting and in his shining, and helped us to understand the possible failures in the morality of priests.

We stressed at the end the horizon of the call to the mystical summits of the Christian life and we would like now to stress the particular application of this aspect in the Asian context.

In a continent in which the spiritual experience of meditation has been culturally widespread for centuries,[63] the credibility of Christianity

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[62]*Christus Dominus* 16.

[63]See the short but clear synthesis about Asian values of *Ecclesia in Asia* 6:

> The people of Asia take pride in their religious and cultural values, such as love of silence and contemplation, simplicity, harmony, detachment,

is somehow linked with the witness of a real grace of communion with God through his Son Jesus in the Spirit. Even if this aspect of Christianity especially shines in contemplative Orders, the priest in his life and pastoral ministry should give a true witness of his spiritual experience and his capacity to lead the faithful to these Christian summits of spiritual life. That should be the Asian Pastoral Charity which is the general purpose of priestly formation and life.

Appendix

We present some readings about the Priest in the Filipino context to complete our priestly panorama and reflection.

Psychological Approach

Rafael T. Cruz, *Priests and Ex-priests: Differences of Personality* (Manila: J.A. Jocson Publications Services, 2003), 132 p.

The author presents a survey of 38 active priests and 38 ex-priests, and samples of married males. He focuses on three psychological aspects: autonomy, narcissism and self-esteem. He compares the two categories of priests and draws some conclusions. Finally, he gives some recommendations. It is a very technical book and quotations of experts in psychology are especially abundant. The work is readable and the comparisons become interesting. We realize, for example, that among ex-priests many had been minor seminarians. Ex-priests appear to a great extent autonomous; both categories seem narcissistic with nuances, but active priests show better levels of self-esteem.

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non-violence, the spirit of hard work, discipline, frugal living, the thirst for learning and philosophical enquiry. They hold dear the values of respect for life, compassion for all beings, closeness to nature, filial piety towards parents, elders and ancestors, and a highly developed sense of community. In particular, they hold the family to be a vital source of strength, a closely knit community with a powerful sense of solidarity.

The book does not pretend to be theological or spiritual, but only psychological. Only the human dimension is taken into consideration. Nevertheless, there is a mystery of "grace and sin" in vocation and its fidelity.

There is another similar study written by Emmanuel R. Fernandez, *Leaving the Priesthood: A Close Reading of Priestly Departures* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2001), 279 p. In the United States, Dean R. Hoge wrote yet another complete survey of priests, *The First Five Years of the Priesthood: A Study of Newly Ordained Catholic Priests* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2005), 186 p., with nuanced results and interpretation, including theological and spiritual commentaries.

These are some contributions from psychology and sociology which may help us understand the priestly situation today.

Personal Approach

Daniel B. Santa Maria, *A Day in the Life of a Parish Priest* (Manila: The Catholic Book Center, 2004), 127 p.

We have a very different approach in this book. Following the flow of a priestly day, the author gives a very personal witness of his own life as a diocesan priest. This book combines a double perspective. The events of every day give Fr. Daniel B. Santa Maria the occasion to make many autobiographical digressions and personal reflections. The reader thus enters into contact with his vocational vicissitudes. In fact, the protagonist is a late vocation to the priesthood, coming from a highly placed family with studies in Chemical Engineering and Business Administration, partly in Santo Tomas University and partly in the United States (Chicago). His decision for priesthood and his formation were not without difficulties. He studied in San Carlos and in San Jose Seminaries. But the aim of the book is, above all, pastoral. All the aspects of celebrations, communication with lay people, ministerial actions and human needs, including meals and rest, are present in this book. Its reading is always encouraging. Fr. Daniel often gives spiritual considerations, but he also speaks of his concerns for the poor and for education, the problems of organization, the

movements, the traditions, and the relationship with his own family, as well as the ministry of different sacraments, especially marriage. Maybe the core of the book is to be found in the sixth chapter: "Why Am I a Priest?" We quote his simple statement: "As a priest, I gather people. They are not my people; they are God's people. I do not put up nor allow them putting up my own fans' club" (49). In short, the work is a nice testimony of "a day in the life of a parish priest" that can help many other pastors in their daily ministerial duties. A similar American publication is the book of Francis P. Friedl and Rex Reynolds, *Extraordinary Lives: Thirty-four Priests Tell Their Stories* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1997), 270 p.

Spiritual Approach

Lastly, we present the book of Bishop Teodoro C. Bacani, *A Spirituality For Ministry* (Manila: Gift of God Publications, 2006), 127 p.

The contents of the work of Bishop Bacani reflect his theological preparation. Here we find in order all the main aspects of the Catholic ministry seen from a spiritual point of view. The frequent biblical references and quotations from different authors of spirituality and modern witnesses of faith reflect the quality of the author, his culture and his teaching, and his pastoral sensitivity. But it is not a technical work. Bishop Bacani constantly inserts personal experiences and reflections that make the reading easy and fruitful. Among his topics we underline the existential theme of "the dark side of the ministry," and also the effort to give "models" of ministry, pointing finally to pastoral love as its very "soul." Social aspects are not lacking—"Preferential love for the poor"—as also the interior disposition that supports all priestly action—"humility." The theological point of view reappears in the key chapter about the Paschal Mystery, but the Bishop does not forget the importance of prayer and its deep relationship with the ministry. We also stress the purpose of "communion" that reaches its summit in the Eucharistic celebration. The considerations about the Holy Spirit are very suitable in our time from someone who has worked extensively with charismatic movements. Finally, the secret of fruitfulness, according to Bishop Bacani, lies in faithfulness. He focuses again and

again on the purpose of Pope John Paul II, the "new evangelization." In short, a very stimulating book from and for Filipino ministers that we can compare, for example, with the book of Cardinal Justin Rigali, archbishop of Philadelphia, *I Call You Friends: The Priesthood: Merciful Love* (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 2004), 194 p.

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THE SECRET IS SILENT PRAYER

A Meditation for Priests on Holy Thursday

Socrates B. Villegas, D.D.

> And the fire on the altar shall always burn, and the priest shall feed it, putting wood on it every day in the morning …. This is the perpetual fire which shall never go out on the altar. (Lev. 6:12–13)
>
> When He was at the table with them, He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him …. They asked each other "Were not our hearts burning within us …?" (Luke 24:30–32)

Every now and then, a younger brother priest would come up to me with these words, "How can we keep the fire of our priesthood alive? After only a few months after ordination, I already feel bored. I feel dry. I am not excited anymore. I might not last." "A priest who is not at peace with himself will not be able to inspire peace in another soul. O priests, you bright candles enlightening human souls, let your brightness never be dimmed" ("Divine Mercy in my Soul," Diary of St. Faustina, 75).

Lost Fire

Every priest knows that feeling of the well drying up and the fire dying. The ordination honeymoon seems to end so quickly and

monotony soon sets in. Burning out, running on empty—the feeling is all too familiar.

The onslaught of all these feelings boils down to prayer, or more specifically, the lack or neglect of it. Indeed, pastoral action is attractive and emotionally rewarding, and priests tend to be consumed by it. But when we sacrifice personal prayer for the sake of pastoral action, burn out, boredom and monotony will set in fast.

Unfortunately, the first victim in this boredom and burn out phenomenon is the Mass. We offer the Mass haphazardly without noticing it because we no longer examine our consciences anymore. We rush the prayers and omit the songs, forgetting that the face of God is more important than the face of our wristwatch. We rehash old homilies *ad nauseam*. We put on the Mass vestments like we put on our ordinary shirts and pants and after we unvest, we just throw them on the table of the sacristy, in a rush to go to another appointment. The source and summit of our Christian life has become just a duty to do and a source of revenue. Sad! Why? How can we reverse the path?

In our desire to invigorate our seemingly humdrum life we begin to indulge in "other pursuits." We explore hobbies and sports—photography, golf, tennis …. We pursue further studies. We join more socials. Buy more gadgets. Take longer and farther vacations.

But the happiness continues to evade us. "In our age, as in every age, people are longing for happiness, not realizing that what they are looking for is holiness" (Jerry Walls). The fire could not be reignited. We become mediocre and lukewarm and get accustomed to bland, tasteless water. We just submit to the reality that the wine of the Lord is no more.

Find Him Where You Lost Him

It need not be so. You will find God where you lost Him. You lost Him at Mass? You will find Him there again. "… The whole Church draws life from the Eucharist, all the more then must the life of a priest be 'shaped' by the Eucharist. So for us, the words of institution must

be more than a formula of consecration; they must be a 'formula of life'" (Letter of John Paul II to priests on Holy Thursday 2005, n. 1).

Where in the Mass can we recover the Lord? As a brother to a brother, I encourage you to look at the silent prayers at Mass that we tend to gloss over or even totally ignore or forget because of haste or lack of concentration. "Even before the celebration itself, it is commendable that silence be observed in the church, in the sacristy, in the vesting room, and in adjacent areas, so that all may dispose themselves to carry out the sacred action in a devout and fitting manner" (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal* 45).

The priest's silent prayers in various parts of the Mass are personal prayers that will help us to see ourselves not just as ministers for the validity of the sacraments but as fellow worshipers of the priestly people. The silent prayers prescribed for the priests during the Mass are not for the people but for us. These silent prayers remind us that we are not only there to bless; we also need to be blessed. We are not just at the ambo to teach; we are there to be taught also. We are not just there by the altar to minister; we also need to be ministered to. We are not just functionaries. We are not just tools. The Lord calls us His friends.

The silent prayers of the priest at Mass, if properly prayed, will awaken in us that sense of awe and amazement as we perform our holy duty. "This amazement should always fill the Church assembled for the celebration of the Eucharist. But in a special way it should fill the minister of the Eucharist" (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia* 5).

Saint Charles Borromeo said in one of his last homilies, "Another priest complains that as soon as he comes into the church to celebrate Mass, a thousand thoughts fill his mind and distract him from God. But what was he doing in the sacristy before he came out for the Mass? How did he prepare?"

How do we prepare for Mass? There is no substitute to silent prayers before putting on the vestments. Put on your vestments silently praying. Resist chatting in the sacristy. Recollect. When you vest for Mass, you put on Christ. Your alb is white, so must your soul be. As you put on

your beautiful and expensive Mass vestments, look into your soul and make sure that your soul is more beautiful than your vestments.

Liturgical discipline requires us to cover our secular clothes with liturgical vestments like the white alb or the white cassock. Putting on these white vestments is like putting on a spirit of love and almsgiving. Almsgiving covers a multitude of sins, the Lord says. Love does not hide; love makes us new. The vestments do not conceal; the vestments say you are a new man. Christ is in you, with you. Remember your dignity with humility.

> Sacred silence also, as part of the celebration, is to be observed at the designated times. Its purpose, however, depends on the time it occurs in each part of the celebration. Thus within the Act of Penitence and again after the invitation to pray, all recollect themselves; but at the conclusion of a reading or the homily, all meditate briefly on what they have heard; then after Communion, they praise and pray to God in their hearts. (*GIRM* 45)

Sense of Mystery, Sense of Awe

Do you still pause after saying "Let us pray" before proceeding to read the presidential prayers? This pause for silent prayer is a sign of respect for the people who need to join their prayers to the priest's. This pause is also for the priest to remember that he must carry in his words the unspoken words of prayer from the community. The priest is presiding. The pause after "Let us pray" is a reminder that he is not alone. The whole cosmos benefits from his act of worship. What an awesome act of a priest! You will never completely understand this mystery because if you would, you could die. It is too much to be contained by our limited hearts.

Do you still bow to the altar before proclaiming the Gospel and pray fervently and silently "Almighty God cleanse my heart and my lips that I may worthily proclaim your Gospel"? How important indeed is purity of heart! "Purity of heart is to God like a perfume, sweet and agreeable" (St. Nicolas of Flue). The Lord taught us so at the Mount of Beatitudes. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Mt.

5:8). Purity is detachment from all and attachment to our All. Purity is self-emptying so that all that we are can be dedicated to God.

> The pastor should always be pure in thought, inasmuch as no impurity ought to pollute him who has undertaken the office of wiping away the stains of pollution in the hearts of others … for the hand that would cleanse from dirt must be clean, lest, being itself sordid with clinging mire, it soil whatever it touches all the more. (Gregory the Great)

Decades ago, Bruce Lee, a master of the martial arts, said: "You must free your ambitious mind and learn the art of dying. The cup realizes itself only by being empty. Be yourself." This is the purity of heart that is essential before proclaiming the Gospel. Christ speaks to His people through us.

Our lips need cleansing from all the murders they have done. "… the tongue is a small thing, but what enormous damage it can do" (Jas. 3:5). When our lives deny what our lips proclaim, we bring death to the lives of many. As we stand before the ambo to proclaim the Gospel as written by the evangelists, the people look at us and ask, "Father, what is the Gospel according to you?" The world does not need teachers. The world needs witnesses. We are ordained by the Church to be sent. We are sent to teach but we must talk only when necessary because the most important component of preaching is living the message.

After proclaiming the Gospel, we kiss the book and pray "May the words of the Gospel wipe away our sins." Do we still humbly pray this? The first person who must be changed by the Gospel should be the priest. We kiss the Gospel to show our love and reverence. Not all kisses are born from love though. The Lord surely received many kisses from his sinless mother as a baby, as a child and surely when his bloodied lifeless body was placed on her lap. Remember, too, the kiss on his feet by the repentant woman. And surely you will not forget the famous kiss in the garden of agony from his betrayer. "… are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" (Luke 22:48). How do we kiss the Gospel? How do we kiss the Lord? We cannot imitate the kiss of his sinless mother because we have long lost our innocence. We can only choose between the kiss of a traitor and the kiss of a repentant servant. When finally you raise your head after kissing the Gospel and begin the

homily, you teach the people of God as a fellow sinner. Let the Gospel touch us first. The best proof of a spirit-filled homily is not when people applaud us, but when they bow their heads, strike their breasts and say, too, "May the words of the Gospel wipe away our sins."

Humility, Humility, Humility

The life of the priest is a life offering. Therefore, it is not surprising that at the offertory of the Mass, the priest has three silent petitions. "By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity." The second prayer is "Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble and contrite hearts." Finally, the third silent prayer is "Lord, wash away my iniquities and cleanse me from my sin."

Water is life. Water is a great teacher. Bruce Lee said, "Be flexible. Be formless. Be fluid. Be shapeless like water. You put water into a cup, it becomes the cup. You put water into a bottle, it becomes the bottle. Water can flow or it can crash or creep. Be water my friend." Water has the continuity of movement. The water of life is mixed with the wine of joy. "You will show me the path of life, fullness of joy is in your presence" (Psalm 16:11). Our life is Jesus. Our joy is Jesus. "… We have joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we are now at peace with God" (Romans 5:11).

St. Augustine was asked, "What are the ways to God? First is humility. Second is humility. Third is humility." Humility is seeing yourself as God sees you. "Until a man is nothing, God can make nothing out of him" (Martin Luther). God loves humility because God loves Truth. Humility is truth but not only truth; it is truth in love. "Humility, humility, and ever humility, as we can do nothing of ourselves; all is purely and simply God's grace" ("Divine Mercy in My Soul," Diary of St. Faustina, 55).

The humility that is asked of a priest is not about self-deprecation or suppression of our talents. Humility is rather the acknowledgment of the greatness that God has done through us. "What is mankind that

you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?" (Psalm 8:4). And the fruit of true humility is a merciful and forgiving heart. Seeing something divine in others, the truly humble person becomes incredibly, endlessly and foolishly merciful. The proof of humility is compassion. "Humility is the solid foundation of all the virtues" (Confucius). A proud priest is a contradiction. "Let us take care so that our own failure may not cause injury to the Church" (St. Ambrose).

Broken Bread, Broken Priest

As he prepares to give the body and blood of the Lord to his people, the priest prays again, "May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it." Do not be afraid. Take courage. As the priest breaks the bread, may he remember the repeated times he broke the heart of our merciful Lord. "O God, be merciful to me for I am a sinner" (Luke 18:13). I always find it heartbreaking to break that bread because the act confronts me with my own brokenness that comes from sin and guilt. But the brokenness of the Lord springs from his love. How far my life is from the life of my Lord!

I must relish the sacrament of penance. I need to return to the confessional right after this Mass, sit there with much patience and compassion because I am myself a sinner. Priests are not angels. If we start to think and act like angels, we will end up acting like beasts. The barometer to gauge the depth of our spiritual life is the frequency of our confession. We may be good administrators or fast builders or eloquent teachers or popular pastors, but if we are far from the sacrament of penance, we are only ourselves. We are not another Christ ….

> The priest's spiritual and pastoral life, like that of his brothers and sisters, lay and religious, depends, for its quality and fervor, on the frequent and conscientious personal practice of the sacrament of penance. The priest's celebration of the Eucharist and administration of the other sacraments, his pastoral zeal, his relationship with the faithful, his communion with his brother priests, his collaboration with his bishop, his life of prayer—in a word, the whole of his priestly existence, suffers an inexorable decline if by negligence or for some

> other reason he fails to receive the sacrament of penance at regular intervals and in a spirit of genuine faith and devotion. If a priest were no longer to go to confession or properly confess his sins, his priestly being and his priestly action would feel its effects very soon, and this would also be noticed by the community of which he was the pastor. (*Pastores Dabo Vobis* 26; *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia* VI).

A Crisis of Saints Among Priests

Right before receiving the Lord in the Eucharist, the priest bows humbly and whispers, "Lord Jesus Christ, with faith in your love and mercy, I eat your body and drink your blood. Let it not bring me condemnation but health in mind and body."

Every reform in the history of the Church started with the reform of priests. The crisis of the Church is really a crisis of saints among priests. We lack saints but we have too many celebrity priests. The luster of celebrities is temporary. The saints will shine like the stars for eternity. May all priests be saints and may I be a saint with them.

What a great mystery, what a great gift the priesthood is! The decreasing number of young men ready to answer the call can be a symptom of a deeper crisis in society—the loss of the sense of mystery and absence or lack of comprehension and appreciation of the meaning of gifts.

> There is spreading in every part of the world a sort of practical and existential atheism which coincides with a secularist outlook on life and human destiny …. The individual … finds himself ever more bereft of that "supplement of soul" which is all the more necessary to him in proportion—as a wide availability of material goods and resources deceives him about his self-sufficiency. There is no longer a need to fight against God; the individual feels he is simply able to do without him. (*Pastores Dabo Vobis* 7).

In a society that is only focused on the palpable and verifiable, on the logical and scientific, mystery is absurd and has no place. In a society where everything seems to be available in the classified ads and the media offers everything for sale, all gifts have price tags and

no one needs to express thanks. If we regain the sense of mystery and awe, the capacity to dream and wonder, we will regain the meaning of living. If we can say "thank you" and "please" more often, we shall realize that so much in life is a gift and we have so many people to thank and so much to be thankful for. And we can be happy again!

Priests are mystery men. Priests are gifts of God to the world. Priests are gifts of the world to God. I am His priest and I am grateful, forever grateful. "Live the mystery that has been placed in your hands!" (*Pastores Dabo Vobis* 24).

Learn the Art of Dying

On eating the body of the Lord, the priest prays silently, "May the body of Christ bring me to life everlasting." And drinking from the cup he whispers, "May the blood of Christ bring me to life everlasting." As he purifies the sacred vessels, he prays, "Lord may I receive these gifts in purity of heart. May they bring me healing and strength now and forever."

Bruce Lee said: "Success flows from dedication and self-knowledge." What was success for Bruce Lee was holiness for Jesus. Bruce Lee only saw success and nothing beyond it. Jesus pointed beyond success and opened the door to perfection. Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect, Jesus taught. What is the way to success? What is the way to perfection? In this Bruce Lee and Jesus shared a common road map—sacrifice.

If the seed dies, it bears fruit. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24). If you want to be my disciple, carry your cross daily and follow me. "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me" (Luke 9:23). Bruce Lee echoed this Christian tenet in these words: "You must free your ambitious mind and learn the art of dying. The cup realizes itself only by being empty."

There is no holiness without the cross. There is no love without sacrifice. How must the priest live out this call to die? Cardinal Sin

taught me two very important lessons on dying. The Eucharist and the confession are sure ways to the art of dying. Free your ambitious mind through confession. Learn the art of dying through the Mass.

Our vocation is such a great blessing but it can also be a great temptation. The priesthood can lead us to heaven as we touch heavenly things here on earth or it can lead to our damnation if we take for granted the holy mysteries we hold. If the priest wants sincerely to take care of his vocation, three things are necessary: celebrate Mass daily, pray the complete Liturgy of the Hours faithfully everyday and go to confession monthly.

Finally, I have been asked "What is my most memorable day as a priest?" I readily said "Everyday!" Everything is grace. Grace is everywhere. Every moment is grace.

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A LIFE IN THE SERVICE OF THE CHURCH IN THE PHILIPPINES AND OF ASIA*

Georg Evers

Introductory Note

When discussing the possibility of an interview with Fr. Arévalo, he replied that he did not think that he was a good subject for such an interview. He suggested to interview some of the "mainstream" theologians, that is, some of the bishops, as e.g., Bishop Ted Bacani, or Francisco Claver, because their theological work has been more at the immediate service of the church-in-mission, being a theology which has been most useful and effective for the life of the church. As regards his own theology, Arévalo considers that to have been a "theology behind the scenes," that is, consisting of work in various committees, preparing statements, giving background information, and acting as ghost writer for cardinals and bishops. As regards his own theological work, C. Arévalo stressed that he has been involved in many activities during his long years as a theologian in

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teaching theology, taking part in conferences, acting as advisor and so forth, but that he has never found the time and distance to sit down to write a comprehensive work of theology. Arévalo sees himself as a typical theologian from the Philippines whom he characterizes thus:

> We, theologians in the Philippines, do not have time for quiet reflection and reading, we are in the middle of things. For instance, Bishop Bacani, in his introduction to the book "For All the Peoples of Asia" puts down the tremendous amount of work he has to tackle. And yet he is considered for the church here as one of the leading theological lights.

1. Theological Formation and Training

Q: *Could you elaborate briefly on your theological formation and on the teachers who have influenced your own thinking?*

A: Theological studies, prior to ordination, were first pursued at Weston College, the Jesuit scholasticate of the New England Province. It was at that time affiliated to Boston College (now a University). I received my licentiate in theology (STL) in 1955 from Weston. At that time the Jesuits still had no theological school in the Philippines. Theological formation was in the neo-scholastic system. Within the limitations of that system, we received a good theological formation, for the time.

The teachers who influenced me most were *Francis X. Lawlor* who taught ecclesiology with a remarkable mastery of the field. He had taught briefly at the Gregorian University in Rome and later wrote the principal articles on the Church in the *New Catholic Encyclopedia* of the 1960s; *Philip J. Donnelly*, who also taught at the "Greg," and participated in the debate on *Surnaturel* (de Lubac's positions on nature and grace) through his articles in *Theological Studies*. He was on the conservative side, but was a man of large and stimulating ideas, especially on God's gratuity in creation and redemption. It was Lawlor's work on the Church which influenced the choice of topic for my doctoral dissertation, on the Mystical Body teaching in Giovanni Perrone, Carlo Passaglia and Clemens Schrader (Roman College theologians of the

19th century). This dissertation I worked on in Rome under *Francis Sullivan*, whose first *doctorandus* student I was.

As for formative influences on my student days I would name first: *Bernard Lonergan*, whose studies on St. Thomas (the *Verbum* and *Gratia Operans* articles) I discovered "on my own" and made the deepest impact on me. I wish I could have really grown in the Lonerganian method in my later years, but that would have demanded a degree of leisure-for-study I just never had, once I was back in my country. Then *Yves Congar*, who in a true sense was my life-long master, since his work has been almost daily theological food and drink for the nearly 40 years of my studying and teaching. Twice in my earlier years I wrote to the great Dominican Theologian asking some questions from him, and each time I was surprised and moved to receive fairly lengthy answers written in his own hand. Only many years later when I was named to the *International Theological Commission* (1974–1986) did I get to meet him and have a couple of long conversations with him.

From Congar I learned the importance of seeing ecclesiology in context, learned to appreciate the importance of the inter-relationship between what we call secular history and the life of the Church, i.e., the *significance of history* in the Church's life and theology. Congar's evaluation of Vatican II, his own journey before and after the epoch-making event, the willingness to be open to all currents in the Church and the world, that remarkable youthfulness of mind which he kept till his eighties … have accompanied me during these last thirty years. The sense of the breadth of the Tradition, the ecumenical sensibility, the respect for the heritage of the Eastern churches in particular, the centrality of mission for all ecclesiology, the vocation of lay people in the Church and in the world, the principle of conciliarity in the Church, the meaning of local church and inculturation, the *sensus fidelium*, the necessary interplay of spirituality, doctrine and life—these are some things I learned from Congar: in so many ways, *etiam a longe*, I believe I have been his student. Perhaps I should add some other formative influences: Henri de Lubac's *Catholicisme*, Karl Rahner's essays in spirituality, Hans urs von Balthasar's notion of *betende Theologie* and

his essays on Karl Barth. One's earliest enthusiasms in theology have a way of remaining operative the rest of one's life.

2. Teaching Experiences in the Philippines Before, During and After Vatican II

Q: *When did you start teaching? What were your subjects? Did you start teaching in Latin—and for how long?*

A: After a brief stint (one semester) of teaching at Woodstock College (Woodstock, Md.) after finishing my doctoral studies in Rome in 1959, I returned to the Philippines and started teaching at San José Major Seminary in Quezon City. I taught several subjects in dogmatic theology, in Latin, using Gregorian University textbooks. Among my students were some who became bishops later on, e.g., Archbishop Paciano Aniceto of San Fernando, Pampanga, Bishop Teodoro Bacani of Manila, Bishop Jesus Galang and Bishop Angel N. Lagdameo. In 1965 the Jesuit School of Theology, later named *Loyola School of Theology* (LST), was founded. I became the "founding dean" and later the first president. It was *Fr. Pedro Arrupe,* as general and *Fr. De la Costa* as provincial who pushed the idea of having a Filipino Jesuit theological school. In 1966–67, I was sent abroad to the USA and to Europe to find out the changes in teaching theology after Vatican II. For me personally, the transition from scholastic theology, which I had come to accept as a kind of "absolute system," to post-Vatican II theological changes meant a real crisis. It took me some time to find my bearings again, mostly in contact in Toronto with Lonergan's theology and theological method which was a real liberation for me, intellectually and (I believe) spiritually for the future.

We shifted to English teaching right after the Council, and began a theology "track" in Filipino a few years later.

I have been teaching continuously (more or less) at LST from 1965 to this year, inclusive. At present I have the ordinary courses in Christology, Systematic Ecclesiology, Holy Orders.

Fr. Luis Antonio G. Tagle of the diocese of Imus is now teaching some of the ecclesiology courses at LST. He was a graduate of San Jose Seminary and was helped with grants by MISSIO Aachen during his STD doctorate studies in Washington D.C. and in Rome and Louvain.

3. Concern for Contextual/Inculturated Theology

Q: *When did your theology take the line of inculturation, that is, becoming aware of the problem of the Gospel meeting with Asian resp.*[sic] *Filipino cultural and religious heritage?*

A: In the spring of 1968 the New York Jesuit magazine, *Jesuit Missions,* organized a conference on "Jesuit mission in Asia for the 70s." I was asked to write one of the key papers, on "A Theology of Mission for Asia," for the conference. The concluding reflection, a "Letter to our Foreign-Born Brothers on Mission in Asia," proved to be a controversial text (Re-read 25 years later it said nothing that is not now considered obvious!). In our university campus it aroused much heated discussion; feelings ran high among some Jesuits from abroad in our province. It was Fr. Horacio de la Costa as Provincial who helped us weather the storm, and move along the line of making the Philippine Province a truly Filipino one, with Filipinos placed in positions of responsibility and decision-making, and with a clear policy of Filipinisation pursued. Fr. de la Costa felt Filipinos should hold, whenever possible, posts of direction in the Province. This meant offering foreign-born, especially American Jesuits the clear option to accept remaining under these policies or to decide to leave the country if they found they could not accept working under Filipino superiors, their not assuming "in charge" posts in our communities and works, and going along with the Filipino ways of doing things. A good number of American Jesuits decided to go back to the States, with no hard feelings. Others opted to accept the changes envisioned, and some eventually asked for Filipino citizenship, which Fr. de la Costa saw as a decisive following of the logic of the Incarnation of the Lord in missionary life.

This series of events, plus the demand for theological lectures on these ideas, both here and other parts of Asia, pushed me to

deepen my own understanding of these issues. I began more serious work on a theology of local church, of indigenisation, inculturation, contextualization, of the deeper purposes of mission.

Q: *What were the theological ideas and guiding principles for this insistence on local theology and local way of doing things?*

A: Fr. Pedro Arrupe and Fr. de la Costa repeatedly urged us to try to develop what the Council in *Ad Gentes* had asked for, "local theological reflection" (*Ad Gentes* 22). This was to be one of the guiding objectives and norms for the setting up of what is now known as the Loyola School of Theology here in Manila. Fr. Arrupe first conceived of LST as a Jesuit theologate for all of the East Asian Assistancy. I was named first ("founding") Dean (1965) and later first President (1968) of this institute. From the beginning, inculturation of theology was part of our mandate.

In 1969 I was invited to participate in the first SEDOS theological conference in Rome which was, I believe, on mission and development. The following year I was asked to give a paper and several bible-study talks on religion, the Church, and development in the First Asian Ecumenical Conference on Development in Tokyo. It was becoming increasingly clear to me that contextualized theology for us in Asia meant reflecting on "development / liberation" issues and what the Gospel had to say on them. In 1974 I was asked to give the keynote theological paper at the First Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) in Taipeh (We hope we can come back to these events later). In all these meetings the problems of local church, inculturation, the concrete meaning of mission in Asia today, came up for discussion.

Q: *In the 1970s, the Latin American theology of liberation saw its first major publications which found their way to other parts of the world. It would seem that the impact of this theology in the Philippines was stronger and more far-reaching than in other Asian countries. Was this the case? Is it correct to speak of a greater affinity to Latin American theology among Filipino theologians?*

A: There are many, among them Bishop Francisco Claver, who hold that in the Philippines, a liberation theology of our own (not labeled

as such of course) anteceded the coming of Latin American theology (*TL*) to our country. This line of thinking came with the influence of Maoist thought and Catholic social teaching, some believe, even in the sixties. But no one denies that, starting with Gustavo Gutierrez's book, Latin American liberation theology exercised an increasing impact among Christians here.

The Philippines had been under Spanish colonial domination from the 16th to the end of the 19th century, which had resulted in a strong Spanish influence on Filipino culture, philosophy, theology, and religiosity. This accounts for a certain affinity with Latin America which had a similar history of Spanish colonial rule. The anti-Spanish revolution in our country counted Filipino clergy among its earliest heroes and inspirers. We have a tradition of religious-motivation symbols working behind revolutionary movements. In Filipino popular religiosity, especially among rural people, the veneration of the *Black Nazarene*, that is, Jesus in his passion and on the cross, plays an important role. For Filipino people suffering from injustices and oppression, the passion of Christ—*Pasyon*—is a powerful symbol stimulating resistance and opposition. For myself, I went to Latin America in 1970 partly to learn all I could about liberation theology (TL). I met Juan Luis Segundo and from him received an initiation in the method and basic lines of this new theology. After my stay at Montevideo, I went to Argentina and listened to lectures by Lucio Gera. Both men really enlightened and moved me. The one brief hour Gustavo Gutierrez gave me at Lima was a deeply impressive experience. I have always had a special regard and admiration for him since that visit (The following December I received one of the first copies of his *Teología de Liberación* from him). The six weeks I spent in Latin America proved to be the beginning of something of a *qualitative jump* in my own theological thinking, a liberating experience whose influence endures today. Perhaps it was I who introduced *TL* to the Philippine audiences. With Gutierrez's book and notes I had taken from interviews with Gera, Segundo and others, I lectured on *TL* at Loyola School of Theology, at the East Asian Pastoral Institute, and to diverse audiences in our country. I must say honestly I never became a *TL* "convert" in a total way. From the beginning, the anti-communism of my earlier

Catholic upbringing made me uneasy with what I thought was an insufficiently critical acceptance of some Marxist positions by at least some Latin American advocates of *TL*. Already in the Philippines, Maoist thought was being accepted in some circles without much reflection; many younger priests (and some foreign missionaries) were already opting for communism and for violent solutions.

Just before the declaration of Martial Law by Marcos I gave a lecture series on "The Mission of the Church in the Philippines," which developed the *signs of the times* approach to theology and praxis, brought *TL* to bear on our Philippine situation, and reworked the Church's "vision-mission" in line with that reflection. Notes taken at those lectures were mimeographed, recopied many times by diverse groups, and (so I was told) reached large numbers of readers. Up to now I sometimes meet religious sisters and people who were then seminarians and catechists who tell me that the talks influenced their thought and their lives. At this time too, some younger theologians (Edicio de la Torre, S.V.D., principally) began to develop theological themes which would later be more fully articulated by Christians for National Liberation (CNL). The coming of Martial Law accelerated and intensified all this thinking.

Q: *The dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos, especially the Martial Law period which began in 1972, seemed to have stimulated much reflection and action within the Christian Churches. What was your own experience as a theologian during this time? You have spoken of addressing groups of concerned Filipino Christians during these years. There were people you worked with in whom you saw a keen desire "to reflect within the parameters of faith on the moment of history through which our people and the church in our country [were] going" (Preface to Leonardo Mercado, S.V.D.,* Elements of Filipino Theology *[Tacloban City: 1975]).*

A: The martial law years marked a new awakening for the Church in the Philippines. For the first time in her history, the Church in our country began to think out for herself how she had to fulfill her mission in the particular situation in which we found ourselves. Much reflection, in small groups of Christian people, in dioceses and parishes, in schools. Lectures: we were constantly being asked to address religious and seminarians. The bishops, individually and as

national conference, began to address more sharply political, economic and social issues. Vatican II documents proved to be inspiration and guide; *Gaudium et Spes* became a rich vein to quarry, also the social teachings of the magisterium. The Church and her leaders became increasingly sensitive to human rights issues, because there was so much injustice perpetrated around us, so much violence, "salvaging" of those suspected of opposing the regime, the Philippine form of the national security state under Marcos. There were marked similarities between Latin American situations and our own; thus convergence of *TL* emerged not by design, but by "event."

Those of us who were considered theologians were invited to many places and by many groups to help sort out situations, ideological stances, concrete decisions by religious, priests, lay people. So we were forced to wrestle not with concepts only, but with real flesh-and-blood issues, with concrete policies and decisions which had to be worked out. Many of us had to think on our feet, outside the "shelter of seminaries," in some places the seminaries themselves became the places "where the action was!" We were not thinking with writings and books in view; what we thought and said was for action and praxis. It was a difficult time, but our then theological reflection was "for real."

It was also in the early 1970s that young priests were getting deeply involved in what we might call conscientizing and liberationist activity, trying to organize the poor to struggle for their own education and formation, their own liberation.

There is Fr. Niall O'Brien's *Revolution from the Heart* to tell us something of this powerful story. I think it was in the late 60s and early 70s (especially) that this movement really started. The then Fr. Luis Jalandoni of Bacolod was a pioneer and prophet in this area. A wonderful young priest leader then, who had the poor really at heart, who moved people to wanting to do something about the situation. More than once if I remember rightly, he asked me to share what I knew of *TL* with the priests of Negros, the seminarians and some lay leaders. Later on of course Marcos himself had him placed in concentration. From there he moved to the Netherlands where he has been working for the Communist Party for many years now. Fr. Edicio

de la Torre also was a pioneer in the ideological struggle. Greatly gifted and marvelously articulate, Edicio won over many young people and intellectuals at that time.

Q: *Can it be said that the Church in the Philippines was of one mind and one voice? Or were there ideological differences within the Church?*

A: Martial Law intensified the movement of minds and hearts and feet toward the Marxist-Maoist ideological line. In my own experience, the seminars led by Francois Houtart were one powerful instrument for both conscientizing and leading young people especially towards the Marxist/Maoist movement.

At an Houtart seminar in Baguio, I remember, I was asked to explain *magisterium* texts on social political involvement of Christians and apply them to our situation. Some at the seminar took vocal exception to the *caveats* given, e.g., by Paul VI in *Octogesima adveniens* regarding Marxism. The positions there taken were attacked as unrealistic, conservative, supportive of the capitalist *status-quo*. The split in ideological positions was rapidly shaping up almost everywhere, in the Church of course also.

There were some who supported the Marcos regime as the only effective way to prevent a communist takeover. Others moved step by step toward "the Far Left." In the broad middle spectrum, you had church people, in various degrees of opposition to the Marcos regime. These divisions existed on all levels of the Church.

It was the "far left" which kept gaining ground among many younger people, students, religious, seminarians, workers in rural and urban areas. *Christians for National Liberation* came into being at this time. Edicio de la Torre, S.V.D., highly intelligent and charismatic, was perhaps the outstanding figure in this "shift to the Left." Alliances were being formed between church people and the communist party, the *National Democratic Front*. I knew some seminarians and priests as well as religious sisters who joined the underground or collaborated intensively with it. As martial law multiplied its abuses the Communist party grew, and collaboration with the party and its fronts grew within the Church. The underground broadened, developed wider networks, the New People's

Army (NPA) increased and so did its support. All this had repercussions within the Church also; it is hard to quantify this of course.

Q: *One of the recurrent topics in your theologizing was "discerning the signs of the times" (Cf. "On the Theology of the Signs of the Times," in* Philippine Priests' Forum*, 1972, 4, 14–26). In responding to the Signs of the Times, was it your belief that the Church, and you yourself as a theologian, were responding to the Spirit, as the Filipinos faced the experience of the 1970s and the 1980s? Would you consider the Church in the Philippines as a hermeneutical community encountering the Spirit in these challenges, and thus moving forward as church in its praxis?*

A: We did formulate our responses in those terms, I believe. We at Loyola School of Theology began publishing *Loyola Papers* under my overall editorship in the 70s and 80s. This was in response to insistent requests for "theological reflection" texts—from religious, seminaries, from schools, from individuals. How should we respond as Christians, they asked, to what was happening under martial law, to the "great ideological battle" taking place all around us, to other national concerns? Could we draw guidelines from the magisterium, and could we show how these applied concretely, here and now? Those were the questions we tried to meet. Not to do thinking for others, but to help them make their own discernments. *Loyola Papers* went through some 15 numbers. The numbers were printed and reprinted again and again, they reached several hundreds of copies, a few even thousands (For local publications in theology, remarkable enough). They were meant for immediate use, and I believed served their purpose. Later on, some graduate students used them for their masters' (and even doctorate) dissertations on the Philippine situation.

Q: *What other theological reflection were you called on to do during this crisis period?*

A: *Loyola Papers* and rather widespread lecturing led to being invited to act as resource person to meetings of the Association of Major Religious Superiors (AMRSP) and the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP). I was sometimes invited to participate in CBCP discussions, alone or with others. At one general session in the early 80s, a formal discussion of the national situation and the

"ideological lines" within the country and the Church was held in the CBCP. It was preceded (or followed) by a seminar on the same topic, under then Bishop Leonardo Legaspi. Several of us theologians and "active" clergy were invited to speak to the Bishops. Fathers Blanco, Intengan, Lambino and myself among the Jesuits, Bishops Leonardo Legaspi, Francisco Claver, Julio Labayen, Antonino Nepomuceno, among the bishops themselves, were much involved in the discussions. We were told the session proved very helpful. The CBCP documents, more involved and more specific as Martial Law progressed, began to increasingly oppose the dictatorship and its abuses. Only a small group of bishops remained pro-Marcos at the end. It was a remarkable moment of history for the Church and our bishops. Reflection on that history has not been adequately done, not at all. And yet it was a time when the Church was, literally, "making history."

Q: *Did you meet with the grass-roots groups at this time, with people who had joined the underground or gone "up the mountains"?*

A: No, I do not pretend to having ever been to the mountains to talk with the insurgents. With some justice, I was accused by some as an "armchair theologian," whenever I took part in the battle of ideologies through writing and speech. But I did join seminars and workshops of priests and other groups, seminarians' discussions, in several parts of the country. I remember several meetings in Mindanao where confrontations were sharp and strong. Once, a priest said the hierarchy, especially our two Cardinals Rosales and Sin, had no longer the right to call themselves *Church*, that they had betrayed the Gospel. At another discussion, a foreign missionary burst out that in our situation, there was no more place for prayer and spirituality; we sinned by not aligning ourselves actively with the extreme Left. I had a brief "exposure period" in the Ipil area of Zamboanga where I listened to farmers and other rural folk discussing scripture passages in the evening, in preparation for Sunday Mass. I visited with some younger priests and our Jesuit missionaries in some areas where the insurgency was much in evidence. But most of my contact with "the front lines" was through meetings of priests and religious men and

women. I did learn something of what was "really going on" in the hinterlands through listening to their experiences and reflections.

Q: *Could you share some personal experiences of this period?*

A: Let me just touch on some stories, situations brought up for reflection and evaluation. Once a Mother Superior asked one of us at the School of Theology about one of her religious Sisters who would often go up to the mountains to spend time with armed insurgents. The Superior found out that this Sister was facilitating meetings of the rebel troops. One of the items on their agenda, often enough, was to "discern" who would be put on their assassination list of people to be killed in the coming weeks. The Mother Superior didn't know what to do about this! To her relief the Sister left the congregation in due time!

At another time, a Provincial inquired about a community of her congregation: the armed insurgents were using their chapel to hide their guns, ammunition and even heavy weapons. Another case: a superior found out one of his religious men was acting as treasurer for guerrilla groups, withdrawing and disbursing money for their needs, etc. Yet another case, a priest was using funding from Europe sent for the diocese and diverting it to the support of guerrilla groups in the hills. When I speak of reflection on ideological issues, you can see that we were not involved in abstract discussions.

Let me end this with a true story about a religious Sister whom I had known when she was just a school-girl, from a rather well known Manila family. She used to see me from time to time. She was working among the poor in the outskirts of a city in Mindanao. She had seen the violence of the Marcos military against the poor, violence against those who were suspected of being pro-NPA. She had just witnessed a vicious killing of a woman and her child, family members of an NPA leader. She wept as she recounted things she had seen with her own eyes. The communists were the only people really fighting to change this evil situation, she said. Would it not be better actively to work with them, help them, in their struggle? Even join groups helping them, espousing violence, fostering the revolution?—There was little I could tell her, except to hold on to her faith, its insistence on non-hate and

non-violence, its recourse to prayer and love …. As it was, she was doing so much for communities of poor people and for victims. She wanted to do even more. In any case, within a few weeks she died in a ferry accident. She and some other sisters (R.G.S.) were on an inter-island ferry, the *Cassandra*, licensed to have some 500 passengers but actually carrying over a thousand. At night it hit a reef and went down rapidly. Through the confusion and terror, she and her companion nuns refused to receive life-belts, insisting that mothers and children, and others first get them. As the ferry sank, these sisters were seen gathered in prayer; they were swept away in the dark waters. Her desire to lay down her life for the poor had been answered by the Lord, not through violence, but from self-sacrificing love.

Contextual Theology

Q: *It is an interesting coincidence that the first contribution in our book series* Theologie der Dritten Welt *(*Den Glauben neu verstehen, Beiträge zu einer asiatischen Theologie *[Freiburg: 1981]) is by Catalino G. Arévalo: "Was ist kontextuelle Theologie?", which is the German translation of your contribution towards an International Colloquium on contextual theology in East and Southeast Asia in June 1978 in Manila. In your contribution you seem to give preference to the term contextualisation, with its emphasis on the socio-economic-political context, as more apt to express the needs of an Asian theology than inculturation. Would you say that this is correct, especially in view of the aim of a contextual theology which you describe as the Christian decision to engage in action?*

A: The question of "how I moved into the area of contextual theology" is probably answered easily enough. I did *not* "get interested" in contextual theology, I was simply obliged by situations in which we were inserted to "do it." As contrasted with seminary professors who were deep into "book theology," some of us were being asked to speak at grassroots seminars and workshops, regional meetings of religious, priests and lay people, meetings of religious superiors, and the like, where theologians were asked "to help us to analyze the situation from the standpoint of faith, and to address the situation and what we should do about it, also from the standpoint of faith." We were being asked to "do theology on our feet" so to speak. In the years following Vatican

II, from ca. 1965 on, through the next 30 years, this was the work we were "forced" to do, if we wanted to be of help to our local churches.

Incidentally, this is one reason I have never had time to write a single book of my own. From 1965 onwards, all my work, except for classroom teaching of seminarians, was in the area of "helping Christians to think their way through" developing situations in our country, in other countries in Asia. Work for the CBCP (Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines), for the FABC (Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences), for individual dioceses and religious communities was all in this direction. Teaching at the East Asian Pastoral Institute (EAPI) during the seventies especially was also an effort to "think through" rapidly-changing situations developing throughout our part of Asia. The themes I was asked to discuss were *Theology of Mission* in Asia and the Philippines, *ecclesiology* (especially the developing theology of *local church*), *"development and liberation," inculturation* (through the seventies this was a topic that people wanted to enter into!), *faith and ideological positions, dialogue,* especially *dialogue with other religious traditions, missionary formation* (what did all these "new things" mean, for those being formed for mission?), *ministries* for needs of *local churches* especially in Asia, the *roles of priests and religious men and women* in Asia today, theology of basic ecclesial communities, and (especially as the eighties began) *violence* and *non-violence in political situations*. And at the background, gradually growing in importance, the *role of lay people in the developing churches* in Asia, and the *role of women*. *All* these themes are ecclesiological. That is why I was asked to help people in workshops, etc., reflecting on them. You see *I had to* do contextual theology, there just was no choice. Too, I was invited to give lectures in Tokyo, Seoul and Pusan in South Korea, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, Saigon (before its fall), many many times in Hongkong and Taipeh, there were workshops, conferences and dialogues in Bangkok, Melbourne, Nagpur, Bombay and Calcutta. There were invitations to Bangladesh and Burma, Indonesia and Port Moresby I was unable to accept. At Melbourne I was part of the Holy See's delegation to the World Council of Churches' conference on mission. Then the countless workshops of the FABC "departments": missionary activity, social action, inter-

religious dialogue, ecumenical conversations, theological interchange … all this was always "dialogue" and addressing contextual issues.

Looking back now from ca. 1967 on, the overarching question theology here in our part of the Church was being asked was: what is the faith-response, what is our response as Church, as Christians to the changing situations around us? In more formal terms, what is the mission of the Church for us here and now, and how do we, concretely, work out in thought and praxis what that mission is? That is why the Latin American response was so influential in the 70s. Not as something to be copied, but as an effort to evolve a methodology of response.

Development/Liberation

Q: *Was the conflict between a liberationist and a developmental approach to the social mission of the church a real opposition, or simply a difference in the approach (cf. C. G. Arévalo, "Notes for a Theology of Development," in D. J. Elwood, ed.,* Asian Christian Theology, Emerging Themes *[Philadelphia: 1980], 267–288)?*

A: Perhaps one good way of looking at this diversity of theological approaches is to recall one rather frequently-voiced principle some people invoked at the time: *"There is no third way"* between capitalism and socialism. One either opts to reform and renew the capitalist way, or opts to reform and recreate socialism along more democratic lines.

This was equivalently the debate we had in our hands. "Developmentists" in fact said: from experience, from our own perception of the concrete situation in our country, the way forward is to start with the capitalist-style society we have, and to keep pushing it towards more just distribution structures—of the fruits of production, of power relationships, of ownership of means of production, etc. Push as hard as you can, trying to move from above and from below. "Liberationists" saw the priority in moving by revolution into the socialist system, with the radical changes which that called for in the social, cultural, economic structures. But they wanted a socialism that had learned the lessons history had taught; they wanted a more

human, more Christian, more democratic socialism. For most people it wasn't a merely ideological issue; they were arguing from history and the praxis-possibilities open to them.

If I may try to articulate that approach some of us took: we said, instead of rigid ideologies, we have some principles from the Church's social teaching to bring to bear on our situation. They can be "radicalized" with liberationist *analyses*. We in the Church, bishops included, can come to agreement on the wide range of policies and practice. The *Maoist approach*, with its Marxist metaphysics, its primacy of class warfare as "hinge-dogma," the option for violence, we cannot "christianize"—at least in practice. It would mean the de *facto* alliance with communism and the communist party, following the party's strategy, aligning the church organizations with the party, as many even now believe should be done. There were others who believed the socialist option was the necessary one, but one different from the Marxist-Maoist line. They came to be known as SD's (socialist democrat). They opted for limited violence, which they considered in line with Christian teaching: limited to neutralizing some key people in the dictatorship, violence exercised on taking over certain power centers, etc.

As Martial Law worsened and its oppression escalated, more people in the Church including bishops, understood the liberationist perspective better: there was a *more conscious* acceptance that fundamental reforms were needed, but by and large the bishops were against violence. Then, providentially the "non-violence option" began to be propagated and grew in acceptance: a peaceful revolution was possible, was possible for us. Then a situation developed that became its staging ground. The rest is EDSA,[1] unplanned, in a true sense a gift.

[1]EDSA is the acronym for Epifanio de los Santos Avenue, the name of the street on which Camp Crame, the headquarters of the Philippine Constabulary (later renamed the Philippine National Police [PNP]), is located, and from where Juan Ponce Enrile and Fidel Ramos were calling for the downfall of Ferdinand Marcos in February 1986. Cardinal Sin called the people on Radio Veritas to come out to EDSA in order to block with their bodies the tanks ordered forward by the Marcos regime to crush the rebellion.

Let me end by saying that when I wanted to "stay" with Church teachings and work rather to keep Church people united with the bishops, I began to be ostracized by "far Left" groups in the Church. I was called "an armchair theologian, a bleeding heart, an establishment lackey," etc. No, I never got to a point where I felt a working alliance with the communist party was the solution. To the end of the dictatorship I felt we should work to keep the Church united, move it toward "the liberationist direction" so we could at least work together for fundamental reforms, but trying to accomplish things in a non-violent way. But there were groups in the Church which wanted a more radical option. There were instances of diocesan, social action centers and works being taken over by people who wanted all-out collaboration with the "far Left." Funding from foreign Catholic agencies was at times being diverted for these purposes. Some priests and sisters, and of course a good number of Christians, joined the Party. We'll never know how many, I guess. The full story of those years has never really been studied, probably it will never be fully known.

Filipino Theology

Q: *You have often made references to* Ad Gentes *22 as a seminal text. It says that "theological investigation must be stirred up in each major socio-cultural area." How did you view attempts to develop a Filipino theology or Filipino theologies?*

A: Developing *a Filipino theology (or* theologies) means, for me, to get in touch with concrete questions Filipino Christians are asking, even if these have not yet been well articulated. It should be part of the theologians' intellectual "sensitivity" to touch the deeper movements in the lives of Filipinos and the currents in Philippine contemporary history, and from within the context and culture, to bring to articulation what operative images and aspirations are present and emerging. *Aspirations*, I think, are an important key; "desires." In the last few decades, we have seen currents in Filipino religiosity, the concerns for social justice and social reforms, the emergence of political activism, issues raised by human migration movements: hundreds of thousands moving into city-slums, hundreds of thousands taking overseas jobs (mainly as domestics and manual workers), etc. There

are aspirations in motion here, changing patterns in the interface between traditional community-life and the disintegration modern life has brought. These are the kind of things Filipino theology must begin with. A theological interpretation of key events in our history, to collocate our Church history within the larger story of Catholicism; e.g., a deeper reflection on the history of colonization and its good and bad sides; some analysis of the Philippine experience of Church, etc., little of this, if anything, has been attempted, let alone completed. The stories of priests who have influenced our history, the prophetic figures of our local churches as shedding light on the mission of the Church here, none of this has been explored.

We have theological dissertations now addressing the Philippine context. Fr. Ben Beltran's Christology is well-known as an important inquiry. A few works for the theological academe exist. But a local theology in a way presupposes a theological community; in the Philippines this hardly exists. I believe such a community is necessary, even for the solitary genius who might give us a truly significant study. Even our professors of ecclesiology have never (not even once!) met to discuss that significant area. In the past there have been attempts like Fr. Leonardo Mercado's, to write on Filipino theology. Mercado explored the language, sayings, thought patterns of Filipinos as starting point. We have Dr. Jose de Mesa's well-read books, Fr. Dionisio Miranda's impressive work …. But as I said we have not developed a *corpus* of writings which is on a par, say, with Latin American theological output, moving in rather clear directions, etc. All this we must try to stimulate still, for the future.

Popular Religiosity

Q: *In Latin American liberation theology there has been a lively discussion on the position and function of popular religiosity. Sometimes it is seen as obstructing liberation, because it was seen as preserving the status quo. How has popular religiosity been viewed by Filipino theologians?*

A: In our Christian history in this country, popular religiosity has often been linked up with liberation movements, beginning with the Spanish colonial period itself. The Gospels' passion narrative

has been a source of strength for those subjected to oppression, both in the sense of giving people fortitude under suffering (I do not see this as necessarily supporting the *status quo*) and motivating people to take stands against oppression, because Christ did not "cave in" to persecution. There are revolutionary and resistance movements throughout our history where the symbolism of passion-cross-resurrection has been seen as supportive of resistance rather than resignation. The EDSA "revolution" in February 1986 was powered by religious motivation and religious symbols, by the active non-violence movement which had gained a foothold here—not in conflict with, but supported by popular religiosity. The omnipresent symbols at EDSA and surrounding areas were religious: Mary above all, the rosary, Marian hymns …. Night and day, wherever the crowds gathered, religious symbols were there in their midst, and prayer and hymns were heard everywhere. No one thought this unusual; people drew strength and unity from their common faith.

Sometime a perceptive and insightful reflection should be done on the role of Mary in the conversion of our people to Christianity, what her influence has been, its shaping power for "the Filipino story," its particular meaning for the Filipino spirit. Some two-finger exercises on this theme have been sketched. An intelligent, detailed and critical study remains to be done. Similar studies could be made on the Christ-child and the Nazarene, on the *Santo entierro*[2] and maybe the Christmas story; they are "foundational" symbols for many of our people.

I do not think that, by and large, most theologians believe that popular religiosity in our country has been allied predominantly with the *status quo*. It is rather the American-backed "born again" movements which have been perceived as instrumentalized by the National Security State and by economic colonialist interests.

The EDSA Revolution

Q: *You participated rather fully in the "People Power Revolution" in February 1986, both before it and during it, and in your active support of the post-EDSA*

[2]Veneration of Jesus in the grave during the Holy Week, a common expression of Filipino popular religiosity.

presidency. What is your assessment as a theologian of those events? In a reflection done immediately after the events you spoke of "EDSA '86" as an event deserving deeper theological reflection, with the Exodus as "background-story" and the non-violent movement as part of the scenario. Now, ten years later, how would you assess these events?

A: The EDSA revolution of 1986 was surely a *moment of grace* for our people, a moment of true liberation for our people, a moment of true liberation given to us. The analogy with the Exodus was drawn again and again by Cardinal Sin and President Aquino shortly after the event. It is truly a pity that no sustained deeper theological reflection has been made on the events.

Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador once said that the mission of the Church in any given country is to help transform that nation's history into a history of salvation. As theologians we of course tend to be highly critical of "faith interpretations" of secular events; I have no quarrel with that. Yet thousands of those who actually were at EDSA and participated in the revolution experienced in their minds and hearts the conviction that God was present and acting in the thousand-and-one "little miracles" that together made the revolution possible. At a workshop held months afterwards I heard a Protestant pastor, with tears, describe his experience of EDSA "as living in the midst of a miracle," which he said he would not deny to his dying day. It is difficult to communicate to those who were not there what the lived experience of so many people was. People in deep prayer for stretches of time, the spirit of sharing and love that we felt was being given as gift "from outside of us," and the willingness of so many to stake their lives, the surprising response of the soldiers, the chain of events, incredible when one looks at it now, which brought about the turnaround of the military, the sudden reversals and miraculous decisions. We who were there can only say we lived out a miracle in those hundred fateful hours! There was the Marian Year of 1985 taking up the Holy Father's urging to celebrate the bi-millennium of Our Lady's birth with its intense prayer offered all over the country for a peaceful solution to our deepening national crisis. The fervor of the prayers, pilgrimages, penances, offered by the people! The increasingly united stand of the majority of our bishops, speaking

out against the abuses being perpetrated, but urging also nonviolence and reconciliation. Prayer for peaceful deliverance, from near despair, from the growing and ruinous poverty of our people, not in a spirit of hatred, but in hope. All these were coming together as a scenario leading to the EDSA events.

Then the fateful Saturday afternoon, when at night, Cardinal Sin called people to the streets to avoid bloodshed, and everything began to come together: "people power" generated as itself a miracle of minds and wills united to overturn the dictatorship; the unexpected crowds gathering by hundreds of thousands with one purpose, the firm, daring will to peaceful change; and everywhere, prayer and sharing, love and laughter. What ideologies, political maneuvering, countless efforts at organizing the opposition, etc. could not accomplish for many years, overnight the movement of faith did. What message should we as Filipino Christians draw from these events? How discern the "surface factors" from what was from God in people and through people? The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP-II) came closest to the reflecting, in faith, on what happened. But the real analysis and discernment remains to be done. Perhaps through narrative, done by a *theological community*, moving from experience to reflection and discernment, through judgments that can be made, conclusions that can be drawn in the spirit of faith. *Narrative as bearer* of the theological reflection, instead of something abstract and formal.

4. Experiences as a Theologian of the International Theological Commission (1974–1986)

Q: *When you were made a member of the papal theological commission in 1974 you were the only Asian theologian in the commission. Were there any expectations, with regard to the contribution that Asian theological reflection could make, from your side, or were you considered just another ordinary member, with no special perspective to contribute?*

A: First, the twelve years during which I served the commission were enriching for me personally. I looked forward to the meetings, listening to theologians I had long admired, whose works I had for years studied, like

Yves Congar, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Juan Alfaro, Heinz Schurmann, Jan Walgrave, Jean Marie Tillard, Karl Lehmann, Walter Kasper, Joseph Ratzinger, Cipriano Vagaggini and others. I learned much, and outside of the sessions I could enter into fruitful conversations.

On the other hand, I do not think there was any real interest in what we from Asia or Africa had to contribute, from different cultural viewpoints. We were expected simply to "fit in" harmoniously. I believe the then-Father John Onaiyekan from Africa, now a bishop, felt the same way. Even on the theme of inculturation, where I was asked to contribute a paper, I felt the Europeans present felt there was little, if anything, we could add to the discussions. There was really no opening for different approaches to theology, for a need of an experiential perspective "from below." The discussions were invariably structured according to the traditional methods. So when we spoke, unless we could speak from expertise in patristics or exegesis, etc., as good European theologians, we really had nothing relevant to say. The one outstanding exception: Fr. Congar would go out of his way to encourage us to speak out, to share some of our different experiences or viewpoints. Whenever I intervened he would seek me out at the coffee break to make some comment, express gratitude, etc. When we were discussing the "liberation problematic," Fr. Congar urged that we invite theologians of liberation to participate in our discussions, but this was not believed advisable.

Would it not help if the ITC met in other venues, took up problems other than those discussed in Europe, listened to other theologians (non-members) who had fresh viewpoints and experiences to contribute, etc.? There would be practical difficulties in trying to test newer methods of theological reflection, to see something of the situation from which certain theologies (e.g., theologies of liberation) arose, etc. For the FABC (cf. following section) Bishops would spend a week of "exposure" in certain settings, to understand the problems the Church was faced with. It will be argued that thus one would be dealing with "pastoral," not theological problems. But is theology to be divorced from life, that it has nothing to learn from concrete situations which pose questions and problems to the Gospel and theology?

In a sense, we could perhaps say that the ITC is still overwhelmingly a European commission. Its set-up, methods, themes, atmosphere are those of European university theology. Its concerns, at least in the years when I was a member, remained those of the European sectors. Maybe nothing else is possible at this time. But let me go on record as having profited much from my years of membership in the ITC, and I am grateful for that experience.

5. Contribution to the Work of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC)

Q: *You were present at the first Asian Bishops' Meeting in Manila 1970 on the occasion of the visit of Paul VI in the Philippines from which the idea of setting up the FABC was born. What are your own recollections about the meeting and the process which led to the founding of the FABC? You have been speaking of a special grace of collegiality which you have observed to have been operative in some of the FABC meetings of bishops, who, freed from their day-to-day chores, are open to more universal concerns and the work of the Spirit (in "For All the Peoples of Asia," in G. B. Rosales & C. G. Arévalo, eds.,* Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences. Documents from 1970–1991 *[Manila: Orbis/Claretian Publ., 1992], XVII).*

A: Pope Paul VI's visit to the Philippines in December 1970 provided a happy opportunity to hold an *Asian Bishops' Meeting* (ABM). It was during that meeting that the first steps toward forming the *Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences* (FABC) were taken (This year, timed to coincide with Pope John Paul II's Manila visit for World Youth Day 1995, the FABC met again in Manila to celebrate the 25th anniversary of its beginnings).

The final statement of the ABM summed up the essential directions for common efforts for the Asian Churches and the Asian bishops: solidarity with Asian peoples in their aspirations and struggles in the years to come (Yes, that final statement was given to me to piece together, using the assorted concluding reflections of the bishops as basis. The text had to be done overnight, in less than a few hours.

Fortunately it was rather well received.). It was also realized that an organization like the FABC could be an important means for helping the Churches in Asia toward communion, mutual knowledge and cooperation in apostolic and missionary endeavors, and the like. Among the moving spirits for FABC's formation we should name Cardinals Kim (Seoul), Gracias (Bombay), Archbishops Fernandes (New Delhi), Lokuang (Taipeih), and Bishops Gaviola (CBCP) and Francis Hsu (Hongkong). Bishop Hsu was, along with Cardinal Kim, very supportive of the idea (The first concrete organizational meeting was held in Hongkong in the following March. The first draft of the statutes were drawn up then.). Father Horacio de la Costa acted as facilitator of the first meeting held at his office.

In April 1974 the first FABC plenary assembly was held in Taipeh. For the participants, it was (I believe) truly an historic meeting: the bishops realized that they could take collegiality some important steps forward together, that they had much to learn from each other; that the communion of Asian Churches could be built up through communion and friendship among themselves. FABC-I served, at the same time, as a preparation for the 1974 Synod on Evangelization held that autumn in Rome; the bishops articulated at that Synod what they had discussed and agreed on at Taipeh (We have published three volumes which document this). Regarding the final FABC-I statement: Bishop Rodericks (Jamshedpur) headed the drafting committee, and he asked me to help out with the task of bringing together the consensus statements of the various workshops into a coherent whole. The draft, when presented to the entire assembly, was approved with minimal changes. The bishops saw in it a good spelling-out of what they believed to be the tasks of evangelization for Churches in Asia. The now well-known "triple dialogue"—with our Asian peoples, with their *cultures* and *religions*, and with their *situations of poverty and underdevelopment*—had a large influence in the self-understanding of Asian Churches, and an understanding of what their mission-thrusts should be. Cardinal Cordeiro was later to tell me that FABC-I's final statement had an unexpectedly great impact in most of the local Churches in our area, that it served as a sort of "vision/mission" statement for the next ten years and more, in our part of the world.

In October 1974, for the Roman Synod on Evangelization, the FABC set up in Rome, at a hall in the Augustinian institute near the piazza of the *Sant' Uffizio*, a series of meetings of the Asian bishops. Fr. D. S. Amalorpavadass, that prophetic figure to whom Asian theologians owe much, was named one of the theological secretaries of the Synod, along with (I believe) Fr. Domenico Grasso of the Gregorian. "Amalor," Fr. Jacques Dupuis, myself and others spoke to the Asian bishops and they held lively discussions among themselves.

When the stage of drafting texts was reached, Amalor, Dupuis and I worked together on a text he [sic] wanted to present. We tried to incorporate a strong "from below" perspective. I don't know all the details, but I remember Amalor telling us that other official theologians could not accept his views on theological approaches "from below," with data from experience and praxis used as starting-point for reflection. "It was just not an acceptable method." He felt frustrated. If I remember rightly, he mentioned that Archbishop Wojtyla was the main relator and did not accept that perspective either.

It was at this Synod that African bishops and theologians issued a document urging that the notion of inculturation and contextualization take the place once for all of "adaptation" which they felt missed the point of what was really called for.

The FABC "study and discussion sessions" emerged as an excellent idea. I believe Fr. Edward Malone, Asst. Secretary General of the FABC, kept them up to help the Asian delegates to succeeding Synods.

The later FABC plenary assemblies, at Calcutta (1978) and Bangkok (1982), discussed the themes of Asian prayer and Christian prayer, and the Church as a community of faith. I was also asked to help in the drafting committees for both plenaries. This work was always done under pressure, and it was difficult trying to get all the main themes in the group-consensus reports into a coherent whole. The book *For All the Peoples of Asia* contains these texts. They exercised some real influence, I am told, in the Church in many countries especially among religious. I took part in a great many workshops of the *Bishops' Institutes for Missionary Activity* (BIMA), *Bishops' Institutes for Social Action* (BISA),

Bishops' Institutes for Inter-Religious Dialogue, et al. Regarding my own theological "focus" in the 70s especially, my work constantly moved around the theme of *the mission of the Church*, *especially in Asia*. I found this a really challenging area because so much was going on around us, in the local churches.[1] For many years I had courses on these topics (the *"triple dialogue" especially*) at the Loyola School of Theology, at the East Asian Pastoral Institute, in other seminaries in the Philippines and elsewhere in this part of the world. I lectured on the same concerns at Seoul, Hongkong, Taipeh, Saigon, Kuala Lumpur.

… "The Church in the FABC region was seeking increasingly to *'become* Church' (to use Fr. Congar's wonderful words)." It was an exciting time to awaken minds and hearts of Asian Christians to the reality and endeavor of the "self-realization of the Church."

Q: *In your introduction to the compilation of FABC texts, "For All the Peoples of Asia," you refer to Yves Congar's words "the time of the heirs." You applied words Congar used for Africa to the Asian setting: the heritage of the Christian Tradition, the heritage of Catholicism, had been transmitted to Asia by missionaries, and now the time had come for Asian Christians to speak in their own voice, to construct their own local Churches. The point of departure in the thought and texts of the FABC assemblies has been the vision (and reality) of a new world being born in Asia, a world of vast changes and youthful restlessness, of conflict and struggle. These are the words you yourself use to describe the surprising consistency of the major orientations in the FABC papers.—Is this sense of urgency and change still the pervading mood in Asia, in the Asian Churches? Would you still hold that an adequate theology of history or a theology of responsibility for the world is far from being an accomplished task in Asian theology?*

A: For me, behind the desire for constructing local theologies lies the "dream of catholicity." The catholicity of the Church has been a passion, in a way, in my mind and heart since my first contacts with ecclesiology. Henri de Lubac's *Catholicisme*, and essays of Congar and Pierre Charles played a part in enkindling this passion. It is a consequence of Incarnation and Paschal Mystery, it is the meaning of Pentecost, that (rightly understood) the realization of *catholicity* is the meaning of the Church's mission. *Deus nostra sumpsit, ut nobis sua daret. Quod non assumpsit, etiam non redemit.* The salvation brought to us by

Christ, the Fathers of the Church said, could be encapsulated in the *admirabile commercium*: God wants everyone, all peoples, all "pieces of our earth" to be filled and fulfilled with his life and his Spirit. That means that every people, every place in Asia, has a vocation to the realization of the catholicity of the Church. Christ is "not yet complete" until all humanity, each part of it, has made its contribution to the "Christ of all peoples." Every people has its gift and riches, and the Father has a place for all these gifts, in the Kingdom, in the Body of His Son. Equality and participation is a calling for each people in the human family. Until each people has made the contribution to the Church's unity-in-diversity which it has a right and duty to make, the work of mission and the mission of the Church has not been fulfilled.

It is my experience that the local Churches in Europe especially (their theologians most certainly) feel no need whatever for what other cultures have to give to them. My experience in the International Theological Commission was, I believe, confirmatory of this. I do not speak of any bad will, or spirit of discrimination. It is very simply this: an unquestioned attitude that "we have everything; we really have no need of anything from you." "We have much to give you, but you have nothing to give us, to be honest." So what Africa or Asia has to contribute to the Church is "local color": some strange and exotic costumes and songs, different skin-colors at the liturgical rites perhaps. Nothing much more. "The millennia of Christian life and culture has nothing to gain from your under-developed ways of life." Yet, does not God's dream of catholicity mean that we have need of one another? That a particular blindness, which sees no need of what others can give, is a blindness that contradicts the Christ, incarnation to Pentecost?

My growing conviction has been that each place and region in Asia has to make its specific contribution to the mosaic which constitutes the catholicity of the Church, which in my mind is one of the most important principles of our faith. Every people has a right to find its place within the church. Every local church can only contribute to this *dream of catholicity* when it is given a status of equality and participation, because every people in the eyes of the Father is equal to all the others and has a right to be loved for themselves and for the gifts and

particular contribution it can make. That was the point I made to the *International Theological Commission* when I told them:

> Most of you don't seem to feel the need of any Asian or African contribution. You find it nice that we come to add some decoration, but you don't have any need for our gifts, because you are representing a European church which is complete to herself! And then you tell us Asians that we need you, because you represent millennia of a Christianity that is the true tradition!

For me, however, catholicity implies that we all have need of one another. That is the ultimate meaning of local church for me. A local church is never a means in itself, but in equality and participation every local church helps to bring forth the catholic communion as the ultimate aim of being church.

The Church catholic is a communion of local churches. Every local Church is the Church in a given time and place, but it is also in communion, both diachronically and synchronically, with the Church in all times and in the world. Unless every local church shares in the *koinonia* that is the Church universal, in true equality, in authentic participation, in the interchange of gifts and blessings, then the dream of catholicity has not yet been realized. It is part of our deepest duty, as Catholics especially, to help bring this to pass.

Q: *You were the "theological program coordinator" of the International Mission Congress (IMC) held in Manila in 1979. Its theme was "Toward a New Age of Mission." You were asked to be the main organizer of the event as far as content and dynamics were concerned. You wrote one of the main pre-congress papers, "Further Reflections on Mission Today in the Asian Context." Before the congress you were charged with preparing the overall program and agenda and acting as Executive Secretary of the Congress Office. During the congress you functioned as coordinator and resource person of plenaries and working groups. You were asked to draft the concluding statement and to edit the papers and proceedings ("Towards a New Age of Mission. The Good News of God's Kingdom to All Peoples of Asia," The International Congress on Mission, Manila, December 2–7, 1979 [Manila: 1981], three volumes). In your own contribution and in your summing up of the results of the IMC, you concentrate on the local church in Asia as the operative agent of mission.*

Now, some 15 years later, do you see Asian local churches living up to the ideal that every local Church is called to be a missionary, called to be a "sending Church"?

A: On the local church, this I believe must be said again and again: the concrete, operative meaning of inculturation is the process of letting the local Church be the local Church, assuming responsibility, within the *koinonia* of all the churches in the *catholica*, to "realize itself" in its own life and mission; Fr. Congar has written on this, with all his rich knowledge of the Tradition. Until the local Churches see their own self-realization as their duty and task, and strive to bring this about, they have not yet "become Church" in the truest, fullest sense. Yet here in Asia, we are still a long way from that!

The operative center of the Church's mission today is the local Church: it must discern for its own time and place what the concrete tasks of its own mission are. The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (1991) was an exercise in formally discerning, after 25 years of *post-Vatican II experience*, how we must in fact move forward. PCP-II said we want to become a true community of discipleship of the Gospel, especially in small ecclesial communities throughout the land. We want to move towards becoming in reality a Church of the Poor. We will make every effort at a renewed evangelization, but one that is truly inculturated and integral (in all dimensions of our common life). Most of our local communities are far from accomplishing these objectives.

But this self-realization as local Church need not and should not be seen as a chronologically prior and separate task from that of "sending on mission" to neighboring or even distant areas. But that mission "abroad" must be seen as the starting of a process of building up a local church in another place, a local church for its own people, in their own cultural setting. The experience of true inculturation—and all it demands by way of openness and willingness to learn through "missionary silence"—should teach us that all Christlike mission is done in dialogue. For Jesus, the years of Nazareth and its silent obscurity were a learning-process, an inculturation for the Son of God, made man like us.

Q: *"The proclamation of Jesus Christ is the centre and primary element of evangelization"—this is your own formulation when reflecting on the IMC ("To*

All the Peoples," XXI). In the last decade there have been accusations directed against some Asian theologians and Asian churches that the preference given to dialogue (with cultures and especially with Asian religions) has obscured the vision of evangelization as the raison d'être of local churches. What do you think of this alleged conflict between proclamation and dialogue?

A: For the FABC, in its various official statements over the last 20 years, dialogue has always been seen as a *mode of proclamation* itself. It is not a substitute for, or an alternative to, proclamation! Some commentators (e.g., Domenico Colombo) have either failed to understand this, or have chosen to misunderstand the clear texts of the FABC assemblies. The FABC in its episcopal texts has never soft-pedalled "telling the world of God's love in Christ Jesus." It has never seen a contradiction in its insistence on inter-religious dialogue as a privilege and task and the joy of proclaiming Christ and his Gospel. But it has insisted that in Asia, all this must be done in dialogue mode. I believe the FABC chose this perspective as definitory because this was what Asian experience demanded, and because Pope Paul VI's *Ecclesiam suam* spoke so eloquently on this note?

Q: *During this period of your close association with FABC (1970 to 1990, roughly), what other convergent theological activities helped to shape your theological work?*

A: My work for the FABC and the International Theological Commission led to serving as consultor of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity and as member of the Vatican delegation to the World Council of Churches' meetings on Mission and Evangelism in Melbourne (1980), WCC Sixth general Assembly in Vancouver (1983), the preparatory Geneva meetings for, and the actual WCC Conference on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation in Seoul (1990). I found participation in WCC assemblies both tiring and yet quite instructive and inspiring. Despite our human failings, we know the ecumenical movement is a work of the Spirit. The expression "breathing with both lungs" refers to the Churches of East and West. But it has relevance for the entire ecumenical movement.

The inter-Church dialogues open us all to an interface of histories, perspectives on the Tradition as it is a part of the life of the "other Churches and ecclesial communities." When I accompanied Cardinal

Jaime Sin in his visit to the Soviet Union in 1987, I came into contact with the Orthodox Church for the first time. It was an eye-opening and profoundly enriching experience. We have so much to learn from their traditions which, in some genuine sense, form part of the great Tradition of the Church. Cardinal Sin also asked me to form part of his companion-group when he visited mainland China in 1985, when China was beginning to open out. There I came in contact with the present Church situation in China: a major ecclesiological issue (Fr. Berchmans Chang of Taipeh has written valuable reflections on this burning issue, which is very real, and not a mere abstract "textbook case"). All of this is valuable education for a theologian.

Then, in 1974–75, I was a delegate from our country to the Jesuits' 32nd General Congregation, when the Order took a strong official position that today the integral proclamation of the Gospel must include the promotion of, and struggle for, justice and human liberation. Those months at Rome were difficult, but rewarding; I had a chance to learn so much from Jesuits from all over the world, who opened windows into the life of the Church in such a diversity of situations. Once again, Fr. Congar's position, that secular history and the life of the Church need always to be in constant interface, struck me as a fundamental perspective! I was chosen to head the commission on inculturation. For various reasons we issued only a one-paragraph decree but it was a significant beginning.

Lastly, my friendship with Fr. Horacio de la Costa, first Filipino Provincial of the Jesuits and later General Assistant to Fr. Pedro Arrupe, was a formative influence on my theological work, an influence of the first order. He was a first-rate historian who obtained the highest academic honors at Harvard University for his graduate work and thesis. But he was also a consummate writer in English and a person who hid beneath his shyness truly outstanding exceptional human gifts. He inspired a generation of young Jesuits and intellectuals in the Church in the Philippines in measure, more than we can surmise. He encouraged us who were somewhat younger than himself to be creative in the tasks of inculturation. He was a true nationalist, in the most honorable sense of that term. At his death, several Filipino VIPs spoke

of him as "one of the great Filipinos in our history." His writings need to be collected, his biography needs writing. The Protestant scholar John English has written an essay which places Fr. de la Costa as one of the leading pioneers in Asian theological thought.

6. The Work of the Theological Advisory Commission (TAC) on the FABC

Q: You *served at the commission from its beginning in 1985 till 1992. What were the reasons which led to the formation of the TAC?*

A: The first idea of setting up a *Theological Advisory Commission* (TAC) within the FABC was launched by Fr. Amalorpavadass during the FABC General Assembly in Bangkok in 1982, when he pleaded for a forum of Asian theologians to discuss the major theological problems of the churches in Asia as an active community of theologians and then be able to assist the bishops in their tasks. The bishops reacted positively to this idea and even then the first topics put forth were *inter-religious dialogue* and the *local church*. I was then asked to be a convenor of the preliminary meeting which was held in 1985, and then of the first meeting in Hongkong in 1986. As regards my own contribution as a theologian I did more work on the *Theology of the Local Church* than for the paper on inter-religious dialogue. For many years I had been exploring the theology of the local church/inculturation in my classes and lectures. I was also instrumental in bringing Fr. Carolus Putranta, who had just finished a thesis on the *Ecclesiology of the FABC* in Rome, and Fr. Joseph Komonchak as resource persons to our discussions on the Local Church.

Q: *How do you evaluate the interplay between the work of theologians and the various organs of the FABC, the local churches, the bishops, the body of fellow theologians, and the churches and theologians beyond the confines of FABC?*

A: To be honest, I do not think that the Theological Advisory Commission has found its place yet. We have nearly no responses from seminaries, fellow theologians and bishops on the working papers. As far as I know in the Philippines no discussions have been held

regarding the TAC-papers. There is as yet no real *theological community* for the FABC-region because of the diversities in situations from country to country, from region to region, even within our countries. Not enough written theological work which has come from this part of the world circulates within our regions. How many in Asia have studied Aloysius Pieris and Michael Amaladoss? Patiently we have to build up a theological community, perhaps ecumenically, as The World Council of Churches is already doing. The FAB has not moved with true interest in those areas as yet. The Pattaya Colloquium in 1994 was called the *First International Theological Colloquium,* but did not turn out to be a real *theological colloquium:* it was more a pastoral meeting. That is all right, because it was a first attempt. But is there enough interest to try again? I would suggest that at least before every Synod of Bishops we have a theological workshop, with theologians meeting with the bishops who will go to Rome. As the Holy Father has said, an *Asian Synod* will be held before the year 2000. Should that not be a marvelous opportunity to have a major meeting between the best Asian theologians and the bishops before the Synod? What role will the TAC play here?

Q: *At the first international theological conference organized by the TAC in Pattaya in April 1994 you took part and gave a retrospect of the work of the FABC and the TAC. At this conference you reacted somewhat disturbed to a contribution by Felix Wilfred, the secretary of the TAC, when he criticized the concept of inculturation, calling it a spent force. Why do you still think that the concept of inculturation is essential for the work of the FABC or Asian theology in general?*

A: Inculturation in the sense of *a truly local church* coming into being is a process hardly begun in most Asian countries. That was my point in the discussions with Felix Wilfred regarding his remark about *inculturation being a spent force.* I do not know what has been done in India and Indonesia, but I believe that in most other countries, the local church is still *on the way* to becoming a local church, and that *cultural imperialism (sit venia verbo)* is still present, coming still e.g., from missionaries from abroad like the American fundamentalist groups, charismatic movements or as importation of thoroughly European or USA methods, with hardly any respect for local churches.

Inculturation—in the sense of the TAC papers—has yet to be realized in Asia. If I understand Felix Wilfred, it would seem that he interprets dialogue in a new way as compared with what the FABC has been saying up to now. I do not know for sure how Fr. Wilfred articulated his own position. But some Asian and Indian theologians seem to be posing a new *status quaestionis* which is different from the one the FABC has had. Should the communication of the Gospel, of the person of Christ, be the obligatory *content* of the dialogue at all?

I was not present at Pattaya when Felix Wilfred explained his own views on "inculturation" at length, so let me not say that my own views are in conflict with his. The "background" of the religious history of my country is quite different from India where the great religions have flourished and shaped cultures and civilizations for centuries. I have never lived in India and Indian religious history and traditions have not been part of my life. So I must say with all honesty that I probably am not well positioned to grasp Felix Wilfred's views.

This is only what I can say: the FABC documents spoke of dialogue as a mode of proclamation. Jesus Christ and his Gospel are to be proclaimed, but dialogue is the absolutely necessary mode of proclamation. The ending of the final statement of FABC I perhaps reflects best (in a few words) what for FABC dialogue means: There is the Word who has been present in Asia from the dawn of the ages, even in our philosophies and religions. There is the Lord, Christ of the Gospels, head of the Church. Mission sets up the dialogue "between" these two aspects of Christ" (We must remember that those words were written in 1974!). The Christ of our Asian peoples will be the coming together of these two faces of Jesus. It is the task of mission to help this to happen; proclamation in Asia must be conscious of the process of this dialogue. So there is no evangelization without the Gospel, without Christ, without the Church.

A new way of positioning the issue would seem to say: Christ, the Gospel and the Church are not the necessary content of the dialogue; these need not be brought in. From the religious heritage present within the traditions of a people we can *already* find the meanings and values which are present in the Judaeo-Christian revelation, present in Jesus

and in his Gospel. The meanings and values are already there; our task is to educe them, so to speak, and help them to come to fullest fulfillment. In the end, Jesus Christ is but one of the saviour figures in religious history. Jesus is a revelation of the Word, a revelation of the Father. But the Word speaks to us through other revelations, through other savior figures. There is no need to bring in Jesus "from the outside," so to speak. Finally, there is really no absolute need to bring him into the picture. Does Fr. Wilfred agree with this position? Is this one of the meanings of the saying, "inculturation is a spent force?" I want to be very honest: I do not know if Fr. Felix will recognize his position in this view at all.

Q: *Listening to the discussion in Pattaya, and during other meetings of the TAC, I understood Felix Wilfred differently, in that he takes the cultural and religious heritage of Asia together with Christian revelation and tradition—which after all has an Asian background and in this sense is not coming from the outside —as the resource from which to do theology. Do you really think there is such a deep rift between what he is saying and what the FABC have been saying?*

A: If his position is what you say it is, then there is no quarrel with him. But let me say what I think must be "saved." Maybe I am too old to change now, at seventy! I believe that we cannot speak of missionary dialogue in Asia without bringing up the person of Jesus Christ and his Church (From what you have said of Fr. Wilfred, he would agree to this). There are Christian theologians who do hold, I know, that there is no need of receiving anything "from the outside," not even Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God is there already, "on the inside," and will make up for everything from the inside of Asian cultures and religions. I appreciate the effort they are making, from within their own contexts, to reach out to others. Many of the positions they hold are tentative hypotheses, looking for validation. Thus we must give them time to work out their theologies, and not judge them right off—give them time to grope a little, time to work out where they really stand. But for myself, I cannot leave out the person of Christ, the community of believers that is the Church, even its "institutional character" rightly understood.

Q: *Am I, therefore, correct in assuming that you see an intricate link between a theology of inculturation and Christology?*

A: Is not the history of Christological teaching itself a theology of inculturation of the faith? To me the very meaning of inculturation comes clear from the history of how our christological and soteriological notions developed as the Church moved into new cultural contexts.

But as to the links between Christology and inculturation, let me draw parallels from my own experience and life. I am seventy now, a Christian all that time. For me Jesus Christ has been the fulfillment of everything I believe is Filipino, in myself. In my own life experience, all that I have wanted, and longed for in life, I have myself found in Jesus Christ. My deepest aspirations have found rest in his person, in his presence. From this may I not extrapolate: whatever there is that is Asian within ourselves will come to fruition in the Lord through the Spirit. Jesus himself enters into our lives, to bring something new, a new personal meaning, a new creative power, a peace and courage and joy that I believe uniquely comes from him. "Peace that only I can give, that the world cannot give." Is this not true of whole peoples also? I think this is valid about the Philippine experience of being Christian: the history and vicissitudes of our christianization as a people have their many dark and sorrowful moments. But the process has given us something we treasure as a people, something we have held onto despite everything, something we do not want to lose.

Is not this the meaning of the catholicity of the Church? That each people, in its own particularity, keeping all that is good and beautiful in the particularity, will yet find in Christ its wholeness, the fulfillment of its particular vocation, its deepest identity? I may be speaking as one less wise *(minus sapiens dico)* but this is what my experience as a Filipino Christian leads me to confess.

Q: *What do you think of the double allegiance some Asian theologians are speaking of to describe that, on the one hand, they are indebted to the Christian tradition as their first allegiance, but that they accept at the same time the cultural and religious traditions of Asia as part of their own heritage as well? Would you*

agree that in this process not only Asian traditions are fulfilled, but that Christianity is gaining something new as well?

A: The formula, as you articulate it, seems to me valid. It is from Indian or other Asian theologies that we can hope to find the spelling out of this double allegiance. India has a history of many religious traditions: Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Islam, and other religions (We in the Philippines cannot speak from the same background). We await the working out of this double heritage in a new Christian theology. For we have not yet in Asia a worked-out theological vision on a par with Latin American liberation theology, if I may say this.

I want to bring up a conversation in this line that troubled me. Once a novice master of a religious order, an Indian priest, asked me if Jesus Christ was really more than just an acquired name, an acquired label, for an experience of the Absolute. If you have ever had a really deep experience in prayer, and have thought of yourself in contact somehow with Jesus Christ, … was not "Jesus Christ or his Spirit" only an acquired label you tagged onto that experience? It was an encounter with the Absolute, the Divine. But, Jesus Christ? Did not Jesus come into it only because your Christian upbringing taught you to give it a Christian label? Maybe you hooked it up with some image of Jesus, inherited from past formation? A Hindu may have a like experience, but he would put another name, another face to it. What is distinctively of Christ or from him, in your deepest experiences of the Divine?

I was troubled by this, maybe it was good to be so questioned. Was the mediation of Jesus only a label I put on an experience of God? For me, "No one comes to the Father, but through me" (John 14:6 and the Matthean logion, Matthew 11:27) has been a central truth for both prayer and life. I have always seen the Christ of the Letter to the Colossians as beginning and term of all creation, and therefore of all religions: the one Mediator in our access to God. I believe my own experiences bear this out, and so I hold on to the universality of the mediation of Jesus. An excellent Indian theologian once told me, "Yes, I hold the universality of Christ's salvation. My question is, how is he universal savior? We have not yet asked that question in depth." I hope Asian theologians continue to wrestle with that question! It

is now "at front and center" and rightly so. I await eagerly the work of those who are in a position to shed light on this deepest and most urgent of questions of our time!

Q: *What do you think in that context of the formulation once used by Michael Amaladoss: "Jesus of Nazareth is Christ. But Christ is more than Jesus"?*

A: There are few Asian theologians of the caliber and quality of Michael Amaladoss; I have only the greatest respect for his thought which I believe to be both profound and orthodox. I would like to understand his thought on this issue more fully. But in a way, we can only answer questions in the terms in which they have been raised for us, and in the context we are addressing. Here in the Philippines, we have had a Christianity which goes back over four hundred years. Our people literally live on and are nourished by the most traditional symbols of their Catholic faith. We are very much "image and icon Catholics." And this, on every level, from the most simple to the most educated. I can give you story after story to tell you what I mean. At the EDSA revolution of February 1986, everything was held together by symbols of our Christian faith: the crucifix, images of Our Lady (especially the Immaculate Heart of Mary), the rosary … I myself find it difficult to "un-imagine" these symbols: my office holds a collection of crucifixes that speak to me of the core things in my faith. I would find it difficult to be "less Filipino" in my own piety and prayer, even if I do not now strictly speaking "need" these supports in prayer and belief. When I read that the Cross reveals to us not only a moment in history, but the deepest nature of the Father, I look at the crucifix and in it I grasp the truth of that statement.

Let me for a moment go to Thomas Merton's "final encounter" with the great Buddha images in Sri Lanka. You remember how he found enlightenment as he stood contemplating those gigantic figures which communicated to him such wisdom, such light and peace, such meaning. But I don't think he ever got around to articulating that moment of enlightenment. What would that moment have meant, for his Christological faith? I would like to know; I would really like to know.

In his Christmas sermons Karl Rahner often speaks of "light coming into darkness, from outside the darkness." The midnight Mass

symbolizes this for him. Is this not true of all human situations? When a de-Christianized Europe is re-evangelized, must not Christ be brought to it again "from the outside"—in a new way, once more? Perhaps in this matter I have been too westernized by all my years of learning. So I cannot do now, perhaps, the work that needs to be done here, which Indian and other Asian theologians are now beginning to do. I can only welcome their initiatives and wish them *buon lavoro.* For myself, I guess, I do hold on to convictions which a lifetime of experience and life have given me. But I do not close my mind; I want to hear what other Asian theologians have to say. After all, their effort are efforts of creative evangelization. Not all valid theological reflection has been done. Europe and the West are only part of the Church and the world. The life of theology is *not* the past. There is a future to look forward to, to salute *a longe* with great hope. Asian and African theologies will be increasingly theologies of the future.

7. Work "Behind the Scenes" for Philippine and Asian Bishops, Other "Behind the Scenes" Experiences

Q: *How would you assess the important and rather extensive contribution you have made in the formulation of position papers, pastoral letters, messages of individual Philippine bishops and the Bishops' Conference, and the many texts which you have been asked to draft for assemblies, workshops, seminars—most of them a rather "official" kind?*

A: Over and above my teaching and work at seminary formation, work for bishops and bishops' conferences (CBCP, FABC) has taken up so much of my time and energy. There has been little time to do "my own personal work," little time to read and reflect in peace. Since 1967 or so (the post-Vatican II years) life for me has been a succession of jobs to be done. Meetings, conferences, assemblies of bishops and priests, workshops of congresses for religious, lay people …. Being asked to speak on a very very large variety of subjects, knowing the while that one doesn't really know so much about a subject, but that one must spend several days and nights "cramming." It has been hectic

(some thirty years of work, work, work), but in its own way fulfilling, giving one a sense of making a contribution, serving people who are "influentials" in the life of the Church.

True, I have not been able to write things in my own name. A few years back, an interviewer asked me how many pages I had drafted mainly for other people, congresses, etc. We estimated, over the last thirty years, some eight or nine thousand typewritten pages, maybe more! All this writing has been done, I trust, in the service of the Church. My Jesuit vocation places my life completely at the service of the Church: her people, her communities, her leadership, her works. I hope at the hour of death the Lord will be merciful.

There has been a hectic side to the work. Much travel: since 1968 or so, I believe I have been to practically every country in the FABC area except Indonesia and Burma. One, two, or three trips abroad almost every year for some 20 or more years. Several trips to Visayas or Mindanao each year, in our country. Not something exceptional, but it all adds up. But there is a happy side too. I have seen the Church at work in so many countries, met so many who are the *real laborers* in our Asian Churches: from Cardinals and bishops to Sisters-in-charge of everything, to typists and drivers—wonderful people who give their time, their energies, their lives to the Gospel, the Church, and the Lord. I have developed friendships with many Asian Christians (Protestants and Catholics) on "diverse levels." I have seen so much of the emerging life of the local Churches in Asia in the last thirty years. It has been a journey, in breadth and depth, into the life of the Church, the Spirit at work in minds and hearts and communities. It has been a lifetime of having one's faith and hope and love expanded and renewed, in the experience of life, in contact with the "people of God." All of it has been grounds for thanksgiving and rejoicing.

Q: *Would you care to elaborate on the relationship between theologians and bishops working together in the various FABC conferences: the example of the various BIRA, BIMA, BILA, etc., that is the close cooperation between theologians and other experts who organize and conduct seminars for bishops to help them in the various issues of the Asian Churches?*

A: In the various FABC seminars for bishops there has been a very good interaction between theologians and bishops. This is a kind of ideal set-up. A smaller group of bishops, with some good resource persons, in a rather informal set-up, with lay people and religious rounding off the composition of the group. My own experience with Asian bishops, by and large, has been that there are so many of them who are real pastors, not afraid to be real human beings, at heart simple and humble men, really dedicated to furthering the Gospel and the life of their Christian communities. The *interaction* within these groups has been wonderful, in the instances where I have had experience. I think *the strength and the beauty* of the FABC lies so largely in these assemblies, these smaller colloquia. The *theology* discussed here is, necessarily, rather down-to-earth, *pastoral* in the best sense. This is the theological *genre* that is most useful for our bishops in general. Thus this is where *Asian theological reflection* is most possible and useful for the concrete life of the Church. But theology precisely must *mediate* between religion and culture, between the Gospel as we understand it in theological terms today and the concrete needs of our local churches today.

Q: *Could you perhaps single out some Church leaders with whom your ministry as priest and theologian has brought you into close contact and who have in turn influenced your life and your work?*

A: Previously I have mentioned *Fr. Horacio de la Costa*. His influence on me has been a deep and lasting one. Other brother Jesuits (Bishop Vincent Kennally; Fr. Walter Hogan who pioneered in labor work in the Philippines and instilled a strong sense of social commitment in all whom he taught) should be mentioned, but this is perhaps not the place for this. *Don Pedro Arrupe:* he marked all of us who got to know him!

Since 1985 1 have worked closely with *Cardinal Jaime Sin* in different ways. Work for the Philippine Marian Year in 1985, the trip to China (1985) and then to Moscow and the Soviet Union (1987) to be of some help to him. The two international conferences on the Alliance of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary which Cardinal Sin initiated, in Fatima (Portugal) in 1986, and in Manila in 1987. I have been able to be of service to him, in various capacities, for some ten years now. He has surely an undeniable place in the history of our nation and the Church

in the Philippines. He is without a doubt a remarkable churchman, a charismatic leader, who has accompanied much for the Church and for our people. As I said, his place in the history of our time, in our county, is secure.

In 1983, when Senator Benigno Aquino was assassinated at the airport in Manila, providence led me to his wife—Mrs. Corazon C. Aquino—and his family, who were staying just across the street from the Jesuit Boston College (BC) in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts. I just happened to be at BC for a few weeks. In succeeding years back home I got to know her and her family well. A journalist wrote that I served as an "unofficial chaplain" before and during her presidency. While Mrs. Aquino was head of state I was able to see her at work from "not too great a distance." I remember bringing Cardinal Stephen Kim to visit her, and his coming from the interview much impressed by her deep faith and purity of heart, i.e., her profound sense of mission, service and stewardship. Mrs. Aquino is a person of deep faith and prayer, in her private and public life. She asked me to organize three Lenten retreats for herself and her cabinet, and other officials working closely with her. I continue to be greatly edified by her Christian commitment and life, her fortitude, her desire to be faithful to the Gospel and constantly to seek the guidance of the Spirit. Her devotion to Our Lady's rosary is a very strong part of her piety. Our people could and can look up to her as a person of conscience and integrity and deep Christian principle.

My work has brought me to come to know remarkable lay people. For instance, Ambassador Howard Dee, our Philippine Ambassador to the Holy See during the Aquino presidency, is a Catholic of outstanding spiritual qualities: a deep piety, marked by an extraordinary devotion to Mary, effective commitment in deeds to social justice, to action for the poor, to the tasks of peace and reconciliation. A truly remarkable Christian.

Q: *Would you comment to P. T. Giordano who sums up your work: [Catalino Arévalo] "has contributed much to the theological effort in the Philippine Church, and his writings have influenced many other theologians, bishops and pastoral workers" (P. T. Giordano,* Awakening to Mission: The Philippine Catholic Church, 1965–1981 *[Quezon City, Metro Manila: 1988], 68)?*

A: What is the final value of all this work, I must finally leave in the hands of the Lord. Only this has been my great consolation. It has tried to be a continuous, unremitting service to the Church, and I trust, to the Lord whom we want to serve. Surely the Lord will have made use of some of it: surely it has had some (no matter how little) *effectivity* in the life of the Asian Churches. That one's own personal work, at the end of a lifetime, is *poca cosa,* does not matter. I have not written even one book of my own. My own notes on the church, the priesthood, on Christology, in the Ignatian exercises, on Mary, I have never had time to put together in a way I thought I would like to for publication. I have dozens of *bits-n-pieces*, homilies, articles hurriedly written, shorter pieces published here and there, nothing that finally *hangs together,* nothing that is really one book, even as *opus parvum.*

Maybe I can publish some few homilies which seem worth publishing, before I die. Maybe my notes on the presbyterate can be put together as a textbook. My lectures at the EAPI on church and mission, which I believe had much that was fresh, original and imaginative in the 1970s, are now old hat. I always wanted to write a book on soteriology, but I don't have the energy for that now. But it does not really matter. Now books have a life span of about 10–15 years, and then they are out of date. Perhaps the work I have been allowed to do will have longer *shelf life*, because it has moved directly into the life of the Church.

Q: *Can you find yourself and your work as theologian in the definition your confrere Antonio Lambino once coined when speaking of the present generation of Asian theologians as theologians of transition, that is theologians who have been trained in a rather traditional way but who as pioneers are busily trying to open up new ways of doing theology without, however, succeeding in presenting a full-fledged new way of doing theology in an Asian manner?*

A: I would count myself rather as belonging to the *theologians of the old dispensation*. But I don't think that there is a need to qualify our theological endeavors. What really matters to me is that when I consider all the churches in Asia and try to look forward to their future, I am filled with a real sense of hope. The churches in Asia are in the process of a *true*—first (?)—*awakening*. I am sure of it. We have at present only

3% of Asia as Christian. That means 97% are still largely un-influenced by the Church, by the Gospel, and perhaps by Jesus Christ. Thus we are at the beginnings. The future will see new shapes of Christian life as wonderful as what the European centuries of Christianity have given us. We ourselves may not live to see this future, but I know and am sure, it will be wonderful beyond our imaginings, beyond my own dreaming. I believe this with all my heart. This has given purpose to all these years of work, of prayer, of study, of preaching and teaching. Catholicity and *catholica unitas* has been the great dream for the Church, one way of seeing aspects of the Kingdom of God coming-to-being already in history. I think of that great text in Isaiah, and perhaps we can adapt it to read thus:

> Blessed be China, my people India … Japan … Burma, the work of my hands, and Filipinas, my inheritance! (cf. Isaiah 19:25).

And the prayer of Angela of Foligno: "Let your love embrace all the nations!" "Come, Lord Jesus, come!"

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REMEMBERING AND REFLECTING ON MY ENCOUNTERS WITH CATALINO ARÉVALO

Theologian, Counsellor and Friend

Georg Evers

When I was asked to contribute to the "Festschrift" honouring Catalino Arévalo, I hesitated at first, but then responded that I could reflect on my encounters with Catalino Arévalo, in the Philippines and in different places in Asia, in the context of seminars and conferences of the FABC, especially the Theological Advisory Commission (TAC), today called the Office of Theological Concerns (OTC). What I present in the following, therefore, is not meant to be a theological assessment of the various contributions Catalino Arévalo has made to the development of a Filipino theology and even more to the theology of the FABC. After all, it would be preposterous if I would pretend to be in a position to do justice to such a task. I hope that in the future some young theologian, looking for a potential subject for his theological dissertation, will take up this challenge to retrace and evaluate the contributions Catalino Arévalo has made to Asian and Filipino theology. My contribution for the "Festschrift" is more modest. I have had the privilege of meeting Catalino Arévalo again and again, when visiting the Philippines and often during conferences of the FABC. What impressed me during these encounters was that Catalino Arévalo was a bridge-builder, always intent on bringing people and ideas into interplay. On the one hand, his interest was to develop a genuine Asian and Filipino theology by relying on Asian resources,

but at the same time, he was convinced that the Catholicity of the Church called for cooperation with other theological strands to ensure continuity and unity. It was this balance between openness to new forms of an indigenous theology and the awareness of safeguarding the age-old traditions of the Church which gave him the stature of a pioneer and something of a Church father at the same time. My own understanding of Asian theology and the role of Asian theologians has been shaped very much by my encounters with him.

To understand why I, as a German theologian, became interested in the theological developments within the Asian Churches, it will be helpful to supply some biographical data. My own connection with and affection for Asian theology go back to my formative years in Japan during the 1960s. After having finished three years of studying scholastic philosophy in Pullach near Munich, which in the pre-Vatican II days was taught in Latin, I was sent by my Jesuit superiors to Japan in 1962 to continue my training as a future missionary in that country. The contact with Japanese culture, history and religious traditions in the Japanese language school was, on the one hand, something of a cultural shock for me, but at the time an eye-opener to a new fascinating culture and to a new way of living and seeing the world. The four-year course in theology at the Sophia University during the sessions of Vatican II, however, was something counter-productive because our professors were still using the old text-books and teaching us a theology which surely was sound and orthodox but lacking any reference to Japan or Asia for that matter. In retrospect, it is surprising to me that the theology we were taught at the time did not reflect on the mission of the Church and on the potential contribution Christianity could make towards present-day Japanese society. Given the fact that Christianity is only a tiny minority in Japan, there should have been an awareness that future priests and missionaries had to be taught about the needs, the method and the aim of presenting the Gospel in the context of Japan. But in the curriculum of the faculty of theology at Sophia University, no course in missiology was offered at the time. The same was true with regard to the problem of the encounter of Christianity with Japanese culture and religions. As regards interreligious dialogue, there were the contributions by the two Jesuits, Heinrich Dumoulin

(1905–1995) and Hugo Enomiya-Lassalle (1898–1990), who have made great contributions in the field of Buddhist-Christian dialogue. The insights they had gained in their encounter with the history and the practice of Zen-Buddhism, however, were not taken up by the professional theologians at the faculty of theology at Sophia University. The same was true for the work of the Catholic novelist Endo Shusaku (1923–1996) who in his historical novels had dealt with the mission history and the persecutions of Christians in Japan. Endo described how the foreign missionaries to Japan experienced the alienness of Japanese culture and society, and how the Japanese, who became Christians, had to struggle with their divided loyalties towards traditional Japanese culture on the one hand, and towards a Christian faith which they experienced as alien and separating them from their own roots on the other. For Endo, these reflections were set in the past, but they were at the same time also problems which were haunting him as a Catholic in his own life. Endo struggled all his life with the problem of how to combine being a Japanese with being a Catholic. Looking at the state of the Japanese Church, Endo was convinced that the task of inculturating Christianity within Japanese culture and society had not even begun. It was somewhat tragic that the contribution Endo had made in his capacity as a novelist was not taken up by the theological establishment in Japan as a challenge to reflect on the theological and missiological implications it contained.

As theological students we reacted to the unsatisfactory situation at the theological faculty at Sophia University, and the irrelevance of much of what was taught in the official lectures, by organising our own theological study circles. Among the students at the time was also the present General Superior of the Jesuits, Adolfo Nicolas. Responding to the new developments in ecumenism in the follow-up of Vatican II, we formed ecumenical groups with theological students from the other Christian Churches and denominations. At the same time, we made contact with members of other religions, such as monks of the Zen tradition and with representatives of the many New Religious Movements in Japan. Some of these activities were the summer camps which were organised by Protestant pastors working in the field of industrial labour with the trade unions of Japan. These four-

week long work seminars brought together theology students from different Christian denominations. The participants were living, eating, discussing, and praying together, and during the day worked in different factories as "working-students" for eight hours. This gave us the opportunity to experience the usual working conditions of Japanese factory workers. During the evenings, talks were given by pastors working in the field of social action, by trade union members and others to provide us with background information about the working and living conditions of industrial workers in Japan. These exposure programs were a learning process for all theology students because they gave us the chance to encounter the realities of Japanese workers' lives. For myself, taking part twice in the project of the work seminars made me realize that the missionary approach followed in the Catholic Church—obliging potential catechumens to take part in a two-year study program of Christian doctrine—was by no means suitable to the life situations of Japanese workers. How could one expect that after a full day of heavy work, these workers would be profiting from studying a catechism which presented them with a small compendium of the totality of Christian doctrines? To be presented with answers to questions which they had never raised, and which did not really touch on their life situations, was obviously not the right way to invite an average Japanese to let himself be baptised and join the Church. The exposure to the lives of Japanese workers showed me the deficiencies of the common catechetical approach followed in Japan at the time.

After seven years in Japan, I went back to my country of origin to do a doctorate in theology at the University of Münster under the guidance of Karl Rahner. My dissertation dealt with the contribution of Vatican II to mission theology, the theology of religions and the theology of the world. This gave me the opportunity to study in depth the conciliar documents in their various stages of development and their theological background. The conclusion of my work was that the formulation of a mission theology valid for the whole Church in any given situation was not possible anymore. The new insights of Vatican II were that the Christian message had to be presented everywhere by taking into account the "signs of the times" in reacting to the various cultural, religious and sociological contexts. The concrete forms of

how to present the Christian message in any given context, therefore, will be varying from context to context which has the consequence that a formulation of only one form of mission theology for all given contexts was no longer possible. This insight prepared me for my work with the Institute of Missiology Missio in Aachen a few years later. Before this, however, I spent seven years working at an institution in Germany dealing with Christian ecumenism, and at the same time, with Christian-Jewish and Christian-Muslim dialogue, and also with "Jewish-Christian-Muslim" trialogue. The dialogue with the members of the Abrahamite family was a good introduction into the practice of interreligious dialogue which is so important for the Asian Churches.

From 1979 until 2001, I worked at the Institute of Missiology Missio in Aachen on the Asian desk, and was responsible for editing the bibliographical guide "Theology in Context," which twice a year provided an overview of theological journals, books and study conferences in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania. The Institute of Missiology was founded after Vatican II by Wilhelm Wissing, then president of Missio in Aachen, as a funding agency providing scholarships for future teachers in seminaries and universities and as an agent to support research, conferences and publications in the Churches in the Third World. The other aim of the Institute of Missiology was to function as a bridge to present the new insights of the different contextual theologies, which were developing in the Asian, African and Latin American Churches, to theologians in Europe and North America. As a German institution, our primary targets were the German speaking theologians. Therefore, the Institute of Missiology started with a book series *Theologie der Dritten Welt* (Theology of the Third World) which presented in German translations selected contributions from theologians from the Third World. The first volume in this series was entitled *Den Glauben neu verstehen. Beiträge zu einer asiatischen Theologie* (A New Understanding of the Faith: Contributions towards an Asian Theology). In this volume, the contributions of an international conference on the theme of "Contextual Theology," held in June 1978 in Manila, were collected, which brought together for the first time Catholic theologians from various Asian countries. Participants were Catalino Arévalo and Efrem Rivera from the

Philippines, Aloysius B. Chang from Taiwan, Robert Hardawiryana from Indonesia, Wendy Flannery from Papua New Guinea, and Ernest Piryns from Japan. The very first contribution in this volume is by Catalino Arévalo who addressed himself to the fundamental problem of the conference: "What is Contextual Theology?" Arévalo is introduced in the volume as

> Professor of dogmatic theology at the Loyola School of Theology at Ateneo University in Manila, as coordinator of the Commission on Catholic Doctrine of the Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, as member of the Papal International Theological Commission and as editor of the *Loyola Papers*.

In his contribution, Catalino Arévalo describes how a theology of the "signs of the times" should be at the centre of the various attempts to develop new contextual theologies. When he outlines the characteristics of such a way of doing theology, he indirectly seems to describe his own theological stance when he states that a contextual theology responding to the signs of the times will look for God's acting in history by avoiding any form of ideology, be it of the "status quo" or of revolutionary fervour. This kind of balanced approach, which in contact with the word of God seeks to use the eyes of faith when doing theology and which tries to be in harmony, as far as possible, with the faith of the whole Christian community, is typical for Catalino Arévalo's approach to theology.

Catalino Arévalo had studied theology at Weston College in the USA and done his theological dissertation at the Gregorian University in Rome in the pre-Vatican II days. The change from Scholastic theology, which he had considered to be something of an "absolute system," to the new insights brought about by Vatican II were for him, as he told me in an interview many years later, "a real crisis." At the same time, Vatican II meant a new beginning for the whole Catholic Church and especially for theology. When in 1965 the Jesuit School of Theology, later named Loyola School of Theology, was founded, Catalino Arévalo became the first founding dean. Later he was sent abroad to the USA and Europe to gather information about the new theological developments. After his return, he started to work on the project which became his life work, to

develop an indigenous and contextual theology in the Philippines and beyond in the Asian Churches. Catalino Arévalo was one of the first theologians in the Philippines to react to the new current in contextual theology developed in Latin America, called liberation theology, which put the emphasis on social analysis and the fundamental option for the poor. After a six-week visit in Latin America in 1970 where he met Juan Luis Segundo and Gustavo Gutiérrez, the founding father of liberation theology, Catalino Arévalo experienced something which he described as a "qualitative jump" in his theological thinking, but which at the same time was a liberating experience accompanying him ever afterwards. But at the same time, he never became an uncritical follower of liberation theology and always kept a critical distance from forms of liberation theology advanced by overly enthusiastic proponents of a revolutionary and Marxist inspired theology. The same critical approach Catalino Arévalo took when, in 1981 in Daressalam, the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) was founded. Unlike his confrere Carlos Abesamis, who was one of the initiators of the Filipino branch of EATWOT, Catalino Arévalo himself never became a member of EATWOT. The EATWOT-theologians were distancing themselves from the traditional Western theology which in their eyes was no longer relevant and not capable of answering the challenges theologians in the Third World were facing in their attempts to respond to the problems of massive poverty and exploitation in their countries. As Gustavo Gutiérrez, the founding father of Latin American liberation theology, formulated, the content of contemporary theology in the context of the Third World could no longer be finding answers to abstract metaphysical problems, such as the question whether God exists, but to respond to the questions of the poor, who were faced with existential problems of finding food and shelter. The task of the theologians, therefore, was to analyse the situation of the poor and to understand the sociological, economic and political mechanisms of exploitation and suppression the poor were faced with. In close contact with the grass-roots, the theologians should then develop their theological insights in living the fundamental option for the poor.

The often aggressive formulations used by some EATWOT-theologians to describe their new way of doing theology from the grass-

roots, by distancing themselves from the traditional Western theology and positions of the magisterium of the Church, were not resonant with Catalino Arévalo's way of thinking and his understanding of being a theologian who tried to keep a balance between being open to change and new insights, but at the same time preserving a bond with tradition and the magisterium within the hierarchical church. Catalino Arévalo was aware that this type of theology was of great importance for his native country the Philippines, which under the military dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos was experiencing social turmoil and violence of various kinds. Within the Catholic Church in the Philippines, there was a fierce debate about the question whether the use of force could be justified when fighting for justice and the rights of the poor against a government which was violating human rights on a grand scale. When faced with the challenges of Latin American theology, which was heavily influencing many theologians and social activists in the Philippines during the time of martial law under President Ferdinand Marcos, Catalino Arévalo remained true to this position of staying with the Church's teaching on non-violence and to work with those groups which remained united with the bishops.

My first personal meeting with Catalino Arévalo was during the time of martial law at the East Asian Pastoral Institute (EAPI) on the premises of Ateneo University. Adolfo Nicolas, then rector of the EAPI, had organised this encounter. I remember that Catalino Arévalo had just returned from the country side, after having given a retreat to sisters working in an area where there were armed clashes between government troops and revolutionaries. My first impression of him was that he was very exhausted and really worn out. When I started questioning him about his position towards liberation theology and his stance on the problem of the legitimacy of using violence in fighting injustice and the violation of human rights, he was not willing to enter into an academic discussion, but referred to a raw experience he just had at the convent of the nuns where he gave his retreat. The question, the mother superior of the convent had put to him, he addressed to me, and asked: "What do you answer, when you are asked by a mother superior, what she should do, when she discovers that one of her nuns is hiding guns, destined for the revolutionaries,

under her bed?" I do not recall how I tried to react to this question, but I began to understand what kind of context Catalino Arévalo and other theologians in the Philippines were facing, and that to respond to these challenges could only be done by developing a new type of contextual theology, quite different from the academic way of doing theology at universities in the West.

Since the Institute of Missiology was editing the series *Theology of the Third World*, we were always on the look-out for potential contributions when we were travelling abroad. Several times, I have tried to convince Catalino Arévalo to put together some of the many articles and research papers he had written in his many assignments, so that we could gather them into a book manuscript, translate them into German and publish them in our series. This approach had worked with his fellow Jesuit, Aloysius Pieris from Sri Lanka, whom we had assisted in collecting articles, which then were published in two volumes: *An Asian Theology of Liberation* and *Love Meets Wisdom: A Christian Experience of Buddhism*, both of which were published first in German by our Institute, and only later in an English edition by Maryknoll Press. This approach, however, did not work with Catalino Arévalo. Whenever I brought up the request that we would like to publish some of his writings in our series, his response was negative. As he himself explained in the interview I was privileged to do with him in 1995 for our journal "Yearbook of Contextual Theologies," he stated that in contrast to seminary professors who were doing "book theology," he was a theologian who was constantly asked to speak at grassroots seminars and workshops, regional meetings of religious priests and laypeople, meetings of religious superiors and the like, and challenged to respond to the actual, ever changing practical problems of everyday life in the Philippines and in Asia from the standpoint of faith. He concluded that this was the reason why, in 30 years of being an active theologian, he never had the time to write a single book by himself. In my travel notes, which I consulted in preparing this contribution, I found a notice about a meeting I had with Catalino Arévalo during a conference of the TAC, in which I had asked him again whether he would be willing to prepare some of his papers for a possible book publication in our series *Theology of the Third World*. His answer to my request was

that he was unable to comply because he did not want to publish his own theological insights because they might stir some controversies, and thus jeopardize his work as ghost-writer for Cardinal Jaime Sin, other bishops, and for publications of the FABC to provide position papers and manuscripts for talks and pastoral letters. He considered this service to be his contribution to the Philippine Church, because it gave him the opportunity to ensure that the more conservative theologians would not determine the course of the Church in the Philippines. Catalino Arévalo was content that many of his ideas were published after all, if not under his name, then under the prestigious names of bishops or as publications of the FABC.

From the first meeting of Asian Bishops in Manila 1970 onwards, Catalino Arévalo had been member of many drafting committees of General Assemblies and the conferences of the various Bishops' Institutes for Social Actions (BISA), missionary activities (BIMA) and interreligious dialogue (BIRA). It would be interesting to find out how the formulation of the triple dialogue came about. This succinct way of describing the task of the Asian Churches as a threefold task of entering into a dialogue with the cultures in inculturation, of engaging in dialogue with the religious traditions in interreligious dialogue, and of dealing with poverty in the fundamental option for the poor has become a hallmark for the FABC. Catalino Arévalo was for sure one of the co-authors of this formula, and ever since has defended it against objections that it had become obsolete by steadfastly pointing out that these three dialogues were still a challenge and an unfinished agenda for the Asian Churches. It is significant for his understanding of the role of theologian in the context of the Philippines and Asian Churches that he never complained not to have been able to develop his own theological insights more at length. Catalino Arévalo was content to be at the service of the Church and to respond to the constant demands made of him and his expertise in theological, ecclesial and spiritual questions.

This disposition to stay in the background and not to seek the limelight for himself made him the ideal animator to advance new ideas and launch activities within the Church in the Philippines and quite often within the FABC. When in 1982 Fr. Amalorpavadass advanced

the idea to set up a forum of Asian theologians within the FABC, to stimulate exchange among Asian theologians and to be of assistance to the Asian bishops, Catalino Arévalo was asked to be the convenor of the preliminary meeting, which was held in 1985, and during which the Theological Advisory Committee (TAC) within the FABC was founded. The first meeting of TAC, held in Hong Kong in 1986, which dealt with the questions of interreligious dialogue and the theology of the Local Church, was also led by Catalino Arévalo. During my visit to the Philippines in October 1986, a few months after the EDSA People Power Revolution, I was invited to have a meeting with the members of the faculty of Loyola School of Theology. The invitation for the meeting had come from Catalino Arévalo. In the discussion, Catalino Arévalo advanced the idea to set up a permanent centre for theological research for the member Churches of the FABC. He was thinking of a permanent office, something parallel to what the Protestant Churches in the CCA had realized in Singapore with the Office of Theological Concern (OTC), with some theologians as permanent staff. As venue for a similar institution of the FABC, Arévalo envisaged to choose also Singapore, because that would be a contribution towards an ecumenical sharing in the field of theology in Asia. The expectation, he expressed at the time, that Missio, especially the Institute of Missiology, could and would take the initiative, however, was in contrast with the way Missio was operating, which as a foreign funding agency could have supported such a venture financially, but could not act as initiator. Only the bishops in the central committee would have been in a position to entrust the task of setting up such permanent centre to Fr. Ed Malone, then the Assistant Secretary General of the FABC in Hong Kong. Eventually, the idea advanced by Catalino Arévalo did not materialize. But it shows how Catalino Arévalo was thinking ahead and beyond the national borders to foster theological cooperation within the Asian Churches. It was not personal ambition to advance his own career, but a genuine desire to create conditions which could bring the various theological enterprises within the Asian Churches into greater cooperation.

It was a kind of coincidence that at the same time when the Theological Advisory Commission was dealing with the problem of the local church, the Institute of Missiology in Aachen was just in the

process of preparing a bibliography on the same topic, as a supplement to our bibliographical journal *Theology in Context*. When I mentioned our project to Catalino Arévalo, he invited me spontaneously to come to the next conference of the Theological Advisory Commission, which was scheduled to be held in April 1987 and which was focusing on the theology of the local church. Catalino Arévalo himself was very much interested in this topic, and making use of his own experiences as theologian in the service of the local church of the Philippines, was able to contribute valuable ideas. But also on this occasion, he was not just relying on his own experience and expertise, but had provided that the Theological Advisory Commission make use of the expertise of Fr. Carolus Putranta who had just finished in Rome a thesis on the theology of the local church within the FABC, and of the theological qualification of Fr. John Komonchak from the Catholic University in Washington, USA, whom he had invited as foreign resource person. It was during this conference in Singapore, and later during several other conferences of the TAC and the FABC, that I could observe how Catalino Arévalo was operating as a theologian who was not seeking the limelight, but who was following closely the debates and who had a special gift of summing up succinctly what had been said. At the same time, he has a critical mind and does not shy away from stating his point clearly. That was, for example, the case when, at the "First International Theological Colloquium" held in Pattaya in 1994, Catalino Arévalo responded to Felix Wilfred's assertion that the concept of inculturation had become "a spent force." Catalino Arévalo objected and insisted that the work of inculturation had not yet been finished and still was to be kept on the theological agenda within the FABC. In other controversial theological discussions, such as the role of Jesus Christ as a historical person and the need to proclaim the Gospel also in the context of interreligious dialogue, Catalino Arévalo insisted on the validity of traditional positions in a firm but gentle way. He made use of his position that, as a senior theologian, he was probably not called to be a pioneer advancing new ideas, but that he felt the obligation to ensure that the Asian theologians were doing their work within the Church and in contact and agreement with the bishops.

Let me finish on a personal note. I have had the privilege to have met Catalino Arévalo on different occasions. One memory is of a visit to Imus, Cavite, where he took me to meet the parents of Luis Tagle, now the Bishop of Imus, Cavite,* who then was studying in the USA with a scholarship of our Institute. It was on a Sunday, when in Imus the annual fiesta was held. It was for me an opportunity to see something of what I would call the "paternal side" of a theologian who was keen on helping young priests to advance in their formation. It is this spiritual side of the theologian which has made Catalino Arévalo such a valuable counsellor for so many people of different backgrounds. I experienced this myself when I informed Catalino Arévalo of the loss of our son Markus, and he responded with understanding and compassion which gave us strength and consolation. Especially grateful I am for the trust he showed me when I asked him for an interview about his life and work for our publication "Yearbook of Contextual Theologies." During this interview, which lasted several hours, I had the unique opportunity to experience Catalino Arévalo's amazing memory, to accompany him in his remembering the different stages of his full life, and to be impressed by the modesty he displayed when talking about himself. When he recounted of how often he was called to do things for others, to facilitate and to give counsel, there were traces of regret not to have been able to fulfil his own plans and to concentrate more on the theological topics he would have liked to expand and to deepen. But there was no resignation, but rather gratefulness to have been able to be of service to others.

*Sometime after this article was written, Bishop Tagle was named Archbishop of Manila and, later, Cardinal of Manila.

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FR. ARÉVALO
My Professor for More Than Fifty Years

Angel N. Lagdameo, D.D.

Writing about Father Catalino G. Arévalo, S.J., for me is recalling my experiences with him as my theology professor at San Jose Seminary at Highway 54 (EDSA) more than half century ago. It was in 1961–1965 that our class had him as our theology professor fresh from his doctorate and professorship at the Gregorian University.

All our professors at San Jose, to use the phrase hallowed by Fr. Emilio Azárraga, S.J., were "the best of the best." But Fr. Arévalo, the youngest of them at that time, was to become gradually the icon of both students and professors of theology.

If there was any subject in theology which we studied the longest and the hardest, it was either *De Ecclesia* or *De Christologia* or *De Trinitate*. I use the Latin titles of the subjects because, remember, we were in the transition from Vatican I to Vatican II. Latin was the sacred medium of teaching at that time. Father Arévalo in addition to the Latin texts current at that time supplied us with practically a library on each subject matter. It was in his subjects that some of us seminarians extended the study period beyond the evening prayer to bed, under cover of the bedsheet with a flashlight.

The Jesuit scholastics and fathers took turns in giving pointers for the following morning's meditation. The pointers were not only materials for meditation and prayer, they were likewise pointers on how to develop topics for future homilies or sermons. I had Fr. Arévalo as my mentor in "homiletics." Before we delivered our prepared homilies in the refectory at lunch-time to the delight of seminarians, the Jesuit fathers would practice us at recreation time in some small chapel. Fr. Arévalo mentored me in my first two homilies: the first was in 1961, a homily on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, based on the encyclical "*Haurietis Aquas*." The second was in Oct. 29, 1962, a homily on "Christ the King and the Forthcoming Vatican II," in Filipino, based on the encyclical "*Quas Primas*." Fr. Arévalo corrected my homily texts before he practiced my delivery.

De Ecclesia

As a requirement of our course on Church (*De Ecclesia*), Fr. Arévalo asked us to submit two papers on the topic. I chose "Cardinal Bea: On Our Separated Brethren" and "The Divine and Human Elements in the Church."

At that time Augustin Cardinal Bea, S.J., was the chairman of Vatican II's secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (Ecumenism). Cardinal Bea tried to bring the church beyond "hating the errors" of heretics and schismatics and "loving the erring." Cardinal Bea was trying to bring to light a "more positive way" of regarding them: although denied "the full participation in the life which Christ communicates to his Church," nevertheless, he said, they had the indelible mark of baptism which made them "our brothers." The "untraditional" or "controversial" position of Cardinal Bea was meant to secure for the "separated brothers" "a room in their Father's House where they also belong." The title "separated brothers" was found then to be both severe and gentle.

Our theses on the divine and human elements in the Church tried to reconcile the sinfulness or weakness of her members with her essential holiness. There can never be, we were taught, a real distinction between the Church of the holy members and the church of the sinful

members. There is only one church, and she is *de iure* holy. Her divine element, her sanctity is an article of faith. But it is important to realize that faith in her sanctity does not depend on ignorance of her weakness and sinfulness nor on the refusal to accept facts and scandals. Despite the reports of many sins in the church, the church at any given time will never fail to produce holiness in her members. And so, if there are sinful Christians and sinful priests, nothing would be more foolish than to leave the church because of them. The seeming conflict between the human and divine elements in the church is precisely the burden of our faith in the church's holiness.

De Verbo Incarnato

Father Arévalo was not only always "on fire" in the classroom, eager that his students be in touch with the Trinity, with the divine and human in Christ; he also wanted them to be "on fire" outside the classroom. In Fourth Year Theology—our last year in the seminary—Fr. Arévalo required us to submit two more papers on Christology.

For the first paper, I submitted a summary of *De Verbo Incarnato* by Fr. Bernard Lonergan, S.J.—a text used at the Gregorian. I tried to present (in 24 pages!) Lonergan's position regarding an aspect of Christ's psychology, namely, his consciousness. Lonergan had brought to light the way to understand the consciousness of Christ, the closest way being our own experience of our consciousness. Lonergan's thesis went this way:

> while it is true that the more we know Christ, the more we will know how to conform to him, it is also true that the more we know ourselves, the more we are conscious of ourselves, of what we are, the more we will grow in our understanding of the mystery of Christ, how perfectly he has conformed himself to us.

This ultimately is what will make Christ's passion more real and true and meaningful to us. We have not a Redeemer who has not known himself, who has not known what is to suffer, what is to die.

On the first page of my paper Fr. Arévalo wrote "*Fine translation-summary of Lonergan, although could stand improving in a few spots. If you have*

another copy, please let me have one. CGA, S.J." Since I had only one typewritten copy, and it was the professor himself asking for it, it was a joy for the student to give it to the professor. That was October 30, 1964.

1995. I received a letter from Fr. Arévalo, dated August 18, 1995. Handwritten. "*A few months ago (as I think I told you) I found this term paper on Christ's consciousness and knowledge (a presentation of Lonergan's thoughts), which was excellent work, even if it needed some 'improvement'" … "I have Xeroxed a copy to show to my present students in Christology ….*" That was a most encouraging comment from a professor of yester years. The distance, 31 years. I was already Bishop of Dumaguete. My professor was still following me up!

I submitted my 18-page paper on "The Satisfaction of Christ" on Dec. 9, 1964, exactly ten days before I was ordained a priest. In the conclusion, I wrote: "In the vicarious passion and death of Christ, there is no place for any consideration of vindictive justice. Vindictive justice is brought to bear only upon a sinner. Now Christ neither contracted nor took upon himself the sin of man, and therefore, it was impossible for Him to contract in any way the punishment due to sin. It can only be said that Christ voluntarily took upon Himself the punishment due to the sins of men out of obedience to the Father and out of love for both God and men." Fr. Arévalo told our class that the "satisfaction" Christ offered to God for sin and sinners was beyond the demands of justice.

What delights me most even up to now is what Fr. Arévalo wrote on the last page of my paper: "*I would urge that you do more work on this, checking it for greater precision, greater accuracy of expression; it will be useful for you in the future—for the exams, for your own preaching, for future clergy meetings, etc. But you will not have time to polish it later, so polish it up now, before you leave.*" Now, now … not later! *Salamat po*, Father.

Symposium on Episcopacy

Before the end of the Second Vatican Council in 1964, Father Arévalo moderated our Symposium on the *Bishop in the Church*. It was an academy

in honor of an alumnus, the Archbishop of Caceres, the Most Rev. Pedro P. Santos, on the eve of his departure to attend the Council. I was one of the three who presented papers in the symposium. Sem. Alfonso Cariño, O.M.I. spoke about "Authority in the New Testament," Sem. Rogelio Sioson spoke about "The Episcopacy: Some Aspects of Collegiality." Father Arévalo assigned me to write about "What is a Bishop?" To my paper, months later, Father Arévalo added "A Postcript" to include a note on "the sacramentality of the episcopate" and "the *diakonia* of the bishop," reflecting on the mind of the Council Fathers.

Fr. Arévalo taught me how to celebrate Mass. He gave me my first "green stole" at my first Canta Misa in Lucban on December 20, 1964, at which he acted as my "subdeacon." He had taken interest in Lucban: one summer vacation he asked me to accompany him to Lucban. We went around Lucban the whole day. He got a close look at mythical Mt. Banahaw. Before he returned me home, we passed by Ateneo de San Pablo, our last look before its closure.

After I was ordained Bishop in August 12, 1980, the late Julio Cardinal Rosales, the preacher, gave me a copy of his homily. The theme of his homily was my Episcopal motto "*Thy Presence, O Lord, I seek*." Having read it again, I thanked the good Cardinal for his reflections in the homily. But he said, "*You must also thank your favourite professor in San Jose*." I guessed correctly whom the Cardinal meant by professor. The homily taught me to seek the presence of the Lord in the Scriptures, in His Word, in Christ's broken body, in the ecclesial assembly, in our daily bread, in the person of His ministers, in the poor around us, in the people, in our prayer, in our fidelity. Presence of the Lord. Only in this can the priest and bishop become the "*sacramentum humanitatis Christi*," the sacrament of the humanity of Christ.

Through the years Fr. Arévalo followed me up as professor. He would send me updated notes on Christology and the priesthood for my reflection and clergy retreats.

On March 13, 2000, when I was announced to become Archbishop of Jaro, after failing twice to reach me by phone, Father Arévalo faxed his congratulations to me, assuring me that Jaro has "many good and

devout priests and much strength from their devotion to Our Lady." The professor encouraging his student!

Through articles he sent me, he had introduced to me Pope Benedict XVI even before I personally met the Pope. Recently he sent me Pope Benedict's "Heart of the Christian Life" (on the Mass) and an early copy of Pope Benedict's "Jesus of Nazareth"—last March 3, 2011. *Salamat po*, Fr. Rev.

I know that Fr. Arévalo has taken great interest in the alleged apparition of the Mediatrix of All Grace in Lipa. He had brought one of his classes to Lipa to pray to the Mediatrix. Every now and then he would ask me about the beatification cause of the Servant of God, Bishop Alfredo Ma. Obviar. I assured him that the Diocese of Lucena has already submitted to Rome the diocesan process on Bishop Obviar. Knowing that I had been for many years the secretary of this "alumnus of Colegio de San Javier," Father Arévalo recommends in his prayer this "little bishop" to Bishop Obviar.

I am glad Fr. Arévalo can still read and hear me say it. Through the years, Fr. Arévalo has been to me a friend (Fr. Rev.), a father (because a Jesuit), a fellow priest, but as an icon, my professor for fifty years.

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CATALINO G. ARÉVALO, S.J., SERVANT OF THE CHURCH

A Compilation of Significant Theological and Spiritual Works

James H. Kroeger, M.M.

Capturing the thought and influence of someone whose prodigious works span more than six decades is, put simply, a daunting endeavor. Yet, to fittingly recognize, at least partially, the marvelous contribution of such a revered person, one is obliged to make a valiant effort to collect his most significant pieces. Thus, the rationale for this presentation: admittedly *extensive*, but certainly *not exhaustive*.

The collecting process has been facilitated by other persons who have previously gathered together some of the materials of Father Catalino G. Arévalo, SJ. Although a lengthy list could be provided, appreciation is especially extended to: Sr. Mary Aquinas Lluch, SPC, Sr. Teresa Joseph Patrick, OCD, Fr. Arnold L. Fuentes, Mr. Luis P. Olivares, and Mr. Antonio V. Romualdez.

This compilation, arranged chronologically by decades for easy reference, includes a wide variety of the published works of Father Arévalo. However, it must be noted that he has also produced hundreds of pages of insightful material that bear the name of other individuals (e.g. bishops, FABC [Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences], CBCP [Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines], etc.). In addition, the number of unpublished homilies, recollection talks, seminar

presentations, and citations fills several drawers of sturdy file cabinets. Collating and publishing some of these treasures awaits another day.

No effort has been made to cite many popular pieces appearing in a variety of local journals and newspapers (e.g. *World Mission, Totus Tuus, The Sentinel, Messenger of Divine Love, Philippine Jesuit Magazine*, etc.) and in various "official souvenir publications" and pamphlets. This piece does not surface many of the materials that are available on the internet or in CD or DVD format (e.g. Homily at the Funeral Mass for President Corazon C. Aquino on August 5, 2009 in the Manila Cathedral). Once again, this body of material constitutes another entire project, awaiting a dedicated researcher.

The reader is referred to a small addition made to this presentation (something usually not included in a bibliography). At the very end of this piece, one will find a brief list of tributes paid to Father Arévalo. In the mind of this compiler, it is important to note the availability of these materials; they contain much insight and inspiration.

And now, what can realistically be said of this presentation? Certainly, it is only a limited attempt to bring together, at least partially, some pivotal theological and spiritual works of the man who has variously been dubbed as "FABC's Premier Theologian" and "Father of Filipino Theology." The endeavor is motivated by a deep sense of filial piety, genuine respect, and grateful thanksgiving. Readers, kindly receive the material with these same, deeply felt attitudes of appreciation.

1950 - 1960

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Dr. Georg Evers is a recognized German authority on the theology of religions and on mission studies especially in relation to Asia. He earned a licentiate and masters degree in theology at Sophia University in Tokyo in 1969 and completed his doctorate in theology in 1973 under the direction of Karl Rahner at the University of Münster. After working for six years as a specialist adviser at a centre for ecumenical and interreligious encounter in Bendorf, he served for more than two decades (1979–2001) as Asia Chair of the Missiology Institute of *Missio* in Aachen. It was during this period that he and Fr. Arévalo met several times, especially at meetings of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences where both of them were regular participants and contributors. From 1984–2001, Dr. Evers was editor of *Theology im Kontext/Theology in Context*, and has contributed to national (German) and international journals about 500 articles on theology of mission, interreligious dialogue and country reports on Asia. He is a permanent collaborator of the journals *Herder Korrespondenz, Die Katholischen*

Missionen and *Studies in Interreligious Dialogue*. His publications too numerous to list here include several books, one of the latest being *The Churches in Asia* (Delhi, 2005). Besides his study of the language, history and culture of Japan in Kamakura in the 1960s, he has made frequent journeys to Asian countries. He has lectured in missiology and Asian theology at the Universities of Nijmegen (2001) and Leuven (2006, 2008, 2010).

Fernando Guillén y Preckler, Sch. P., is a Spanish priest, a member of the Order of Pious Schools, and a member of the Systematic Theology faculty of the Loyola School of Theology. He obtained his licentiate degree in Philosophy and later a doctorate degree in Theology at the Gregorian University during the period of Vatican II. He also later obtained a licentiate degree in Philosophy at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, his native city. He has been professor of Philosophy and Theology in various centers of learning in Spain, Mexico, Senegal, and Cameroon. In the Philippines, Fr. Fernando is also at the Maryhill School of Theology (MST) and the Institute of Consecrated Life in Asia (ICLA). He has worked as formator in his Order and attended many theological congresses and conferences especially on ecumenism, theology and religious life. He has also been involved in the frequent preaching of recollections and spiritual exercises. He has also animated schools of lay formation especially in Yaounde, Cameroon, and has contributed numerous articles to Philippine and European journals, among the most recent being "Dios en la literatura asiática: compasión o confesión?" in *Analecta Calasanctiana,* n. 101 (2009), 13–78. His recent books include *Dieu dans la littérature africaine. En relisant les classiques africains* (Rome: Gregorian and Biblical Press [GBP], 2012), *El arte espiritual. La belleza de la vida interior* (Madrid: Ciudad Nueva, 2010), and *Vocation, Consecration, Formation: Doing Discernment* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2009).

Rev. Fr. Francis Gustilo, S.D.B., is member of the International Theological Commission for the Quinquennium 2009–2013. He is the third Filipino to have that distinction, the

first being Fr. Arévalo and the second being then Fr. Tagle and, for a time, Bishop Tagle (now Cardinal Archbishop of Manila). Fr. Gustilo is Professor of Fundamental Theology at the Don Bosco Center of Studies School of Theology. He completed his Licentiate in Salesian Spirituality in 1983 and his Doctorate in Spirituality in 1989. He has taught theology for more than thirty years not only at the Salesian theologate but also in the San Carlos Seminary Graduate School of Theology. In 2009, His Eminence Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales appointed him as the spiritual director/adviser of the very large transparochial Catholic charismatic covenant community Couples for Christ Foundation for Family and Life.

James H. Kroeger, M.M., is Professor of Systematic Theology, Missiology, and Islamics at the Loyola School of Theology in Manila; he is also a regular professor at the East Asian Pastoral Institute and the Mother of Life Catechetical Center. He holds Licentiate and Doctorate Degrees in Missiology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Father Kroeger has served mission in Asia (Philippines and Bangladesh) since 1970. Currently, he is President of the Philippine Association of Catholic Missiologists (PACM), Secretary-Convenor of the Asian Missionary Societies Forum (AMSAL), and consultant to both the Asian Bishops' (FABC) Office of Evangelization and the Philippine Bishops' (CBCP) Commission on Mission. Recent books he has authored include: *A Vatican II Journey: Fifty Milestones* (2012 [four translations]), *Migration: Opening Pathways of the Church's Mission* (2010), and *The Future of the Asian Churches* (2002 [co-author with Peter C. Phan]). Moreover, he has edited and co-edited many books, including: *The Gift of Mission: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow* (2013), *Exploring the Treasures of Vatican II* (2011), *The Documents of Vatican Council II* (2011), *A Fiery Flame: Encountering God's Word* (2010 [co-editor with Joseph Don Zaldivar]), *Theology from the Heart of Asia: FABC Doctoral Dissertations I – II* (2008), *Once Upon a Time in Asia: Stories of Harmony and Peace* (2006 [ten translations]), *Becoming Local Church* (2003).

His Excellency, Most Rev. Angel N. Lagdameo, D.D., has been Archbishop of Jaro, Iloilo Province, Philippines since 2000. He was President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) from 2005–2009, completing the maximum of two terms. He served the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) as Chair of the Office of the Laity of the FABC from 1994–1998. During his term, he gave conferences and participated in conventions of the Catholic Laity in various countries of Asia. From 1990 to January 2000, he served as Chairman of the CBCP Episcopal Commission for the Laity and as Chair of the National Committee for the Great Jubilee Year 2000. He was Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Cebu and was Bishop of Dumaguete. Archbishop Lagdameo has known Fr. Arévalo for more than fifty years, having been Fr. Arévalo's student in theological seminary, and having kept in contact with Fr. Arévalo since then, at the annual reunions of the San Jose Seminary alumni and faculty and by their collaboration in many Church activities over the years, including those involving the FABC.

His Eminence, Most Rev. Luis Antonio Cardinal G. Tagle, D.D., is the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Manila and former Bishop of Imus, Cavite.

In 1997, Blessed Pope John Paul II appointed him to the International Theological Commission where he served until 2003 (He is the second of only three Filipinos to be appointed to the ITC, the first being Fr. Catalino G. Arévalo, S.J., and the third, Fr. Francis Gustilo, S.D.B.). Fr. Arévalo has known Cardinal Tagle since the latter was a young college student of philosophy at the Ateneo de Manila University and a seminarian at the San Jose Major Seminary, an inter-diocesan seminary under the care of the Society of Jesus, for eventual priestly service in the Diocese of Imus. He finished his first cycle of theology studies in Loyola School of Theology in 1982. After some years of priestly ministry and teaching in seminaries and schools of theology, Tagle was sent to Catholic University of America and there earned the Licentiate

in Sacred Theology in 1987 and the Doctorate in 1991. Under the direction of Fr. Joseph Komonchak, he wrote his dissertation entitled *Episcopal Collegiality in the Teaching and Practice of Pope Paul VI*. From the time he was a priest up until today, he has been frequently invited to give conferences, direct retreats and facilitate seminars for the renewal of priests, religious and lay leaders in the Philippines and abroad, and since 2008 has been offering reflections on the readings for Sunday Mass through a religious show called *The Word Exposed* which is aired on Philippine national television every Sunday, uploaded to the Internet and is viewed locally and internationally. His involvement with the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) has brought him to various parts of the continent. During his Episcopal ministry in Imus, he was elected Chair of the Episcopal Commission on the Doctrine of the Faith of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP), and a delegate of the CBCP to the XI and XII Ordinary General Assemblies of the Synod of Bishops (2005 and 2008, respectively), and on both occasions was voted a member of the Post-Synodal Council. It was during the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Faith, where Archbishop Tagle was participating as a Synod Father, when Pope Benedict named him to the College of Cardinals.

Even after he was ordained a bishop in 2001, Cardinal Tagle continued to lecture in Theology at the Divine Word Seminary, San Carlos Seminary, Maryhill School of Theology, and Loyola School of Theology; today, as Cardinal Archbishop, he still finds time to teach a few courses in San Carlos Graduate School of Theology and in Loyola School of Theology.

His Excellency, Most Rev. Socrates B. Villegas, D.D., is currently President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines and Archbishop of Lingayen-Dagupan in the Philippines, after having been Bishop of Balanga (2004–2009) and Auxiliary Bishop of Manila for three years before that.

Archbishop Villegas has been Chair of the Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines and President of the Asia-Oceania Mariological Society, and a member of the Pontifical Council of the Family based in the Vatican. He has published several books of homilies and spiritual reflections and has helped in the drafting of statements of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines.

Bishop Villegas also served as Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Manila and for nineteen years was the personal secretary of the late Jaime Cardinal Sin, in whose service he first came to meet and develop a friendship with Fr. Arévalo, who himself served the late Cardinal as one of the Cardinal's theological consultants and writers.