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# Editorial

by the Co-Editors

As this issue went to press, news broke of Pope Francis's new *Motu Proprio* entitled *Humanem progressionem* that creates a new Dicastery for Integral Human Development combining the functions of the existing Vatican offices dealing with justice and peace, world development, migrants, and health care.<sup>1</sup> The document's opening lines could well serve as the theme of the present issue:

In all her being and actions, the Church is called to promote the integral development of the human person in the light of the Gospel. This development takes place by attending to the inestimable goods of justice, peace, and the care of creation. The Successor of the Apostle Peter, in his work of affirming these values, is continuously adapting the institutions which collaborate with him, so that they may better meet the needs of the men and women whom they are called to serve.

Robin Ryan explores the theme of *communion* in *Laudato Si'* and in other writings and addresses of Pope Francis. Ryan depicts the connections between Francis's appeal to this theme in his ecological theology and his employment of it in his descriptions of the church. It describes the way in which communion is foundational for Francis's theological anthropology, ecological theology, and ecclesiology.

Reflecting on the Synod on the Family, and in light of the principle of sacramentality, Alan McGill considers the renewed prominence of questions about the development of doctrine. Utilizing the work of Alfred Loisy and Pope St. John XXIII and the dialogical disposition of Vatican II in relation to the modern world, McGill detects an intrinsicist perspective on the development of doctrine, offering hope for the possibility of more complete expressions of timeless truths.

Confucianism greatly influenced the dynamics of the Korean monarchy and family hierarchical system in the nineteenth century when Catholicism was introduced by the educated yangban class. Catholic teachings so impressed Koreans that their loyalties toward the king were challenged by their new love for God, and many were led to martyrdom. In his article, Simon C. Kim and Elizabeth Oh engage the current struggles of Korean American Catholics with this Confucian heritage embedded in the Catholic faith, especially within the immigration context.

The role of women in the Church continues to be an urgent issue. As Leonie Westenberg points out, pastoral responses to calls to examine the fruits of the Second Vatican Council, especially evangelization and the role of the Church in modern society, frequently fail to recognize the specific needs of women in society and in the Church today. Thus, Westenberg examines practical movements in the contemporary Church that are instigated by women and for women—especially the disenfranchised and excluded.

<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis, "Apostolic Letter issued *Motu Proprio* by the Supreme Pontiff Francis Instituting the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development," <http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2016/08/31/0606/01365.html#fr>.

In “Theology at the Cutting Edge,” Br. Guy Consolmagno SJ, a planetary scientist and director of the Vatican Observatory, shows how for Catholics, science and theology have a common cause in seeking truth, freedom from sin and ignorance, and bringing about justice in the world.

Anne McGowan in her Word & Worship column invites us to consider: “If what we pray shapes what we believe and forms how we live (*lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi*), the words we speak to God in our liturgies are vital to our lived experience of faith.”

Similarly, reflecting on the Signs of the Times, Michel Andraos challenges us (the Church) to move beyond the seeds of reconciliation planted by Popes Benedict XVI and Francis by “proposing a new theology and ecclesiology, radically different from the colonial past and present” in genuine dialogue with indigenous peoples.

Perhaps the challenge for the new Dicastery and for us is expressed best in Jessica Joy V. Candelario’s New Voices column when she says of ministers of prophetic dialogue: “Instead of merely providing answers, prophetic ministry enables people to ask questions.”

As we live into the second half of 2016, what are the questions we need to ask?

#### Cover image:

“The Last Supper” by Sergio Gomez.

Acrylic On Canvas 84” x 180” (June 16, 2014)

Sergio Gomez is a Chicago-based visual artist. He received a Master of Fine Arts degree from Northern Illinois University. As an art student at Governors State University, Sergio was recipient of the Lincoln Laureate Medallion Award given by the Lincoln Academy and former Governor of Illinois Mr. Jim Edgar. Sergio’s work has been the subject of solo exhibitions in the United States, Italy, and Austria. His work can be found in private and public collections of the National Museum of Mexican Art, Brauer Art Museum, and the MIIT Museo Internazionale Italia Arte, among others. He is currently the Director of Exhibitions at the Zhou B. Art Center, owner and director of 33 Contemporary Gallery, contributor for Italia Arte Magazine, and founder of VisualArtToday.com, a curated online exhibition space for international contemporary art.

“The Last Supper” is presently exhibited at Catholic Theological Union, Chicago.

(bio excerpted from: <https://www.artworkarchive.com/artwork/sergio-gomez?page=1>)

# Lessons of Martyrdom on Contemporary Immigration

by Simon C. Kim and Elizabeth Oh

From the beginning of Jesus's ministry, the call to "follow me" was not a foreign invitation, but one that resonated with the disciples. Otherwise, how could one literally drop everything to follow at a moment's notice? What resonated was not only the hope afforded them by the person standing in front of them, but also the redirecting of their talents to a greater purpose in life. How many times do we say that there "must be more to life than this," and when the opportunity affords itself, how many of us have the courage to act upon it? This is precisely what was presented to the disciples, and they were the ones with enough courage to follow through with it. Thus, the simple words "Come follow me," in fact, resonate at a much deeper level for those who respond. Christ reminds us of this reality when he tells the first of his disciples that they will no longer be just fishermen but will be netting people as fishers of humanity (Mt 4:19, Mk 1:17, Lk 5:10).

Fishing was a lucrative business at the time of Jesus. Ownership meant both a successful fishing operation as well as a "secure and stable lifestyle" which the first disciples left completely behind.<sup>1</sup> Their response was not a calculated decision, but rather a direct response to Jesus's invitation as indicated by the Greek term *eutheōs* in the Matthean account.<sup>2</sup> To become fishers, netting people instead of fish meant that those called would not be just adding another activity in their busy lives, but, rather, embracing a totally new way of life.<sup>3</sup>

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Thus, the years spent with Jesus before his crucifixion were a formation period where the skill-set one already possessed was reformulated. The lessons of living with their master can be interpreted as an invitation to live according to the reign of God by retooling one's ability within the kingdom. In particular, fishing was the skill-set or ability that Simon, James, and John possessed prior to their engagement with Jesus. Watching and imitating their teacher allowed the Twelve to witness God's economy and eventually

embrace a mindset where their abilities could be recalibrated in continuing the work of Christ with the grace of the Holy Spirit. In particular, the willingness to labor all night, casting one's nets into the deep and reaping the

1 Daniel J. Harrington, *The Gospel of Matthew, Sacra Pagina Series*, Daniel Harrington, ed. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991), 72.

2 Greg Garrett, "Matthew 4:12-23: Homiletical Perspective," in *Feasting on the Word: Year A*, vol. 1, ed. David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor, 289 (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press), 2010.

3 Ted A. Smith, "Mark 1:14-20: Homiletical Perspective," in *Feasting on the Word: Year B*, vol. 1, ed. David L. Bartlett and Barbara Brown Taylor, 289 (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press), 2008.

rewards of a bountiful haul were repetitive habits (Jn 21). However, these were soon transformed into powerful tools utilized in furthering the reign of God.

In the opening narratives of the gospels where we see Jesus bringing together the Twelve, the paradigm for ministry is not about the qualifications we might value today through educational achievement, work experience, or leadership abilities. Rather, the call of these men was related to their occupation and willingness to shift their worldview by leaving everything behind. These two aspects are then utilized in creating disciples whose faithfulness is revealed in all aspects of our abilities, a further sign that the reign of God is comprised of all aspects of our humanity. What Jesus saw in the Twelve was their ability to fish as well as their willingness to follow. These two elements—one's talent and one's obedience—are also evident in the lives of the Korean Martyrs, and, therefore, must also be uncovered in the Korean immigrant experience to the U.S. as part of the ongoing faith tradition.

### **Korean Martyrs as Loyal Scholars**

Korea first encountered Classical Confucian thought as a tributary of China and eventually established its own Confucian ideals to create a national identity.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, Korean Confucianism became the belief system of the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1910) to unite the kingdom. Rulers either legitimized their reign or the overthrow of previous regimes by appealing to the Korean people's loyalty. As a result, Koreans viewed the king as worthy of their loyalty since "kingship was supposed to embody both inherent moral superiority through a royal bloodline, and individual greatness expressed in superior feats of prowess, both intellectual and physical."<sup>5</sup>

As Confucianism valued respect for authority and for the group rather than the individual, namely to the king and to one's parents, Koreans had a deep respect for the practice of loyalty found in filial piety for family and society to function harmoniously.<sup>6</sup> Joseon literature shows evidence of this in stories of children, subjects, and wives who suffered to remain loyal to parents, rulers, and husbands. Some Koreans, in fact, took suffering to the extreme in following Confucian teachings by giving up their lives. "Taking one's life was not only appropriate, but an honorable act"; for instance, women committed suicide to protect their chastity and government officials killed themselves honorably before enemies reached them during the seventeenth-century struggle.<sup>7</sup> Korean subjects also gave up their lives to remain loyal to the king.

Not all of Catholicism aligned with Confucianism, however, and Koreans would suffer greatly for their newfound faith. Their loyalty toward the king was challenged by their new love for God. This transition was not difficult within a Confucian hierarchical system since humans were subject under one another, thereby upholding the community. Thus, an earthly king would naturally be subject to a heavenly king. God became their ultimate ruler, not their king; consequently, this became an act of treason, punishable by death.

Despite strong resistance, local writers brought the Catholic faithful together and inspired them to endure great persecution. The first Catholics were the highly educated elite *yangban* class. Later, those unable to read Classical Chinese required Catholic literature in the Korean vernacular. For example, Augustine Jeong Yakjong produced the first Korean catechism using examples from daily life. In it, Jeong explains why ancestor worship was against the Catholic faith, as the Lord of Heaven deserved all the praise. He also describes Jesus as sharing the noblest bloodline of every human on earth, which clearly went against the monarchs whose very claim to the throne was

4 William Callahan, "Negotiating Cultural Boundaries: Confucianism and Trans/National Identity in Korea," *Cultural Values* 3 (1999): 336.

5 Patrick Kilkelly, "Orthodox Heresy: Chŏng Yakchong and the Chugyo yoji," *Irish Journal of Asian Studies* 1 (2015): 12.

6 Callahan, "Negotiating Cultural Boundaries," 344.

7 Franklin D. Rausch, "Choosing to Die: Catholic Voluntary Martyrdom in the late Joseon Korea" (paper presented at the University of Washington Workshop on the Politics of Honorable Death and Martyrdom in Korean History, Seattle, Washington, June 8, 2013), 5.

based on having the purest bloodline.<sup>8</sup> Thus, Catholic ideals of human equality, along with the belief in God and concern for the afterlife, conflicted with Confucian thought, inciting persecution of believers.

Jeong's son, Paul Chong Hasang, wrote the first apologetic work. Through his writings, he attempted to revive the church after severe persecutions during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His letter attempted to persuade the prime minister that Catholicism was compatible with Confucian thought, while surpassing it. Chong's tone reflects his zeal and passion in arguing how one must adhere to the Catholic faith. Quite contrary to Confucian beliefs, he asserts that status and wealth are worthless in the present world, and nothing compares to attaining the joy of eternity in heaven.<sup>9</sup> He further notes the compatibility of filial piety and the Fourth Commandment to honor one's parents, and how one should serve parents and also offer one's life in loyalty to the king. Ultimately, Chong argues that one must obey God, as he ranks the highest. He writes, "The father is the highest in a household, yet the king of the country is higher than the father; and though the king is the highest in country, the one who is higher than the king is the Great King of heaven and earth."<sup>10</sup>

The ease with which some Koreans were able to integrate themselves into Catholic doctrine of piety is evidenced in their extraordinarily high rates of martyrdom. Though some scholars may wonder at their courage, their self-sacrifice may have been easier than other non-Confucian-based cultures as they were merely transferring their loyalty from a king to God. In other words, just as the fishermen adapted their abilities to become fishers of humanity, Koreans adjusted where to place their loyalty from their existing allegiance to the king to their newfound heavenly Father. As Koreans merged Confucian notions of filial piety to fit their Catholic beliefs, martyrs were also able to eventually reconcile their filial duties in caring for their parents by praying for them in heaven. They also thought of suffering and martyrdom as a "debt owed to God" that helped to "expiate their sins."

One martyr, Magdalena Son Sobyok, "held that her life was not her own but a gift from God."<sup>11</sup> Others, Magdalena Yi Yonghui and her sister Barbara Yi Chonghui, were tortured several times and asked if they understood their offenses, to which they replied, "If we intended to reject the Lord, why would we have surrendered ourselves?... If the law says we should die, then we should die."<sup>12</sup> With complete and utter loyalty to God and king, they gave themselves up to the authorities, choosing to surrender themselves. However, martyrdom was not romantic by any means. The recorded hagiographies often depict harrowing images of torture and suffering. For example, Johannes Cho Haesong was tortured so that his flesh was torn and his bones protruded from his body.<sup>13</sup> Maria Yi Yonhui was struck over 300 times leaving no part of her body unharmed. Despite extreme suffering, these martyrs "connected violence with sincerity—the willingness to suffer showed one's true loyalty and devotion."<sup>14</sup>

Confucian beliefs not only helped convert Koreans to Catholicism but also provided courage to remain loyal to their faith, as it also strengthened the entire community. As Confucian teachings emphasized relationships, several martyrs shared their final breaths with family members as a way to fulfill their filial duties:

The marital bond proved strong with eight couples suffering martyrdom. In eight other cases, children followed their parents' example, and in a further nine siblings paid the ultimate price. The presence of aunts and uncles together with their nieces and nephews hints at other wider family relationships

8 Kil Kelly, "Orthodox Heresy," 15.

9 Paul Chong Hasang, "Sang-Jaesang-Seo," *KIATS Theological Journal* (2005): 143.

10 Chong, "Sang-Jaesang-Seo," 144.

11 Andrew Finch, "The Pursuit of Martyrdom in the Catholic Church in Korea before 1866," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 60 (2009): 103.

12 Rausch, "Choosing to Die," 10.

13 Finch, "The Pursuit of Martyrdom," 100.

14 Rausch, "Choosing to Die," 5.

which could encourage and support confessors. This network of responsibilities might extend beyond the kin group.<sup>15</sup>

Not only did families desire to obtain martyrdom together to fulfill filial obligations, they also wanted to share in the honor of experiencing and reaching eternal glory in heaven. Martyrdom, in fact, became an honorable achievement to be noted in the family genealogy. The strong familial bonds also helped provide support in refusing to apostatize or betray one another to authorities. Many would suffer torture when asked to confess the location of relatives, as one betrayal could lead to the discovery of several others.<sup>16</sup> One might speculate that these communal ties contributed to the fact that so many Catholics had been willing to die for the faith.

Spiritual support along with practical assistance further aided Catholics in coping with persecution. While imprisoned, Christians prayed for each other for God's grace to endure torture and attended to each other's wounds. Outside of prison, Christians continued their support through any means. As Confucian ideals aim toward the common good, Catholic efforts during the hardships of persecution demonstrated this teaching well.

Therefore, the early Christians reinterpreted Confucian ideals of filial piety to become compatible with their Catholic faith, preserving their sense of community and familial bonds while still remaining faithful to God. Their re-envisioning of their purpose as fishers of men by giving up their lives for God's greater glory resulted in converting thousands. The concept of filial piety, present today globally, has been passed down through generations. However, the challenge remains with Korean American Catholics to reshape Confucian ideals to make them still relevant to contemporary faith.

### **Expectations of Korean American Catholics**

Most Koreans today immigrated to the U.S. with the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 (a.k.a. Hart-Celler Act). In addition, the close of the Second Vatican Council also allowed for such cultural awareness within the church. For example, the Archdiocese of San Francisco acknowledged the presence of the Korean faithful in their midst in 1966. Although Korean immigration has been over a century old, such a description as Korean American Catholics was not available until social and religious events changed the mindset of those on the streets as well as in the pews.<sup>17</sup> Not until 1966 did dioceses across the country officially recognize Korean immigrants in their midst. Thus, Korean American Catholics are celebrating their golden jubilee in 2016.

As with any other ethnic group, Korean immigrants have a variety of push-and-pull factors bringing them to the U.S. Those who came in the decades of the 1970s and 80s left their homeland trying to rebuild, as Korea still struggled to recover after the civil war. Those who came in these two decades escaped political unrest of a dictatorial regime and economic instability in an impoverished country (push factors). The U.S. provided a stable environment in which to raise their families by affording recent arrivals both economic and educational opportunities (pull factors) not available back home, as Korea was just developing societal and religious infrastructures.

In recent decades, Korean immigration has continued at a consistent level with only slight dips accounting for drastic events such as the IMF bailout of Korea in 1997. However, the push factors of Korea have dramatically changed and are almost nonexistent with today's stable democratic government, unprecedented economic growth, and global cultural expansion primarily through K-Pop and Korean dramas. Nevertheless, pull factors found in the U.S. continue to attract immigrants from the Korean peninsula. These pull factors have not changed even with

<sup>15</sup> Finch, "The Pursuit of Martyrdom," 107.

<sup>16</sup> Finch, "The Pursuit of Martyrdom," 108.

<sup>17</sup> For more regarding social and ecclesial changes in the U.S. church see Simon C. Kim, *A World Church in Our Backyard: How the Spirit Moved Church and Society* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2016).

the political and economic transformation of Korea. Educational and employment opportunities afforded in this country are still strong factors for immigration. Even with the rapid growth and development of Korea, the small country of over 50 million people cannot provide all the opportunities found in the U.S. The “American Dream” is much alive not so much in terms of lifestyle choices but rather in the resources not found elsewhere.

Like other immigrants to the U.S., Koreans also immigrated with their beliefs or embraced the faith soon after based on religious as well as social and cultural needs. In fact, a larger percentage of Koreans professed a Christian belief as immigrants than had done so in the homeland. Pyong Gap Min explains the immigration of primarily Christians as premeditated by missionary activities from the U.S. as well as the Korean government strategically sending their own. Upon arrival, many immigrants were welcomed by religious communities in the resettlement process. Thus, Korean immigration also includes a faith narrative which has not yet taken root in either the people (specifically the next generation) or in U.S. soil as part of the wider church.

Like most immigrants, Korean Americans have not properly reflected on the skillsets brought over with them as well as those developed here. During the 1970s and 80s, those with college degrees or professional occupations in Korea found themselves self-employed with long work hours, further isolating their existence in this country beyond linguistic and cultural differences. Those who immigrated especially in the new millennium are better educated with greater resources in their journey to the U.S. Thus, recent immigrants are no longer relegated to self-employed positions as they possess the skillset, especially language proficiency, to compete in every area of society.

It is undeniable that Korean immigrants have succeeded in many ways in part by a diligent work ethic as well as their willingness to leave their homeland. These two elements continue the faith narrative of not only this immigrant country but also the biblical narrative that develops out of the calling of the first disciples. Just as Jesus transformed the fishermen into fishers of men and the Korean Martyrs transferred their loyalty to a heavenly rather than an earthly king, Korean immigration provides a similar context for uncovering one’s identity of concepts such as fishers of men and loyalty within filial piety, which are transformed into a relatable narrative for the next generation.

### **Filial Piety in the Next Generation**

Today, Korean Americans struggle with Confucian ideals while growing up with Western ideals. Immigrant parents demand obedience from children who should not question their authority especially when it comes to worldly success such as academic, career, and marriage ideals. Furthermore, children are later expected to care for their elderly parents. Not only do subsequent generations not understand this principle as well—in part because Western society emphasizes the individual over the group—they also do not comprehend their parents’ sometimes unattainable expectations. The great divide exists because of the misinterpretation of filial piety of the first generation and the lack of cultural understanding of the next, as well as the unwillingness to accept the differences of both.

Children of the next generation first learn about filial piety while assisting their parents to navigate through the struggles of immigrant life. Role reversal of immigrant children “parenting their parents” is a common experience. From a series of interviews in California from 2006-2012, several 1.5 and second-generation Korean Americans responded that they had a limited childhood, having to provide emotional and physical support by coping with their parents’ absences and financial ups and downs, and helping out with the family business, all without any complaint or sign of unhappiness or frustration.<sup>18</sup> Later in adulthood, these children appreciate their parents’ sacrifices and feel they tried to please their parents to help ease their burdens. One respondent, who achieved straight

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18 Grace J. Yoo and Barbara W. Kim, *Caring Across Generations* (New York: New York University Press, 2014), 22.

As, described how her mother kept her report card in her purse not only to show others but also to comfort her during difficult times at work. Satisfying immigrant parents is an act of filial piety, and many children come to understand this only after discovering their parents' past, especially within the context of Korean culture.

Much of the knowledge gap is due to parents' lack of communication of themselves and the country they left behind. Many children have heard vague accounts about the Japanese Occupation and the Korean War. They may have picked up stories of poverty and hunger or of a relative who had died or was missing. Much of the details, emotions, and suffering the first-generation immigrants had undergone remain untold. These scarring memories are most likely too painful to recount, and a profound silence exists in each household regarding the trauma immigrants experienced. This reticence among immigrants is a coping mechanism used for survival. Crying or self-pity would have done nothing to help feed a family or save anyone from danger. The strength and resilience practiced throughout a lifetime of trauma, for instance, carried over into their work ethic and outlook as an immigrant. When children discover the details of the harsh realities their parents faced prior to coming to the U.S., they become more understanding and sympathetic. Often, details are revealed indirectly or sought out when children are older, in the hopes of learning more about their own identity and family history.

In general, many children of Korean immigrants experience a lack of emotional support from their parents. The first generation, with a survivor mentality, is focused more on working to support their children and is unwilling to express love, especially through words. Often in Korean families, overt displays of affection are thought to show weakness in a person's character. Instead, love was shown through actions and hard work in supporting the family. Children found this type of love challenging to grasp in the midst of dealing with feelings of discrimination and alienation from the mainstream culture. This lack of intimacy exacerbated even more the children's understanding of not only their parents' expectations for them but also their own Korean American identity. Given knowledge of their parents' past and of Korean history, as the children grow older they are not only more accepting and forgiving of their parents and how their lives had been impacted,<sup>19</sup> but also more aware of their own "Korean-ness."

For many respondents in the study, Korean-ness is defined by carrying out responsibilities for family members and respecting the older generation. Almost all respondents desired to transmit the tradition of respecting elders to subsequent generations. The practice of filial piety, however, becomes more complex as parents age and require care from their adult children. Tensions and misunderstandings arise as parents feel "entitled" to their adult children's attention; all the while, adult children struggle to balance the various responsibilities of their own lives, such as work and raising children. One respondent describes her parents as "[demanding] respect without giving respect. They don't make an effort to understand their children or have an open dialogue and so misunderstandings and resentments get in the way of their relationships."<sup>20</sup> In general, adult children of immigrants end up caring for their elderly parents more out of duty and obligation than out of a close bond, as they try to compensate for the lack of parental love they felt during childhood.

Caring for the elderly also involves more than just offering time and attention. Adult children, however, feel a strong sense of obligation to provide for their parents financially by paying mortgages, monthly allowances, and vacations. Moreover, when a parent becomes seriously ill, many adult children take on caregiving duties like medical advocacy and financial support, as well as daily tasks such as bathing, cleaning, and other assistance. In many cases, siblings divide up the responsibilities in caring for parents, as caregiving can be overwhelming, exhausting, and emotionally draining. Commonly, daughters take on the role of caregiving and managing relationships. One such daughter found solace in prayer throughout her mother's hospitalization and recovery process by not only

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19 Yoo and Kim, *Caring Across Generations*, 49.

20 Yoo and Kim, *Caring Across Generations*, 131.

praying for her mother, but also for her own healing from painful family conflicts. “[She] describes her brush with martyrdom: she did all she did to be a ‘good daughter,’ and she faced the need to protect herself emotionally from her mother’s behavior when her good intentions were not enough.”<sup>21</sup>

Throughout this study, respondents realized that they had to redefine Confucian ideals of filial piety to fit their needs, namely, to be more practical. One male respondent explains how he has accepted his limitations:

I’ve done this before. I dropped everything, canceled my appointments here at work and just flew out. Sometimes you need to do that, but I’ve also got to be realistic and reasonable as well. So one of the ways that I’ve come to accept is acceptance. Just accepting the fact that pain and suffering and death are part of life...I think the other thing is just reminding myself that I cannot—physically and emotionally—I cannot always be there for my mom... That I can do the best I can but even my best will not be enough sometimes, and then just having to live with that... I don’t want to exceed my capabilities... because that’s not going to make me more effective either. I can lose my concentration at work; it could affect my productivity. It can take away some of the potential money that can go to my mom...so it’s self-preservation, so I can help other people.<sup>22</sup>

Filial piety, therefore, is not lost in the next generation, but needs to be transformed into an understandable Christian perspective that honors the individual within our ethnic faith narrative. Just as we must reinterpret what it means to be “fishers of men” in our current reality as Christians, our loyalties within a Confucian system of filial piety also need to be transformed within our current understanding as Korean Americans. Without re-envisioning one’s religious and cultural heritage, faith becomes a relic of the past and unable to make sense of the lived realities, especially for the next generation as they struggle with navigating multiple realities. A lost sense of identity also means a lost sense of our faith.

### **Re-envisioning Cultural and Religious Identity**

Immigration presents many opportunities to transform both cultural and faith traditions. Those who live in a “singular” culture without much human mobility do not find the need to reflect on their lives in the same way as immigrants, who must navigate multiple worlds. Within each world is also a faith tradition, which when uncovered becomes a wealth of spiritual resources. However, the process of uncovering such areas requires a re-envisioning of multiple realities immigrants are bombarded with. As mentioned throughout this article, the sense of loyalty found within filial piety was understood in a specific manner within the educated class as illustrated by their transference of loyalty from the king to their new God. In cases where it was possible, they honored both as witnessed in their surrender to local authorities. However, in other cases where a choice had to be made, they chose to remain resolute in their faith by embracing death. Just as Jesus’s calling of fishermen to become fishers of men, Korean Martyrs took their Confucian-rooted knowledge and skills of their everyday life and transformed them within the reign of God. They refined the idea of filial piety by attaching a purpose behind obeying parents and the king as glorifying God. Re-envisioning, in many ways, was simply an adjustment of what they already possessed.

For Korean Americans today, filial piety has its challenges; yet by viewing the struggle as a blessing, they can approach a renewed vision. The cultural notion of blessings versus the Christian tradition has been viewed as one in the same way as Koreans see both cultural and spiritual blessings in terms of monetary and material gain. Thus, a prosperity gospel or emphasis on successes in the present world is what Koreans value, especially those who im-

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21 Yoo and Kim, *Caring Across Generations*, 154.

22 Yoo and Kim, *Caring Across Generations*, 161.

migrate for a better life. A perspective of this nature hinders the lessons of the Korean Martyrs for their loyalties were placed on relationships, eventually on the ultimate relationship with God, that mattered the most. By over-emphasizing the material, such as desiring academic and career successes in the next generation, many Korean immigrants fail to appreciate the richness of the faith found in the relational opportunities of a multicultural reality. In addition, the confusion of identity and culture that the next generation grapples with is rarely seen as a blessing. However, these moments of struggle are opportunities to not only encounter God's presence in the world but also to uncover the richness of such a diverse creation. Similar to the Korean Martyrs, Korean immigrants, possessing the same nature of devotion and solidarity, can re-envision filial piety as a blessing and means to serving one another, and, in doing so, serving God.

By realigning the goals of immigration with a proper understanding of blessings found in God's economy, Korean immigrants can correctly interpret filial obligation and allow their children to better comprehend both a faith and cultural heritage that seem so foreign at times. Only through such a process do we realize the calling of Christ is not only to enter the kingdom, but also to do our part in furthering the reign of God in our midst. In transforming what being faithful means today, especially through the experience of contemporary immigration, we realize that the truth already resides in us and our abilities can add to the diverse blessings of church and society found in our own communities.

# In the Aftermath of a Synod: The Sacramental Vision of the Universe and a Case for the Development of Doctrine

by Alan McGill

Catholicism's sacramental vision of the universe holds important implications for the development of doctrine, especially concerning several issues surfaced in the 2014 and 2015 Synods. The central thesis of this paper is that if God is present in and through all of creation, then human reason, experience, and processes of communication, interpretation, and development, though fallible and at times corrupted by sin, are ultimately good and holy and can mediate the divine.

The eternal truths that doctrines seek to express cannot by definition change. However, as soon as we concede a distinction between the eternal truths themselves and the doctrinal formulations that seek to express those truths in human words in a given epoch, we then admit that the doctrinal formulae must be open to the possibility of a more effective or more complete expression.

Our argument offers a prospectus for the development of doctrine in general, without invoking specific arguments regarding the admission of divorced and civilly remarried Catholics to communion, teachings in relation to the LGBT community, or the post-synod discussion of the possibility of ordaining women as deacons. In relation to these contemporary debates, however, the present work proposes that an appeal to the immutability of doctrine is not an adequate resolution.

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## Loisy's Intrinsicist Perspective on the Development of Doctrine

As the nineteenth century drew to a close and the Modernist Crisis simmered, Alfred Loisy, proposed what might be termed an intrinsicist model of the development of doctrine. Whereas a scholastic position might be characterized by the dictum that "grace builds on nature," and the implication that revelation builds on reason, Loisy viewed nature, reason, and the processes of doctrinal development as infused with grace.<sup>1</sup> Loisy implies that grace works in and through the processes of communication, interpretation, and development, rejecting a model of literal inspiration. "There is nothing to indicate, nor has the Church ever taught, that in those who are the inspired organs of revelation, the movement of thought takes a totally irregular

movement, rejecting a model of literal inspiration. "There is nothing to indicate, nor has the Church ever taught, that in those who are the inspired organs of revelation, the movement of thought takes a totally irregular

<sup>1</sup> Lawrence Cunningham associates the corrupted dictum, "grace builds on nature" with scholasticism. The dictum appears to be a paraphrase of Aquinas's assertion that grace "perfects" nature. See Lawrence Cunningham, "Four American Catholics and their Chronicler," *Horizons: The Journal of the College Theology Society* 31, no. 01 (2004): 113-117. Cunningham makes this association in his abstract.

course . . .”<sup>2</sup> Loisy saw the “movement of thought” governed by its regular course, that is, by reason, as a means through which divine inspiration is mediated.

Christianity is already, in Loisy’s view, a product of development, and this merely needed to be recognized more explicitly. He wrote, “Christianity is in a very true sense a development from post-exilic Judaism, which is a development of the religion of the prophets which is a development from primitive Mosaic Yahwism.”<sup>3</sup> Given that Christianity was already the product of development, Loisy suggested that “It is just the idea of development which is now needed, not to be created all at once, but established for a better knowledge of the past.”<sup>4</sup>

Loisy believed that the divine was at work in and through the processes that affected the development of scripture and Tradition. His position was analogous with that of Teilhard de Chardin, who held that the Creator works in and through the processes of evolution.<sup>5</sup> If God created humanity through what science describes as the process of evolution, it might also be argued that God reveals to humankind through historical, literary, and cultural processes.

Loisy was critical of Adolf von Harnack’s assumption that the essence of a more pure Christianity had been lost as the Church developed.<sup>6</sup> Harnack’s position seemed to play into the hands of a magisterium that equated development with corruption—if such development was influenced by contemporary scholarly insight. Loisy, on the other hand, argued that the tradition had always been dynamic and there had never been a static, pristine Christianity.<sup>7</sup> In Loisy’s view, those who denied the possibility of a legitimate development of doctrine, in fact, corrupted the Tradition.<sup>8</sup> The author defended his insistence upon the possibility and necessity of a legitimate development of doctrinal formulae by offering myriad examples as to how doctrines ranging from Trinitarian to Eucharistic had evolved.<sup>9</sup>

Loisy’s position that revelation is mediated in and through processes of interpretation and development might be regarded as quintessentially Catholic. His view exemplifies the sacramental vision of Catholicism whereby grace is mediated in and through creation, not an extrinsic supplement to creation. Sacramental theologian Michael Himes captures this dimension of Catholicism when he suggests that “at its best, Catholicism is shaped by the conviction that grace lies at the root of all reality. And if that conviction is true, all the humanities, as well as the sciences, become religious enterprises.”<sup>10</sup> However, the anti-Modernist magisterium of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century rejected the intrinsicist view of grace. Rather, it reflected the position of the First Vatican Council that in 1870 condemned those who viewed revelation as working in and through human processes for “utterly confusing nature and grace, human science and Divine faith.”<sup>11</sup>

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2 C.J.T. Talar, ed., *Prelude to the Modernist Crisis: The Firmin Articles of Alfred Loisy*, trans. Christine Thirlway (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), xxi.

3 Alfred Loisy, *L’Evangile et L’Eglise* (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1902), 161-162, quoted in *Prelude to the Modernist Crisis*, ed. by Talar, 94.

4 Talar, *Prelude to the Modernist Crisis*, xiv.

5 Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Harper Colophon, 1975), 218, 220, 223, 227, 228, 277. Pope St. John Paul II, “Message to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences: On Evolution,” <https://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP961022.HTM>

6 Adolf von Harnack, *What is Christianity?* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1904), 234.

7 Alfred Loisy, ‘Le Développement Chrétien d’Après le Cardinal Newman,’ *Revue du clergé français* 17 (1898); Pius X, *Lamentabili Sane Exitu* (Rome: The Holy See, 1907), no. 1, <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius10/p10lamen.htm>

8 Jeffrey Morrow, “Alfred Loisy’s Developmental Approach to Scripture: Reading the ‘Firmin’ Articles in the Context of Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Historical Biblical Criticism,” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 15, no. 3 (2013): 328.

9 Morrow, “Alfred Loisy’s Developmental Approach to Scripture,” 329.

10 Michael Himes, “Finding God in All Things: A Sacramental Worldview and its Effects,” in *As Leaven in the World: Catholic Perspectives on Faith, Vocation, and the Intellectual Life*, ed. Thomas Landy (Franklin, WI: Sheed and Ward, 2001), 102.

11 First Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith* (Dei filius) (Vatican, 1870), Introduction.

In July 1907, Pope Pius X issued a decree, *Lamentabili sane exitu* that rejected the attempts of exegetes and theologians to contribute to the development of doctrine as transgressing non-negotiable boundaries and nothing short of destructive. “The fact that many Catholic writers also go beyond the limits determined by the Fathers and the Church herself is extremely regrettable. In the name of higher knowledge and historical research (they say), they are looking for that progress of dogmas which is, in reality, nothing but the corruption of dogmas.”<sup>12</sup> Insisting upon a clear separation of grace from human science, and regarding attempts to develop doctrine in light of modern insights as nothing less than corruption of dogma, the anti-Modernist magisterium effectively rejected an intrinsic model of the development of doctrine.

### John XXIII’s Distinction between Substance and Presentation

In his inaugural speech at the opening of the Second Vatican Council on October 11, 1962, Pope John XXIII conveys a commitment to both the conservation and development of doctrine. The pontiff speaks of the importance of treasuring the deposit of faith as mediated by scripture and tradition, not by simply preserving it, but by developing it so that it may speak effectively to the modern era.

Our duty is not only to guard this precious treasure, as if we were concerned only with antiquity, but to dedicate ourselves with an earnest will and without fear to that work which our era demands of us, pursuing thus the path which the Church has followed for twenty centuries.<sup>13</sup>

Pope John bestowed a mandate to go beyond antiquarianism so as to continue the development that had characterized the dynamic tradition at its best—though not consistently—for twenty centuries, hence recognizing the integral role of development in the sacred Tradition. On the eve of the Council, the pontiff sensed a widespread readiness for such development.

The whole world expects a step forward toward a doctrinal penetration and a formation of consciousness in faithful and perfect conformity to the authentic doctrine, which, however, should be studied and expounded through the methods of research and through the literary forms of modern thought.<sup>14</sup>

Pope John acknowledges the capacity of modern research methods, and modes of thinking and communicating to mediate truth. John XXIII makes a distinction between the eternal truths in themselves and the doctrinal formulations that seek to express these truths through a given language for a given epoch. “The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another.”<sup>15</sup>

While Pope St. John XXIII distinguished between the substance of doctrine and the manner in which it is presented, it is not as though some kernel of truth can be isolated and preserved while the culturally conditioned assumptions around it can be neatly sifted and discarded. If agreement could be reached as to what kernel of teaching or what articulation of principles cannot conceivably be reformulated in order to communicate more clearly to a given context or express the truth more completely in light of a new insight, then this irreformable essence of Christianity should be codified and forever conserved. Immune from the possibility of change, it would, by definition, be itself eternal truth. It would eliminate the possibility of fresh insights that offer a more complete representation of the truth, thus denigrating the sacramental potential of reason and experience.

<sup>12</sup> Pius X, *Lamentabili sane exitu* (Rome: The Holy See, 1907), no. 1, <http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius10/p10lamen.htm>.

<sup>13</sup> Pope John XXIII, *Inaugural Speech at Opening of the Second Vatican Council*, October 11, 1962. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/john\\_xxiii/speeches/1962/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_spe\\_19621011\\_opening-council\\_it.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_xxiii/speeches/1962/documents/hf_j-xxiii_spe_19621011_opening-council_it.html). Cf. Walter Abbot ed., *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Guild Press & America Press, 1966), 715.

<sup>14</sup> Pope John XXIII, *Inaugural Speech at Opening of the Second Vatican Council*.

<sup>15</sup> Pope John XXIII, *Inaugural Speech at Opening of the Second Vatican Council*.

The immutable substance of doctrine is not some distillation of essential teaching that transcends the possibility of change, a “creed within the creed” or “catechism within the catechism” but, rather, the eternal truths that doctrine imperfectly expresses. It is the Church’s task in every age to strive to express the eternal truths in the most clear and complete way possible, taking full account of the Church’s current teachings on the responsible interpretation of scripture.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Second Vatican Council’s Openness to Dialogue with Diverse Perspectives**

Vatican II’s *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* expresses the Council’s desire for dialogue with the contemporary world, including those who are not explicitly followers of Christ. “This council can provide no more eloquent proof of its solidarity with, as well as its respect and love for the entire human family with which it is bound up, than by engaging with it in conversation” and again, specifically with regard to non-Catholics, “We want frank conversation to compel us all to receive the impulses of the Spirit faithfully and to act on them energetically.”<sup>17</sup> The implication is that dialogue between diverse perspectives can mediate the “impulses of the Spirit.”<sup>18</sup> Unless the human family beyond the confines of the magisterium is capable of mediating the eternal truths, the development of doctrine in light of its insights would indeed be a corruption of doctrine.

The Council’s dominant model of Church as the People of God serves to subvert any simplistic assumption that the institutional church has a monopoly on God and on truth.<sup>19</sup> This broad and inclusive ecclesiology means that dialogue between the Church and the modern world need not be understood as a conversation between the magisterium and extra-ecclesial perspectives so much as a grace-filled sharing of wisdom among the People of God.

*Lumen gentium* employs the adjective “pilgrim” so as to speak of the pilgrim People of God, with overtones of the realized futuristic eschatology detected by Lindbeck, and suggesting a Church that is still making its way, and open to progress.<sup>20</sup> The Council recognized the capacity of scientific progress and of culture to reveal truth for the benefit of the Church. “The experience of past ages, the progress of the sciences, and the treasures hidden in the various forms of human culture, by all of which the nature of man himself is more clearly revealed and new roads to truth are opened, these profit the Church, too.”<sup>21</sup>

Leo O’Donovan detects in *Gaudium et spes* not only an openness to dialogue with the modern world, but an affirmation that modernity’s efforts for human development are in continuity with the divine plan. O’Donovan notes that the constitution suggests that modern humans can, in this regard, “justly consider that by their own efforts they are unfolding the creator’s work.”<sup>22</sup> This suggests an intrinsicist model of the development whereby grace works in and through human processes.

O’Donovan remarks that several theologians have detected in *Gaudium et spes* an optimistic, evolutionary perspective such as that advanced by Teilhard de Chardin.<sup>23</sup> Henri de Lubac considers that de Chardin’s evolutionary

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16 Second Vatican Council, *The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* (1965), no.12, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651118\\_dei-verbum\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html).

17 Second Vatican Council, *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (1965), no. 3, 92, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19651207\\_gaudium-et-spes\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html).

18 Gabriel Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence: A Study in Catholic Modernism and Integralism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 218.

19 *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (Vatican: 1964), chap. 2.

20 *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, chap. 7; George Lindbeck, “Vision of a World Renewed,” in *The Future of Roman Catholic Theology: Vatican Two—Catalyst for Change* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 4.

21 Second Vatican Council, *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, no. 44.

22 Leo J. O’Donovan, “Was Vatican II Evolutionary? A Note on Conciliar Language,” *Theological Studies* 36, no. 3 (September 1975): 497.

23 O’Donovan, “Was Vatican II Evolutionary?” 495.

theology exerted “a certain influence, at least indirect and diffuse on some orientations of the Council.”<sup>24</sup> Otto Spülbeck recalls four occasions on which the Council fathers, while deliberating on *Gaudium et spes*, discussed de Chardin’s theology, and regards chapter three of that pastoral constitution as particularly informed by de Chardin’s view that all of creation will ultimately say “Yes” to the divine invitation.<sup>25</sup> These undertones of de Chardin are reminiscent of Loisy’s emphasis on the evolving nature of the Tradition.

## Historical Consciousness and the Development of Doctrine

George Lindbeck, a Lutheran observer at the Council, believes that the Council recognized the riches of a 2,000-year-old evolving tradition.<sup>26</sup> The Council moved beyond those strands of the tradition that had reacted at the Council of Trent to the Reformation, and in the Modernist crisis to modernity. Lindbeck recalls, “The renewers argued circles around the traditionalists. They unmasked their opponents as mistaking the post-Tridentine developments, not least the Marian and papal advances of the nineteenth century, for the total Catholic heritage.”<sup>27</sup>

A commitment to the entirety of Church teaching, beyond the emphases of Trent and Vatican I, is evident in the theological endeavor known as *ressourcement*. The Council welcomed among its *periti* theologians who advocated a return to the scriptural and Patristic sources of theology that has been all but obscured by scholasticism. During the decade before the Council, *ressourcement* theologians, including John Courtney Murray, Edward Schillebeeckx, Henri de Lubac, and Karl Rahner, had been held in suspicion by the magisterium while endeavoring to recover the riches of Christian antiquity. Now, in the environs of St. Peter’s Basilica, they brushed shoulders with their former detractors. As James Carroll remarks, “Formally censored and censured scholars were all at once the darlings of Catholic thought.”<sup>28</sup> Still, the return to early sources would pose a significant challenge to the Neo-Scholasticism that had all but eclipsed other perspectives within the Tradition.

The Council would revive ancient practices and ways of thinking as much, if not more, than it inaugurated new ones. As Daniel Donovan observes, “Although Vatican Two has seemed to many people to represent something new, in many ways what it said . . . was quite traditional. It represented a return to values and insights that in many cases had been widely held in the early Church.”<sup>29</sup> The Council was more friend than foe to ancient Christianity.

Lindbeck regards the Council’s historical consciousness as distinguishing it from previous councils. The author argues that the Council adopted a new view of the world, seeing the Church and the broader world as works in progress, evolving towards the fulfillment in the Kingdom of God.<sup>30</sup> Lindbeck describes this perspective as “realized futuristic eschatology.”<sup>31</sup> By this term, the author refers to an evolutionary view of the Church and the world, in which the Kingdom of God is a reality experienced as “already” and as “not yet,” a tension to which Walter Kasper, Teilhard de Chardin, Karl Rahner, and JB Metz have been attentive.<sup>32</sup> Lindbeck argues that this perspective is closer to the Hebraic perspective held by many of the biblical authors than to more static views of the world

24 Henri de Lubac, *Athéisme et sens de l’homme: Une double requête de ‘Gaudium et spes’* (Paris, 1968), 130. Quoted in O’Donovan, 495.

25 Otto Spülbeck, “Teilhard de Chardin und die Pastoralkonstitution,” in *Die Autorität der Freiheit* 3, ed. Johann Christoph Hampe (Munich, 1967), 86-97 at 86-87. Cf. Spülbeck’s essay ‘Fortschrittsglaube und Evolution’ in *Der Fortschrittsglaube—Sinn und Gefahren*, edited by Ulrich Schöndorfer (Graz, 1965), 85-107. Giovanni Caprile notes seven references to Teilhard in the Council aula: *Il Concilio Vaticano II* 4 (Rome, 1966), 257, 263, 265, 278; (Rome, 1966), 76, 105, 153. Quoted in O’Donovan, 494.

26 George Lindbeck, “How a Lutheran Saw It: a Different Kind of Reformation,” *Commonweal* 129, no.20 (November 22, 2002): 16.

27 Lindbeck, “How a Lutheran Saw It,” 16.

28 James Carroll, *Practicing Catholic* (New York: Houghton Miffler Harcourt, 2009), 163.

29 Daniel Donovan, *Distinctly Catholic: An Exploration of Catholic Identity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1997), 25.

30 Lindbeck, “Vision of a World Renewed,” 4. Cf. Walter Kasper, *Dogma unter dem Wort Gottes* (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald, 1965), 36 quoted in Francis Sullivan, *Creative Fidelity: Weighing and Interpreting Documents of the Magisterium* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 37.

31 Kasper, *Dogma unter dem Wort Gottes*, 9.

32 Lindbeck, “Vision of a World Renewed,” 4. Cf. Walter Kasper, *Dogma unter dem Wort Gottes*, 36 quoted in Sullivan, *Creative Fidelity*, 37.

held by Hellenistic perspectives.<sup>33</sup> Insofar as it reflects the “already,” a realized futuristic eschatology is conducive to an understanding of doctrine as authoritative. Insofar as it reflects the “not yet,” a realized futuristic eschatology is conducive to an understanding of doctrine as provisional, reflecting the “not yet” status of a pilgrim Church. Hence, realized eschatology can suggest an understanding of doctrinal formulae as provisionally, rather than eternally, authoritative.

### ***Mysterium Ecclesiae: Affirming the Need for Change in Doctrinal Formulae***

In 1973, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith issued a declaration, *In Defense of the Catholic Doctrines of the Church against Certain Errors of the Present Day (Mysterium ecclesiae)*.<sup>34</sup> The declaration candidly admits “during her earthly pilgrimage the Church, embracing sinners in her bosom, is at the same time holy and always in need of being purified.”<sup>35</sup> A Church that is always in need of being purified is a Church that had better be open to the possibility of change.

Reflecting the position endorsed by Pope John XXIII, *Mysterium ecclesiae* recognizes that the effectiveness of any doctrinal formulation is relative to its context:

. . .the dogmatic *formulas* of the Church’s Magisterium were from the beginning suitable for communicating revealed truth, and that as they are they remain forever suitable for communicating this truth to those who interpret them correctly. It does not however follow that every one of these formulas has always been or will always be so to the same extent.<sup>36</sup>

The declaration proceeds to approve a role for theologians in the exegesis and formulation of doctrine at the service of the teaching office. “For this reason theologians seek to define exactly the intention of teaching proper to the various formulas, and in carrying out this work they are of considerable assistance to the living Magisterium of the Church, to which they remain subordinated.”<sup>37</sup> *Mysterium ecclesiae* notes that while some ancient doctrinal formulae remain effective, others need to be replaced by new ones that present the same meaning.

For this reason also it often happens that ancient dogmatic formulas and others closely connected with them remain living and fruitful in the habitual usage of the Church, but with suitable expository and explanatory additions that maintain and clarify their original meaning. In addition, it has sometimes happened that in this habitual usage of the Church certain of these formulas gave way to new expressions which, proposed and approved by the Sacred Magisterium, presented more clearly or more completely the same meaning.<sup>38</sup>

The essential meaning of the formulae remains ever-true, however; the Church’s expression of the meaning may be more developed so as to be clearer and more complete.<sup>39</sup> The formulae can develop so as to communicate more clearly in the idiom of the age, and more completely so as to take account of new insights into the original deposit of faith.<sup>40</sup> Hence, in *Mysterium ecclesiae*, the case for the development of doctrinal formulations is vindicated. As Francis Sullivan observes, “This statement of the CDF provides official clarification of the sense in which dogmatic

33 Lindbeck, “Vision of a World Renewed,” 9.

34 The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Mysterium ecclesiae* (Vatican: The Holy See, 1973), [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19730705\\_mysterium-ecclesiae\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19730705_mysterium-ecclesiae_en.html).

35 *Mysterium ecclesiae*, no. 6.

36 *Mysterium ecclesiae*, no. 5.

37 *Mysterium ecclesiae*, no. 5.

38 *Mysterium ecclesiae*, no. 5.

39 *Mysterium ecclesiae*, no. 5.

40 *Mysterium ecclesiae*, no. 5.

statements can be said to be 'irreformable.' Irreformability is predicated of their meaning . . . On the other hand, the fact that this meaning can be expressed with greater clarity or more developed shows that irreformability is not predicated of dogmatic formulas as such."<sup>41</sup>

Cautioning against the equation of doctrinal formulations with revelation itself, Avery Dulles argues that a model of "revelation as doctrine" could give rise to the misunderstanding that doctrine comes directly from God.<sup>42</sup> Also, Dulles notes that, if taken in isolation, a model of revelation as doctrine "forgets God's presence in one's own life and experience" and excludes "a faith that probes and questions."<sup>43</sup> Karl Rahner observes that even dogmatic formulations can become intertwined with non-binding assertions and assumptions. "In the transmission and expression of dogmas properly speaking there may be inseparably mingled ideas, interpretations etc., which are not part of the binding content of the article of faith."<sup>44</sup>

## The Challenge of Developing Discipline

Vatican II's *Decree on Ecumenism* acknowledges that not all doctrines are equally foundational to the Christian faith. "When comparing doctrines with one another . . . there exists a 'hierarchy' of truths, since they vary in their relation to the fundamental Christian faith."<sup>45</sup>

In terms of the hierarchy of truths, the doctrinal issues discussed at the Synod on the Family and the post-synod discussion on ordaining women to the permanent diaconate are classifiable as discipline, that is, *disciplina morum* in the language of the Council of Trent.<sup>46</sup> While the magisterium does not provide any list exhaustively distinguishing dogmas, discipline, or other categories of teaching, Francis Sullivan describes *disciplina morum* as moral norms, mores, and practices for various facets of life.<sup>47</sup>

Although it may seem counterintuitive, it may be the case that the Church experiences greater difficulty in developing its teachings in the category of discipline than it does in developing its understanding of dogma. Although dogma comprises doctrines that are more central to what the Church believes, in itself dogma does not require any change in practices. In a case in point, Rahner playfully suggests that if the media were to report that a fourth person of the Trinity had been discovered, it would be perceived by many Christians as less noteworthy than a Vatican pronouncement on some sexual matter.<sup>48</sup> The underlying point is borne out when Andrew Greeley suggests that the teachings of the encyclical *Humanae vitae* on reproductive matters made a greater impact on married Catholics than had the entire proceedings of the Council. "The encyclical, *Humanae vitae*, issued in the summer of 1968, is the most important event of the last twenty-five years of Catholic history . . . Unlike the changes of the Vatican Council, which had only marginal impact on the lives of the Catholic laity, the encyclical endeavored to reach into the bedroom of every Catholic married couple in the world."<sup>49</sup> So while dogma is more foundational to the faith, it is at the level of discipline that change is more obvious and more contentious in the modern Church.

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41 Sullivan, *Creative Fidelity*, 35.

42 Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (New York: Orbis, 1992), 45-46.

43 Dulles, *Models of Revelation*, 115.

44 Karl Rahner, "Yesterday's History of Dogma and Theology for Tomorrow," *Theological Investigations* 18, trans. Edward Quinn (New York: Crossroads, 1983), 11-12.

45 The Second Vatican Council, *The Decree on Ecumenism (Unitatis Redintegratio)* (1964), no. 11. Available at [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_decree\\_19641121\\_unitatis-redintegratio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html).

46 Francis Sullivan, *Magisterium: Teaching Authority in the Catholic Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 128.

47 Sullivan, *Magisterium*, 128.

48 Karl Rahner, *The Trinity* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), 9-21.

49 Andrew Greeley, *The Catholic Myth: The Behavior and Beliefs of American Catholics* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990), 91.

When the Church significantly develops its understanding in relation to matters as foundational as the manner in which God relates to the world, and with issues involving salvation, it can be the case that the verbiage of the doctrinal formulae remains unchanged but reinterpreted by the Church. In a case in point, when Catholic Christians today recite the Nicene Creed at Mass, they profess belief in “God the Father, the Almighty, Creator of heaven and of earth.” If they profess the creed in Latin, then they may be uttering the same words that a tenth-century Christian would have uttered.

In a further example, it could be argued that the Church still teaches that *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* - Outside the Church, No Salvation. However, it is clear from Vatican II’s *Declaration on The Church’s Relations with the Non-Christian Religions* that this should not be taken to mean that baptism with water and initiation into full communion is absolutely required for salvation (not that such a crass interpretation was ever a fair representation of the Church’s position). Still, Vatican II challenged a prevailing understanding of this dictum, *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus*, so that it must now be understood in relation to an inclusive model of the Church as the People of God with whom non-Catholics can be in a degree of communion. Understood in this way, the dictum points to the communal nature of salvation and challenges individualistic soteriologies. Salvation always reflects our relationship with the People of God, that is, Christ’s Mystical Body in our time and place.

Enormous potential for equivocation and ambiguity exists when foundational beliefs undergo development that is nothing short of transformative, yet the relevant doctrinal formulae are not rephrased. However, with regard to discipline, precisely because it is concerned with concrete application, there is generally less room for equivocation and ambiguity. On the face of it, either the Church begins to allow divorced and civilly remarried Catholics to receive communion or it doesn’t. However, as we shall see, even in relation to the disciplinary matters discussed at the Synod, Pope Francis seems to be possessed of a penchant for ambiguity, what John Keats called “Negative Capabilities,” viewing ambiguity as potentially creative rather than as necessarily problematic.<sup>50</sup>

### Personal Conscience and the Development of Doctrine

In his post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis does not directly define any doctrinal change in relation to the admission of divorced and civilly remarried persons to communion. The Holy Father does, however, exhort the magisterium to leave room for conscientious discernment.

We have long thought that simply by stressing doctrinal, bioethical and moral issues, without encouraging openness to grace, we were providing sufficient support to families, strengthening the marriage bond and giving meaning to marital life. We find it difficult to present marriage more as a dynamic path to personal development and fulfillment than as a lifelong burden. We also find it hard to make room for the consciences of the faithful, who very often respond as best they can to the Gospel amid their limitations, and are capable of carrying out their own discernment in complex situations.<sup>51</sup>

Francis’s remarks reflect the Church’s teaching that a person is always obliged to follow the dictates of their conscience as the voice of God resounding within their depths.<sup>52</sup> The Pontiff’s remark in this regard might be construed as encouraging an approach to doctrinal development that reduces the tension between the Church’s teaching on the primacy of personal conscience and its teachings on specific issues, by incorporating more room for

50 John Keats, to Benjamin Bailey, London 1817 available at <http://www.john-keats.com/briefe/221117.htm>.

51 Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20160319\\_amoris-laetitia.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20160319_amoris-laetitia.html).

52 The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Revised in Accordance with the Official Latin Text Promulgated by Pope John Paul II* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), nos. 1800, 2851, 2852, <http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/INDEX.HTM>.

discernment into future formulations. In lamenting that the magisterium has not encouraged an openness to grace, Francis's remarks reflect the sacramental vision of the universe in which grace infuses the human person and their decision-making.

Related to the matter of personal conscience, it might be argued that a form of collective conscience is evident in what Cardinal Newman called the *sensus fidelium*, that is, the manner in which the faithful as a body accept or reject doctrinal propositions.<sup>53</sup> Clearly, the *sensus fidelium* is not static as can be seen historically in the faithful's growing disdain for slavery, or indeed, one might argue, its reception of *Humanae vitae's* reaffirmation of the ban on artificial birth control. In 2014, the International Theological Commission acknowledged the importance of the *sensus fidei* in the history of the Church and remarked that

what is less well known, and generally receives less attention, is the role played by the laity with regard to the development of the moral teaching of the Church. It is therefore important to reflect also on the function played by the laity in discerning the Christian understanding of appropriate human behavior in accordance with the Gospel.<sup>54</sup>

This raises the question of the status afforded to lay voices in the context of a synod and pre-synod consultations relative to input by the hierarchy. Granted, neither personal conscience nor the general consensus of the faithful should operate in a vacuum, and so we turn to the question of interpreting scripture and the broader Tradition.

### The Role of Exegesis

It is crucial that disputes regarding doctrine are informed by a robust exegesis of scripture and of the wider Tradition so that anachronistic assumptions are not glibly accepted so as to defend the status quo. For example, there exists a strand of scholarship that calls into question the association of the sin of Sodom with homosexuality as opposed to abuse of the stranger.<sup>55</sup> The Pontifical Biblical Commission has recognized the role of exegesis in the development of doctrine, in 1964 urging biblical scholars to freely exercise the best methods at their disposal:

There are still many things, and of the greatest importance, in the discussion and explanation of which the Catholic exegete can and must freely exercise his skill and genius, so that each may contribute his part to the advantage of all, to the continued progress of sacred doctrine. . .<sup>56</sup>

A sacramental model of the universe suggests that processes of communication, redaction, editing, translation, and interpretation are both graced and fallen, inherently good, yet fallible. Such a perspective on creation compels us to seriously consider exegetical insights that reflect broad (since there is hardly ever unanimous) consensus among biblical scholars.

A historical-critical approach is applicable not only to the scriptural foundations of doctrine but to the Tradition more broadly. Just as the Bible did not, as Martyn Percy remarks, arrive "by fax from heaven," neither did other

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53 John Henry Newman, *On Consulting the Faithful in Matters of Doctrine*, July 1859, available at <https://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/newman-faithful.asp>.

54 The International Theological Commission, *Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church* (2014), no. 73, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti\\_documents/rc\\_cti\\_20140610\\_sensus-fidei\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_cti_20140610_sensus-fidei_en.html).

55 Mark Jordan, *The Invention of Sodomy in Christian Theology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997); Michael Carden, *Sodomy: A History of a Christian Biblical Myth* (London: Routledge, 2004).

56 The Pontifical Biblical Commission, *Sancta Mater Ecclesia; Instruction on the Historicity of the Gospels*. Latin text is at Pontificia Commissio Biblica, *De Historica Evangeliorum Veritate*, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/pcb\\_documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19640421\\_verita-vangeli\\_lt.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/pcb_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19640421_verita-vangeli_lt.html). An English translation by Joseph A. Fitzmyer, SJ, *Theological Studies* 25 (1964): 402-408, is available here: [https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research\\_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/catholic/pcb\\_gospels.htm](https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/research_sites/cjl/texts/cjrelations/resources/documents/catholic/pcb_gospels.htm).

facets of the Tradition, including doctrinal formulae.<sup>57</sup> Congar has compellingly illustrated the evolving nature of the Catholic Tradition as it came to define various dogmas.<sup>58</sup> Herbert McCabe proposes that Tradition may be defined in terms of a continuous engagement with questions rather than continuity in terms of particular answers. McCabe suggests “. . . we do not just have to know what people said in the past, but we have to be in continuity with their wrestling and with their problems.”<sup>59</sup> Doctrinal continuity may lie in an ongoing grappling with mystery rather than in imagining that our forebears had achieved a static understanding of the faith that we are obliged to preserve.

## Conclusion

This article extends the Catholic vision of a sacramental universe to the question of the development of doctrine. If we truly believe that creation is infused with grace, then reason, experience, and process of communication, interpretation and development, as part of creation, are infused with potential to mediate the divine.

The Second Vatican Council mandated a dialogical stance on the part of the Church in relation to the modern world. As such, it recognizes the capacity of progress in the various sciences, and the perspective of modern people more generally to serve as conduits of truth and of grace.

In closing, it might be observed that the modes of the Risen Christ's presence in the Mass liturgically signify the conversation between various manifestations of grace that can contribute to the development of doctrine. The Church teaches that Christ becomes present in a unique way in the Eucharistic elements, and that Christ is present in the scriptures.<sup>60</sup> It also teaches that Christ is present in the person of the presider and in the assembly.<sup>61</sup> In the Mass, therefore, the Word of God addresses the assembly not a profane audience but as the Mystical Body of the Risen Christ present in a particular time and place. In life as in the Mass, do not scripture and Tradition address the Mystical Body of Christ that includes lay and ordained members who have theological, exegetical, and experiential insights to offer? Is not the development of doctrine a graced dialogue between the Word of God and the People of God?

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57 Martyn Percy, quoted by Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 231 Cf. Martyn Percy, *Thirty Nine New Articles: An Anglican Landscape of Faith* (London: Canterbury Press, 2013), 20.

58 Yves Congar, *The Meaning of Tradition* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1965), 16, 55.

59 Herbert McCabe, *God Still Matters* (London: Continuum, 2002), 206. Quoted in Mary McCaughey, “Reason, Reality, and the Re-personalization of Being: A Response to Taylor’s Characterization of the ‘Impersonal Order,’” *Religion, Education, and the Arts* 7(2011), <http://rea.materdei.ie/media/Issue%207/REA%20Issue%207%20-%20Mc%20Caughey.pdf>.

60 Second Vatican Council, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (1963), no. 7, [http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist\\_councils/ii\\_vatican\\_council/documents/vat-ii\\_const\\_19631204\\_sacrosanctum-concilium\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html)

61 Second Vatican Council, *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (Vatican: 1963), no. 7.

# The Theme of Communion in *Laudato Si'* and Its Implications for Ecclesiology

by Robin Ryan, CP

This essay explores the theme of communion in *Laudato Si'* and in other writings and addresses of Pope Francis. I wish to discern the connection between Francis's appeal to this theme in his ecological theology and his employment of it in his descriptions of the Church. I undertake this exploration in light of the recent critique of communion ecclesiology proffered by some theologians, and I ask whether Francis's ecclesiology meets the concerns of this critique.

## Communion in *Laudato Si'*

Pope Francis threads the theme of communion and its theological "cousin" solidarity throughout *Laudato Si'*. In the second chapter of the encyclical (titled "The Gospel of Creation") he develops a theological anthropology that intrinsically links the human person with other persons and with the rest of creation. Commenting on the Priestly narrative of creation in Genesis 1, Francis quotes a passage from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* that

describes the human person as a being who is "capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself [herself] and entering into communion with other persons" (LS 65; CCC 357). The capacity for communion is essential to what it means to be human. The pope interprets the story of Cain and Abel—in which Cain is "cursed from the ground" (Gen 4:9-11)—to teach that disregard for the well-being of one's neighbor ruins one's relationship with self, others, God, and the earth. He concludes that these ancient stories in Genesis "bear witness to a conviction which we today share, that everything is interconnected, and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others" (LS 70). This vision of the interconnection of all of the dimensions of creation pervades the encyclical.

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The section on "universal communion"—also in the encyclical's second chapter—further explores this reality of interconnection. Francis affirms that "as part of the universe, called into being by one Father, all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family, a sublime communion which fills us with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect" (LS 89). He immediately extends this communion among members of the human family to the rest of creation by quoting a statement that he made in *Evangelii Gaudium*: "God has joined us so closely to the world around us that we can feel the desertification of the soil almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement" (LS 89; EG 215). Further along in this same section, the pope underlines the inextricable relationship between care for our sisters and brothers and care for the natural

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world. He insists that “[a] sense of deep communion with the rest of nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings” (LS 91). Conversely, he says that “our indifference or cruelty towards fellow creatures of this world sooner or later affects the treatment we mete out to other human beings” (LS 92). He concludes this section of the encyclical by reprising this principle of the interconnection of all creatures: “Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in a bond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth” (LS 92).

Francis repeatedly reiterates this principle of communion in the shadows of two destructive vices that he believes plague the lives of contemporary people: self-absorption and indifference. A pervasive attitude of individualism (which Francis links closely with self-absorption) ultimately demeans us. The pope asserts that “[o]ur openness to others, each of whom is a ‘thou’ capable of knowing, loving and entering into dialogue, remains the source of our nobility as human persons” (LS 119). Francis argues that, if we truly wish to care for our sisters and brothers and for the natural environment, individualism must be overcome by disinterested concern for others and “the rejection of every form of self-centeredness and self-absorption” (LS 208). The antidote to self-absorption is solidarity, which is closely linked with communion in all of the writings of Francis. The common good of society entails “a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters” (LS 158). This includes an intergenerational solidarity that is committed to sustainable development (LS 159). Those involved in environmental education must help people “to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care” (LS 210).

Pope Francis waits until the concluding section of his encyclical to ground his emphasis on communion in Christian belief in the Trinity. Perhaps he reserves discussion of this specifically Christian doctrine to the end because he is addressing the encyclical to a wider audience. In the introduction, he says, “We need a conversation that includes everyone” (LS 14). In his reflections on the Trinity, Francis depicts the Father as the ultimate source of everything, the Son as the reflection of the Father through whom all things were created, and the Spirit as the infinite bond of love who is intimately present at the very heart of the universe (LS 238). Francis draws on the theological-mystical perspective of Bonaventure in speaking of the “specifically Trinitarian structure” of all creatures (LS 239). Rooted in the classical Trinitarian theology of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, he affirms that the divine Persons are subsistent relations. Because the Trinity is the “divine model” for the created world, the world is “a web of relationships” (LS 240). As a partaker of this web of relationships, the human person “grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures” (LS 240). In this section of the encyclical, readers can perceive the Trinitarian foundations of Francis’s repeated call to create a “culture of encounter.”

It may be helpful to note here that the Orthodox bishop and theologian John Zizioulas (Metropolitan John of Pergamon) was one of the presenters of *Laudato Si’* when the encyclical was made public, representing Patriarch Bartholomew. Though it is not clear to what extent Zizioulas’s well-known theology of communion has influenced Pope Francis, positing some influence seems plausible.<sup>1</sup> Gerard O’Connell, Vatican reporter for *America* magazine, notes that Pope Francis took a first draft of the encyclical and worked on it with some theologians. O’Connell reports, “He did not name any of the theologians that he had consulted, but it is now clear that Metropolitan John

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<sup>1</sup> Zizioulas is not cited in the notes of the encyclical, though Patriarch Bartholomew receives several references in the introductory section of the letter. For a brief discussion of the thought of Zizioulas in relationship to soteriology see Ryan, *Jesus and Salvation: Soundings in the Christian Tradition and Contemporary Theology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 199-201. Susan Wood, an expert in communion ecclesiology, discusses the work of Zizioulas and fellow Orthodox theologian Nicholas Afanasiev in her essay “Liturgical Ecclesiology” in *A Church with Open Doors: Catholic Ecclesiology for the Third Millennium*, ed. Richard Gaillardetz and Edward Hahnenberg (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 138-158, at 139-142.

was one of them.”<sup>2</sup> In his comments on *Laudato Si’*, Zizioulas adduced a theme he had developed earlier in his writing on ecology—the human person as the “priest” of creation. He observed that in the eucharist the church offers to God the material world in the form of bread and wine. As these gifts are lifted up to the Creator, “human beings instead of proprietors of creation act as its *priests*, who lift it up to the holiness of divine life.”<sup>3</sup> In an earlier essay on ecology, Zizioulas wrote that the human person is the link between God and creation. Human beings are called to bring nature into communion with God and, in so doing, to sanctify it.<sup>4</sup>

In his theology of communion, Zizioulas argues that there is an intrinsic connection between being, person, and communion. What it means to be a (divine or human) person is inextricably linked with communion. The processions of the divine Persons within the Trinity—the begetting of the Son and the bringing forth of the Spirit—are expressive of “the ecstatic character of God” whose being “is identical with an act of communion.”<sup>5</sup> Zizioulas argues that without the concept of communion it would not be possible to speak of God: God is a personal communion of life and love.<sup>6</sup> The Triune God is the revelation of true personhood because in God being and communion coincide; this is what authentic personhood entails. For Zizioulas, “there is no true being without communion” and true being is personal.<sup>7</sup> Adducing the patristic conception of salvation as divinization, Zizioulas asserts that divinization means a participation in God’s personal existence: “The goal of salvation is that the personal life which is realized in God should also be realized on the level of human existence.”<sup>8</sup> The Holy Spirit, who is the Giver of life, “opens up our existence to become relational.”<sup>9</sup> On the human level, true being comes from a person “who freely affirms his [her] being, his [her] identity, by means of an event of communion with other persons.”<sup>10</sup> In the eucharist, Christians celebrate and enact the reality of salvation as communion with God and others.

### The Theme of Communion in Other Writings of Pope Francis

The theme of communion and solidarity permeates Francis’s other writings and his various addresses. In pursuing this theme, Francis is building on the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and of the popes who preceded him. At the very beginning of *Lumen Gentium*, Vatican II describes the church as “in the nature of a sacrament, a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men and women” (LG 1). This same constitution affirms that God has willed to make human beings holy “not as individuals without any bond or link between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge him and serve him in holiness.” Ultimately, holiness is a communal affair. The Church, then, has been established by Christ as “a communion of life, love and truth” (LG 9). *Gaudium et Spes* teaches that the risen Christ, through the gifts of the Spirit, established a new communion among the members of his body, a bond that gives rise to mutual service and solidarity (GS 32).

The Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops concluded that an ecclesiology of communion was the foundation for Vatican II’s vision of the church. The Synod said that “the ecclesiology of communion (*koinōnia*) is the central and fundamental idea of the council’s documents.”<sup>11</sup> The synod report spoke of baptism as the door

2 Gerard O’Connell, “High Level Launch for Pope’s Encyclical, in the Vatican, on June 18,” *America* online, June 10, 2015. See <http://americamagazine.org/content/dispatches/high-level-launch-popes-encyclical-vatican-june-18>.

3 John D. Zizioulas (Metropolitan John of Pergamon), “Pope Francis’ Encyclical *Laudato Si’*: A Comment,” [http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/06/18/metropolitan\\_john\\_zizioulas\\_laudo\\_si\\_give\\_orthodox\\_grea/1152356](http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2015/06/18/metropolitan_john_zizioulas_laudo_si_give_orthodox_grea/1152356).

4 John D. Zizioulas, “Priest of Creation,” in *Environmental Stewardship: Critical Perspectives—Past and Present*, ed. R. J. Berry (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 273–290 (emphasis author’s).

5 John D. Zizioulas, *Being as Communion: Studies in Personhood and the Church* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1985), 44.

6 Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 17.

7 Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 18.

8 Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 18.

9 Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 112.

10 Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*, 18.

11 Final Report of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops, *Origins* 15, no. 27 (December 19, 1985), 448.

and foundation of communion in the church, and it said that the communion that is experienced in the celebration of the eucharist signifies and builds up the communion of the faithful in the body of Christ. This ecclesiological vision is evident in the teaching of *Lumen Gentium* on the local church (especially LG 23 and 26). The universal church is a communion of local churches. Walter Kasper, whose thought has influenced Francis, served as the theological secretary for the 1985 synod. In his comprehensive work on ecclesiology he observes that through his work for the synod he “came to the conclusion that *communio*-ecclesiology was the central concern and the main motif of the conciliar ecclesiology.” He goes on to say, “It has become a fundamental law for me ever since.”<sup>12</sup>

Pope John Paul II connected communion and mission in his teaching on the lay faithful and on priestly formation, describing the church as a communion-in-mission (*Christifideles Laici* 32; *Pastores Dabo Vobis* 12). This ecclesiology of communion is also manifest in a well-known observation John Paul II made in his letter on the new millennium: “To make the church the home and school of communion: that is the challenge facing us in the new millennium.”<sup>13</sup>

In his in-depth study of a number of different *communio* ecclesiologies, Dennis Doyle enumerates four elements that these ecclesiologies have in common.<sup>14</sup> First, this ecclesiology involves a retrieval of a vision of church that was prevalent in the first millennium, prior to the divisions among Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Christians. Second, communion ecclesiology stresses the element of spiritual fellowship, or communion, between human beings and God, in contrast to visions of church that focus on its legal and institutional dimensions. This does not mean, however, that envisioning the church as communion leaves no room for structures; there must be some structures of communion. Third, this conception of church accentuates the visible unity of believers as symbolically realized through participation in the eucharist. It is thus sometimes called a “eucharistic ecclesiology.” And fourth, communion ecclesiology “promotes a dynamic interplay between unity and diversity in the Church, between the Church universal and the local churches.”<sup>15</sup> The most appropriate way to conceive of this “dynamic interplay” between the universal and the local became a well-publicized source of conflict between Walter Kasper and Joseph Ratzinger, each of whom was operating out of an ecclesiology of communion.<sup>16</sup>

Francis has developed this theme of communion from the beginning of his pontificate, and he has connected it intrinsically with the mission of the church. For Francis, “communion” is almost more of a verb than a noun. Communion is something that we must practice—something we must do. We do that especially by entering into solidarity with others, far and near, including those who live on the fringes of our society and of the world. In a 2013 General Audience, Francis offered the following observation: “It is necessary to seek to build communion, to teach communion, to get the better of misunderstandings and divisions, starting with the family, with ecclesial reality, in ecumenical dialogue too. Our world needs unity; this is an age in which we all need unity. We need reconciliation and communion, and the Church is the home of communion.”<sup>17</sup> In a homily that Francis gave to the bishops, priests, religious, and seminarians gathered for the World Youth Day celebration in Rio de Janeiro, he said: “Be servants of communion and the culture of encounter! I would like you to be almost obsessed about this.

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12 Walter Kasper, *The Catholic Church: Nature, Reality and Mission*, trans. Thomas Hoebel (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 21.

13 John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 43.

14 Dennis Doyle, *Communio Ecclesiology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), 13.

15 Doyle, *Communio Ecclesiology*, 13.

16 See Joseph Ratzinger, “Universality and Catholicity,” in *On the Way to Jesus Christ*, trans. Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 131-141; Walter Kasper, “The Universal Church and the Local Church: A Friendly Rejoinder,” in *Leadership in the Church: How Traditional Roles Can Serve the Christian Community Today*, trans. Brian McNeil (New York: Crossroad, 2003), 158-175.

17 Pope Francis, General Audience, November 25, 2013, in *The Church of Mercy: A Vision for the Church* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2014), 28.

Be so without being presumptuous, imposing ‘our truth,’ but rather be guided by the humble yet joyful certainty of those who have been found, touched, and transformed by the Truth who is Christ, ever to be proclaimed.”<sup>18</sup>

Francis emphasizes that the communion that believers are called to foster in the church and the wider world entails a unity that encompasses a reconciled diversity. It is the presence and action of the Holy Spirit that creates this communion. Likening the Spirit to the “maestro” of an orchestra, he envisions the Spirit as creating a magnificent harmony amidst difference. Uniformity, he insists, kills life, while the communion created by the Spirit respects difference and in so doing breathes life into the ecclesial community. In the words of Francis, “The life of the Church is variety; and when we want to impose this uniformity on everyone, we kill the gifts of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>19</sup>

In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Francis appeals to the reality of communion on both the personal and ecclesial levels. In the personal sphere, the summons to realize our call to communion with others serves as the antidote to individualism. He asserts that through friendship with God “we are liberated from our narrowness and self-absorption” (EG 8). He speaks of “the individualism of our postmodern and globalized era,” which leads to “a lifestyle which weakens the development and stability of personal relationships.” The ministry of the church should “bring out more clearly the fact that our relationship with the Father demands and encourages a communion which heals, promotes and reinforces interpersonal bonds” (EG 67). Francis thinks that the world is “wounded by a widespread individualism which divides human beings,” and so he challenges Christians in communities throughout the world “to offer a radiant and attractive witness of fraternal communion” (EG 99). At the end of the section of the exhortation on the economy and the distribution of income, the pope seeks to assure those who may be offended by his teaching that he speaks to them with the best of intentions. He says, “I am interested only in helping those who are in thrall to an individualistic, indifferent and self-centered mentality to be freed from those unworthy chains and to attain a way of loving and thinking which is more humane, noble and fruitful, and which will bring dignity to their presence on this earth” (LG 208). For Francis the Christian understanding of the human person as a being who is called to build communion with others represents a prophetic word in the face of the individualistic mindset which is pervasive in the contemporary world.

On the ecclesial level, Francis quotes John Paul’s observation in *Christifideles Laici* that “communion and mission are profoundly interconnected” (EG 23; CL 32). He then addresses local, or particular, churches and encourages bishops to foster “a dynamic, open and missionary communion” in their diocesan churches (EG 31). Francis does not elaborate on the meaning of the phrase “missionary communion,” though the context suggests a united commitment to evangelization that utilizes the gifts of all believers and includes “pastoral dialogue” among all the members of the local church. As in the writings of John Paul II, it appears that Francis thinks that the communion which the church is impels to mission, and that the goal of mission is the building of communion within the church and in the wider world.

### Recent Critiques of *Communio* Ecclesiology

In recent theological literature, there has been some critique leveled at ecclesiologies of communion. It appears to me that this critique encompasses at least two dimensions. First, it is argued that *communio* ecclesiology after Vatican II, especially as presented in statements of the magisterium, became focused on *hierarchical* commu-

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18 Pope Francis, Homily, World Youth Day, Mass with Bishops, Priests, Religious, and Seminarians, July 27, 2013, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco\\_20130727\\_gmg-omelia-rio-clero.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130727_gmg-omelia-rio-clero.html).

19 Pope Francis, General Audience, October 9, 2013, *The Church of Mercy*, 35.

nion—unity with the hierarchy of the church in faith and life.<sup>20</sup> Particularly during the pontificates of John Paul II and Benedict XVI, critics suggest that this focus on hierarchical communion obscured and minimized Vatican II's teaching on the church as the people of God. Second, the argument is also made that *communio* ecclesiology tends to become so concerned with the inner life of the church (and thus self-absorbed in its own way) that it neglects mission. It forgets that the church is missionary in its very nature. I will briefly examine these critiques and explore whether they apply to the ecclesiological vision articulated by Pope Francis.

In the decades after Vatican II, there has sometimes been a conflict between those who focused on the council's view of the church as the people of God and others who espoused communion ecclesiology, which usually highlighted the biblical image of the Body of Christ. Doyle notes that, among the communion ecclesiologists whom he studied, some "have explicitly stated that the Mystical Body of Christ image should have priority over what they call the more 'sociological' People of God." He lists Henri de Lubac, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Joseph Ratzinger, and John Paul II as among this group.<sup>21</sup> In a recent essay that includes a strong critique of *communio*-ecclesiology, Australian theologian Neil Ormerod cites Doyle's observation about theologians who have downplayed the notion of the church as the people of God.<sup>22</sup> Ormerod suggests that the tendency to dismiss the people-of-God concept as "sociological" leads to an ecclesiology that "tends to reinforce the status quo, and fails to give adequate accounts of power and social change." These *communio* ecclesiologies "tend to paper over tensions and conflicts, and when they arise, those who 'cause' them can be accused of 'breaking *communio*' with the church at large." As an example of this dynamic, Ormerod recalls Rome's removal of the Australian bishop William Morris from the office of bishop for statements he made about married and women clergy.<sup>23</sup>

Even Walter Kasper, who devotes a substantial section of his volume on ecclesiology to the concept of the church as the people of God, is very careful to distinguish a "theological" understanding of this concept from a "sociological" rendering of it. In his discussion of the biblical concept of the people of God, Kasper emphasizes that the Bible "does not use the sociological-national term *dēmos*, which is found in language regarding democracy."<sup>24</sup> Rather the biblical word is "the salvation-historical term *laos* in the sense of the people chosen by God and set apart from all other nations, or more precisely from the heathen nations (*ethnoi*; [sic])."<sup>25</sup> Kasper refers to sociological and political misconstruals of the concept of the people of God in the history of the church, such as that of Eusebius of Caesarea, who identified God's people with the Constantinian empire. In his interpretation of the church as the people of God, Kasper excludes "a democratic understanding which does not want to understand the term 'people' in the biblical sense of *laos* but in the profane sense of *dēmos*, and which tries to deduce from that some kind of democratization of the Church."<sup>26</sup>

The argument that communion ecclesiology minimizes mission is vigorously proffered by Ormerod and hinted at in a more nuanced way by Stephen Bevans. In an essay in which he offers the building blocks for a "missionary ecclesiology," Bevans argues that the communion ecclesiology favored by John Paul II and Benedict XVI is

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20 See Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on Some Aspects of the Church Understood as Communion," (28 May 1992). [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_28051992\\_communiois-notio\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_28051992_communiois-notio_en.html).

21 Doyle, *Communion Ecclesiology*, 18.

22 Neil Ormerod, "A (Non-*Communio*) Trinitarian Ecclesiology: Grounded in Grace, Lived in Faith, Hope and Charity," *Theological Studies* 76 (September 2015): 448-467.

23 Ormerod, "A (Non-*Communio*) Trinitarian Ecclesiology," 455. The reference to Morris is found in n. 34.

24 Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 120.

25 Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 120.

26 Kasper, *The Catholic Church*, 120.

different from the missionary focus of Pope Francis.<sup>27</sup> As we will see below, however, Bevans strives to integrate *communio* and *missio* in his ecclesiological proposal. Ormerod is more strident in his critique. He argues that *communio* ecclesiologies “are generally fairly weak on the question of mission.”<sup>28</sup> He quotes a statement made by the distinguished missiologist Louis Luzbetak: “To get lost in the joy and blessing of Christian fellowship means to forget the kingdom for which the church exists; it is also to forget the church’s mission.”<sup>29</sup> Ormerod proceeds to argue that, while we may experience a taste of the full communion with one another and God that is the goal of mission, “the mission draws us out of the intimacy of communion and into the struggle to actualize the kingdom, a struggle that transforms both the world and the church.”<sup>30</sup> Like communion ecclesiologists, Ormerod also envisions the church as the icon of the Trinity, and thus he aspires to construct a Trinitarian ecclesiology. But his focus is on the two missions of the Son and the Spirit, which are grounded in the two Trinitarian processions of the Son from the Father and the Spirit from the Father and the Son. The church participates in the missions of the Son and the Spirit. This approach, he thinks, foregrounds *missio* as the primary task of the church and the very reason for the church’s existence.

### ***Communio* in Francis in the Light of the Critiques**

Is Francis’s appeal to the notion of *communio* in his ecological theology and his ecclesiology susceptible to these two critiques of ecclesiologies of communion? Does he downplay Vatican II’s teaching on the church as the people of God? Do his repeated allusions to *communio* as a reality and a task lead him to obscure the missionary nature of the church?

Juan Carlos Scannone, a prominent Argentinian theologian who has influenced the thought of Pope Francis (he is cited in a note to chapter four of *Laudato Si’*), has written about the development of the *teología del pueblo* in Argentina after Vatican II.<sup>31</sup> He argues that this form of theologizing has made an impact on Francis. Scannone describes the way in which this method of theology grew out of the work of a commission comprised of bishops, theologians, and experts in pastoral ministry after the council. It drew on the theology of the people of God contained in the conciliar documents. This “theology of the people” centered on the dialogue between theology and culture, particularly the cultural expressions of ordinary people. Though distinct from liberationist theology, exponents of *teología del pueblo* were closely attuned to the concerns of the poor and their struggle for justice and peace. As Scannone puts it, these theologians realized that the option for the poor and the option for culture coincided.<sup>32</sup> Scannone proceeds to elucidate the ways in which the influence of the *teología del pueblo* is evident in the writings of Pope Francis, particularly in *Evangelii Gaudium*. He highlights the pope’s frequent use of the term “God’s faithful people.” In addressing the role of charisms in the church, Francis speaks of the ways in which these gifts enrich “the life of God’s holy and faithful people for the good of all” (EG 130). And Scannone explores Francis’s discussion of culture and the inculturation of the gospel. Scannone reports that when Bergoglio was a seminary rector in 1985, he organized the first congress in Argentina on the evangelization of culture and the inculturation of the gospel.<sup>33</sup>

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27 Stephen Bevans, “Beyond the New Evangelization: Toward a Missionary Ecclesiology for the Twenty-First Century,” in *A Church with Open Doors*, 3-22, at 12.

28 Ormerod, “A (Non-*Communio*) Trinitarian Ecclesiology,” 456.

29 Louis J. Luzbetak, *The Church and Cultures: New Perspectives in Missiological Anthropology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1988), 337; cited by Ormerod on 456.

30 Ormerod, “A (Non-*Communio*) Trinitarian Ecclesiology,” 457.

31 Juan Carlos Scannone, “El Papa Francisco y La Teología del Pueblo,” *Selecciones de Teología* 54 (2015): 39-50.

32 Scannone, “El Papa Francisco,” 40.

33 Scannone, “El Papa Francisco,” 44.

Scannone's account of the impact that the Argentinian "theology of the people" had on Francis is validated by a careful reading of the first part of the third chapter of *Evangelii Gaudium*. Emphasizing that it is the entire people of God that proclaims the gospel, Francis says that the church "is more than an organic and hierarchical institution; she is first and foremost a people advancing on its pilgrim way to God" (EG 111). He asserts that "[b]eing Church means being God's people, in accordance with the great plan of his fatherly love" (EG 114). The people of God is incarnate in all the peoples of the earth, with their distinctive cultures. Acknowledging that grace presupposes culture, Francis affirms that "God's gift becomes flesh in the culture of those who receive it" (EG 115). Cultural diversity is not a threat to the unity of the people of God because the Holy Spirit "builds up the communion and the harmony of the people of God" (EG 117). Drawing on the document of CELAM produced at Aparecida, the pope highlights the importance of attending to popular piety, even quoting Aparecida's reference to "the people's mysticism" (EG 124).<sup>34</sup> Francis observes, "Popular piety enables us to see how the faith, once received, becomes embodied in a culture and is constantly passed on" (EG 123). Francis's approach to culture and especially to popular piety is a clear outgrowth of his attention to the teaching of Vatican II about the church as the people of God.

The pope's appreciation for this conciliar teaching is also evident in his emphasis on dialogue in the church and his references to the *sensus fidei*. His appreciation for the importance of dialogue became clear in his opening address at the synod on the family, where he encouraged honest and open dialogue among the participants.<sup>35</sup> Richard Gaillardetz takes note of a statement Francis made in his well-publicized interview with editors of Jesuit magazines. Francis said, "When the dialogue among the people and the bishops and the pope goes down this road and is genuine, then it is assisted by the Holy Spirit."<sup>36</sup> Gaillardetz comments on Francis's statement by stating, "Francis is saying that we can be confident of the assistance of the Holy Spirit to the bishops *on the condition that they are open to listening to others.*"<sup>37</sup> When addressing the duty of the bishop to foster a sense of missionary communion in the diocesan church, Francis says that the bishops will have to encourage the means of participation proposed in the *Code of Canon Law* "and other forms of pastoral dialogue, out of a desire to listen to everyone and not simply to those who would tell him what he would like to hear" (EG 31).

This call to pastoral dialogue in the church is given a doctrinal basis in Francis' appeal to the teaching of Vatican II about the *sensus fidei* of the whole people of God (LG 12). The council's teaching that the whole body of the faithful has an anointing that comes from the holy one means that "[t]he people of God is holy thanks to this anointing, which makes it infallible *in credendo*" (EG 119). The presence of the Spirit within the community "gives Christians a certain connaturality with divine realities, and a wisdom which enables them to grasp those realities intuitively, even when they lack the wherewithal to give them precise expression" (EG 119). Among those who share in the *sensus fidei* are the poor who, as Francis insists, have much to teach the rest of the church. "Not only do they share in the *sensus fidei*, but in their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them" (EG 198). This teaching about the *sensus fidei* of the entire people of God is not, of course, new with Francis. Nevertheless, given the broader context of his summons to foster dialogue within the church at all levels, his appeal to the *sensus fidei* gives this conciliar doctrine a prominence that it did not have during the pontificates of John Paul II and Benedict XVI. It also shows that his *communio*-ecclesiology integrates a strong affirmation of

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34 See Fifth General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops, *Aparecida Document*, June 29, 2007, 262.

35 Greeting of Pope Francis to the Synod Fathers During the First General Congregation of the Third Extraordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (October 6, 2014), [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/october/documents/papa-francesco\\_20141006\\_padri-sinodali.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/october/documents/papa-francesco_20141006_padri-sinodali.html).

36 Antonio Spadaro, "A Big Heart Open to God: The Exclusive Interview with Pope Francis," trans. Massimo Faggioli, Sarah Christopher Faggioli, Dominic Robinson, Patrick Howell, and Griffin Oleynick, *America* 209, no. 8 (September 30, 2013), 22, <http://americamagazine.org/pope-interview>.

37 Richard Gaillardetz, *An Unfinished Council: Vatican II, Pope Francis and the Renewal of Catholicism* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2015), 122 (emphasis author's).

Vatican II's teaching about the church as the people of God. And it reflects a dynamic view of church that does not simply reinforce the status quo.

Ormerod's assessment of *communio* ecclesiologies as generally weak on the question of mission does not seem to be applicable to the ecclesiological vision articulated by Francis in his writings thus far. It has become clear that Francis wants to reinvigorate the church with a missionary impetus. His use of the term "missionary discipleship"—borrowed from the Aparecida document he helped to draft as Archbishop of Buenos Aires—makes that evident. Gaillardetz observes that Francis's use of that term emphasizes "the fundamentally centrifugal thrust of the church's activity and the need for Christians to enter into a deeper and more profound solidarity with the world."<sup>38</sup> Gaillardetz argues that Francis's "emphasis on the centrifugal impetus of the church marks an orientation that was not nearly as pronounced with Pope Benedict."<sup>39</sup> Bevans argues similarly, concluding that what Francis says in *Evangelii Gaudium* about mission "seems to lead the church beyond the [2012] synod's theme of new evangelization toward a vision of the church as going forth as a 'community of missionary disciples.'"<sup>40</sup>

This centrifugal impetus of the church is evident in many of Francis's addresses and writings. Francis views Jesus as someone who was always on the move, always going to the next town or village to proclaim the Good News and to encounter others, even when it was risky to do so. In a homily to the bishops of Brazil he said, "We cannot keep ourselves shut up in parishes, in our communities, in our parish or diocesan institutions, when so many people are waiting for the Gospel! To go out as ones sent. It is not enough simply to open the door in welcome because they come, but we must go out through that door to seek and meet the people."<sup>41</sup> The pope acknowledges that this going forth to the world, especially to the "existential peripheries" of society, is risky. But he says that he would "prefer a thousand times over a bruised church to an ill church."<sup>42</sup>

This missionary impulse permeates *Evangelii Gaudium*. At the beginning of the first chapter of this apostolic exhortation, Francis observes that, in fidelity to Jesus, "it is vitally important for the church today to go forth and preach the Gospel to all: to all places, on all occasions, without hesitation, reluctance or fear" (EG 23). The pope dreams of a "missionary option," a missionary impulse that will transform everything else in the church—customs, practices, schedules, language, and structures. Known for his efforts to reform the Vatican Curia, Francis asserts that the renewal of the church's structures must be undertaken with a view to making them "more mission-oriented" (EG 27). In the section of the document where he discusses the church as the people of God, Francis observes, "In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples" (EG 120). He interprets the gospel passage about Jesus and the Samaritan woman in John 4 as the story of someone who became a missionary immediately after her encounter with Jesus. So he can say, "Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are 'disciples' and 'missionaries,' but rather that we are always 'missionary disciples'" (EG 120). Thus for Francis the following of Jesus necessarily entails being sent forth by Jesus to proclaim the gospel in word and deed. One dimension of this evangelizing task of the disciple involves an activity we have already discussed—solidarity. Commitment to solidarity with others, particularly the poor and other marginalized people, is integral to the mission of the church. Francis teaches that solidarity means more than "a few sporadic words of generosity"; it entails "the creation of a new mindset which thinks in terms of community and the priority of the life of all over the appropriation of goods by a few" (EG 188). By entering into solidarity with the poor and other suffering people we are evangelizing, even

38 Gaillardetz, *An Unfinished Council*, 116.

39 Gaillardetz, *An Unfinished Council*, 117.

40 Bevans, "Beyond the New Evangelization," 10.

41 Pope Francis, Homily for the Mass with the Brazilian Bishops, July 27, 2013, *The Church of Mercy*, 60.

42 Pope Francis, Address to the Participants at the International Congress on Catechesis, September 27, 2013, *The Church of Mercy*, 15.

though solidarity is not the totality of evangelization. Francis has sought to embody this evangelizing activity of solidarity through many symbolic actions, such as celebrating Holy Thursday liturgy with persons who are incarcerated and traveling to the island of Lampedusa to highlight the plight of refugees.

In his essay outlining a missionary ecclesiology, Stephen Bevens says, “The challenge of a missionary ecclesiology is to keep a balance between the ‘centrifugal’ nature of the church lived out in mission and a more ‘centripetal’ aspect of the church expressed in the understanding of the church as communion. One might characterize the church, a community of missionary disciples, as a ‘communion-in-mission,’ a dynamic interplay of communion and mission.”<sup>43</sup> I believe that, thus far in his pontificate, Pope Francis has endeavored to do precisely what Bevens describes. The “centripetal” movement toward communion, present in his ecological theology and his ecclesiology, is infused with an abiding sense of mission -- with a “centrifugal” impetus. Francis’s ecclesiology, then, is not characterized by the kind of inward-looking obsession that Ormerod criticizes in other *communio* ecclesiologies.

## Concluding Remarks

We have seen that the theme of communion is central to the thought of Pope Francis in the areas of ecology, theological anthropology, and ecclesiology. In *Laudato Si’* Francis integrates the capacity to enter into communion with others into his description of the nature and the nobility of the human person. He also extends this capacity for communion beyond other humans to the whole of creation, highlighting the intrinsic connection between care for other human beings and care for the earth as our common home. For Francis, the call to communion is a prophetic word in a world plagued by a spirit of individualism and indifference. Ultimately, the impulse toward communion, which is intrinsically human, is grounded in the reality of the Creator—the Triune God who is a personal communion of life and love.

The themes of communion and solidarity permeate Francis’s writings and addresses, playing an especially central role in his vision of church. His *communio* ecclesiology is rooted in the teaching of Vatican II and is related to the thought of his predecessor popes. At the same time, the ecclesiology of Francis is also characterized by a vibrant acknowledgment of the church as the pilgrim people of God. As such, it recognizes the need for ongoing dialogue in the church at all levels, and it pursues reform in the structures of the church. While Francis does not propose a view of the church as a democracy, he does insist that every voice in the church must be heard. Moreover, Francis’s *communio* ecclesiology embraces a strong sense of mission; he adheres to the teaching of *Ad Gentes* that the church is “missionary by its very nature” (AG 2). In Francis’s church every member is “sent forth” to proclaim the gospel. Thus, he envisions the church as a communion-in-mission.

There are at least two current pastoral realities that suggest to me the need to pay close attention to the “communion” dimension of “communion-in-mission”—even in the face of theological critiques of *communio* ecclesiology. These pastoral concerns may relate more readily to the church in the United States than to other sectors of the world. The first is the growing number of Catholics, especially young adult Catholics, who no longer participate in the life of the church with any regularity.<sup>44</sup> This is a complex phenomenon that does not admit of a simple explanation. Nevertheless, one of the causes for this movement away from participation that is sometimes cited is the experience of a lack of “communion” in parish and diocesan settings. Pope Francis himself alludes to this experience in *Evangelii Gaudium*, adverting to the spread of fundamentalist religious movements, which attract a significant

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43 Bevens, “Beyond the New Evangelization,” 14.

44 See the report of the Pew Research Center, “America’s Changing Religious Landscape,” <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/>. For an in-depth study of the religious practices of young adult Catholics in the U.S., see Christian Smith, Kyle Longest, Jonathan Hill, and Kari Christoffersen, *Young Catholic America: Emerging Adults In, Out of, and Gone from the Church* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

number of Catholics. Francis says that this is due, at least in part, “to certain structures and the occasionally unwelcoming atmosphere of some of our parishes and communities, or to a bureaucratic way of dealing with problems” (EG 63). He notes that in many places an administrative approach prevails over a pastoral approach. In the face of the exodus of younger Catholics from the church, it appears that the challenge of evangelization includes the need to create a more vital spirit of *communio* at the local level.

Second, and not unrelated to the first concern, the phenomenon of the mostly younger “neoconservative” priests now ministering in parishes as pastors or parochial vicars also gives one cause to reflect on communion at the local level. It appears to me that the approach of many of these priests to the practice of the faith, and their view of what it means to be truly Catholic, reflects an individualistic spirituality. While these pastoral leaders certainly urge Catholics to gather in church for worship, they seem to be focused most intensely on individual reception of the sacraments and forms of personal devotion. Celebration of the sacraments and personal devotion are both essential to Catholic identity. But it seems that this focus can become a narrow one that minimizes the call to build vital communities of faith at the local level—communities that create a sense of belongingness.

I believe that Francis teaches us that a whole and balanced view of the church necessitates both the centripetal movement of *communio* and the centrifugal impetus of *mission*.

# Incarnating the Feminine Genius in the Contemporary Catholic Church

by Leonie Westenberg

In examining the “feminine genius” in the contemporary Church one can similarly examine the effects of the Second Vatican Council and shifts concerning the role of lay men and women in our post-Conciliar Church. The Second Vatican Council was called both a “light for the Church and a light for the world.” Indeed, Pope John XXIII voiced a need for *aggiornamento*, a renewal and bringing up to date of the Church to serve a world that had undergone much political and social change. What then, have been the fruits of the Council, some fifty years on? Pope Benedict XVI, in calling for a Year of Faith (2011), identified the encouragement of the lay vocation and lay ministry as a positive fruit of the Council.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, however, the Pope also noted that the years following the Council have been marked by a crisis of faith among peoples, with a corresponding indifference and apathy to faith, religion, and, in many cases, to Christianity.<sup>2</sup> However, this apathy in the Western World has been, for many women, a symbol not of their own apathy but of their disenfranchisement and exclusion.<sup>3</sup> Oftentimes, women in difficult circumstances have found it hard to see their place in the Church or have found little compassion for their circumstances. Yet, as *Lumen Gentium* notes, in Mary the Church has reached perfection and should exhibit a motherly love in its missionary activities.<sup>4</sup> While this motherly love should be extended to men and women alike, in and outside the Church, the distinct needs of many women in our community, for example, those women who feel ignored and suffer because of family circumstances, poverty, and marginalization related to gender, demand that such motherly love be administered to women and their children as “the least of these.” Certainly, too, it is most frequently other women in the Church who can be of assistance in representing the “motherly love” noted in *Lumen Gentium* and who can often best recognize the particular gifts of women in the Church.

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1 Benedict XVI, *Porta Fidei*, (2011), [http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/motu\\_proprio/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_motu-proprio\\_20111011\\_porta-fidei.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_ben-xvi_motu-proprio_20111011_porta-fidei.html).

2 Benedict XVI, *Porta Fidei*, no. 2.

3 Sidney Callahan discusses this in respect to “biology as destiny.” Sidney Callahan, “Mary and the Feminist Movement,” *America*, no. 20 (December 18, 1993), <http://americamagazine.org/issue/100/mary-and-feminist-movement>.

4 Second Vatican Council, “*Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*” (hereafter LG) in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott (New York: Guild Press, 1966), nos. 15, 46, 50, 52-69.

Motherly love in this usage introduces the notion of the “feminine genius” and of spiritual motherhood. The medieval mystics held that the qualities often associated with the “feminine genius” can be modelled by the Church in its pastoral concern.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, in speaking of the feminine genius, some women theologians have written of “traditioning” as a form of “spiritual midwifery,” so that women’s ministries in the Church can be recognized, utilized, and valued in both new and traditional ways.<sup>6</sup> Examples of such ministries include grassroots movements in Ireland, Europe, Central America, and the United States, to be discussed further in this essay.

What, however, is meant by the term “feminine genius”? The term emerged in wider use as a result of the work of Edith Stein, philosopher, teacher, and, later, Carmelite nun (St. Theresa Benedicta of the Cross). Stein described the feminine genius as marking the ability of women to “naturally seek to embrace that which is living, personal, and whole.”<sup>7</sup> Stein further qualified this statement in noting that though she wrote of generalities (“No woman is only woman; like man each has her individual speciality and talent”), she continued to envisage women’s inclination to “cherish, guard, protect, nourish and advance growth” as part of a feminine formation that can enrich all professions.<sup>8</sup>

St. John Paul II further introduced the concept of the feminine genius in his 1988 Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*. He wrote of the feminine genius as encompassing “the moral and spiritual strength of a woman” in connection to her “awareness that God entrusts the human being to her in a special way.”<sup>9</sup> Like Stein, John Paul II clarified his description of the feminine genius by stating that “God entrusts every human being to each and every other human being.” He maintained, however, that the feminine genius should not be discounted as a result of this calling to all of humanity but should be considered separately in the life of the Church since the “entrusting” described above “concerns women in a special way—precisely by reason of their femininity—and this in a particular way determines their vocation.”<sup>10</sup>

The term feminine genius thus denotes the idea of women’s care thinking, as suggested by the feminist psychologist Carol Gilligan. Gilligan’s research highlights that women, more often than men, view self as a component of a network of relationships and therefore represent “care thinking” (empathy in Stein’s description of the feminine genius) in sustaining these relationships as a moral imperative.<sup>11</sup> Central to this “care thinking” are important notions of both care of and responsibility for others. Definition of the feminine genius, therefore, involves a respect for the dignity of all human life amidst a woman’s own respect for the dignity of womanhood. This respect is personified in the work of many women in the community and in the Church in effecting change in the world that will ensure a personal dimension in societal concerns, including health care, social issues, and economics.<sup>12</sup>

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5 St. Bridget in her *Revelations*, St. Hildegard of Bingen’s *Book of Divine Work*, and St. Julien of Norwich’s *Revelations of Divine Love*.

6 Judith Lynch, “Traditioning: Women Passing on the Story,” *Newsletter*, May 28, 2015, National Office for the Participation of Women, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, [http://www.opw.catholic.org.au/resources/traditioning-women-passing-on-the-story.html#.V5pQc6Ly\\_fb](http://www.opw.catholic.org.au/resources/traditioning-women-passing-on-the-story.html#.V5pQc6Ly_fb).

7 Edith Stein, *The Collected Words of Edith Stein, Volume Two: Essays on Woman* (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1987), 43.

8 Stein, *Essays on Woman*, 43-47.

9 John Paul II, *Apostolic Letter on the Dignity and Vocation of Women, Mulieris Dignitatem*, Apostolic Letter, August 15, 1988, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_letters/1988/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_19880815\\_mulieris-dignitatem.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1988/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19880815_mulieris-dignitatem.html).

10 John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem*.

11 Carol Gilligan, “Moral Orientation and Moral Development,” in *Ethics: The Big Questions*, ed. James Sterber, (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 443.

12 In similar vein, Stein notes that “there is no profession which cannot be practiced by a woman” in discussion of women’s “potentialities” in influencing public and domestic spheres. Stein, *Essays on Woman*, 105.

## Women in the Church Fifty Years on from Vatican II

Such discussion of the feminine genius provides a corresponding hint at its possible significance for the Church and community. Furthermore, description of the feminine genius at work in the Church raises the question: What is the experience of women in the contemporary Church post-Vatican II?

In one sense, it can be argued that women's involvement within the Church has increased since the Second Vatican Council. While noting that lay ministry in general and participation within dioceses has been a "fruit" of Vatican II, Susan Ross states that the work of women, religious and non-religious, has formed the spine of the Catholic dioceses in the U.S., with extended growth so that some "80% of lay ecclesial ministers are women."<sup>13</sup> Additionally, the type of work undertaken by women in the Church has also varied, to include more lay women theologians and biblical scholars, and pivotal roles in parishes once undertaken by priests—positions such as chancellors, liturgical specialists, catechists, and those running faith and sacramental formation. This has been, in the words of sociologist and advisor to the U.S. Council of Bishops Msgr. Phillip Murnion, a "virtual revolution in parish ministry."<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, there has been recognition in the Church of women's voices, that nebulous term that nevertheless accentuates the stories of women and the importance of presenting women's experiences in decision making. Gilligan describes the different experiences, the different voice of women, especially in noting relational truths that have often been ignored or suffocated.<sup>15</sup> Fifty years on from the Second Vatican Council we see a gradual inclusion of women's voices in the Church and in ecclesial decision making. Pope Francis, for example, in 2014 appointed five women to be part of the International Theological Commission assisting the Holy See, and as part of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith. Listening to, and incorporating, the experiences and voice of women in the Church has also been furthered by a distinct feminine and feminist theology. Indeed, Pope John Paul II in *Mulieris Dignitatem* discussed the "distinctiveness" of women, acknowledging that women's voices must be recognized as "*sequela Christi*," followers and imitators of Christ, so that their experience through history and in the world today can be considered as valued contributions to our theological understanding.<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, however, it can be argued that while these changes in the roles and understanding of women's contributions since Vatican II are positive, there remains discussion on the fullness of such change. Is the change superficial, so that women are seen to be "stop-gaps" in ministries until more male clergy emerge? Are the changes "accidents" and not "substance," as Ross maintains, changing the appearance of women's roles but not breaching the substance of the same?<sup>17</sup> It can be noted that change is gradual and fifty years is a drop in the bucket of ecclesiastical history. However, much social change has occurred in the last fifty years and it seems that the positive changes for women in the Church have also been accompanied by areas still requiring change.

In particular, I refer here to women in families undergoing change and disruption, and women as victims of abuse. In both Western and developing countries, many women are single parents or parents with absent partners, and live in abject poverty.<sup>18</sup> Many times, their voices are not heard in Church decision making, not even by the often

13 Susan A. Ross, "Joys and Hopes, Grievs and Anxieties: Catholic Women Since Vatican II," *New Theology Review* 25, no. 2 (March 2013): 30-38.

14 Phillip J. Murnion, cited in John L. Allen Jr., *The Future Church: How Ten Trends are Revolutionizing the Catholic Church*, (New York: Doubleday, 2009), 192.

15 Carol Gilligan describes this as "ethics of care" so that women's voices include ideals of caring and relationships, in Jill Taylor, Carol Gilligan, and Amy A. Sullivan, *Between Voice and Silence: Women and Girls, Race and Relationship* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995), 123.

16 John Paul II, *Mulieris Dignitatem*.

17 Susan A. Ross, "Joys and Hopes, Grievs and Anxieties: Catholic Women since Vatican II."

18 This has been called the "feminization of poverty," wherein the burden of poverty is borne by women and children, in both developed and developing countries. See Martha Chen, Joann Vanek, Francie Lund, James Heintz, Renana Jhabvala, and Christine Bonner, *Progress of the World's Women 2005: Women, Work and Poverty* (New York: United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2005), 36. [http://www.sarpn.org/documents/d0001563/Women\\_work\\_UNIFEM.pdf](http://www.sarpn.org/documents/d0001563/Women_work_UNIFEM.pdf).

middle-class feminist theologians. This point is addressed by Jacqueline Grant, who portrays the lifestyle of numerous women of different ethnic backgrounds as being lived on the margins of society and the Church, concerned less with issues of women's ordination or positions in the Church than they are with the practicalities of life, and spiritual, physical, and emotional support and recognition from local churches.<sup>19</sup> It seems that though Church hierarchy and theologians have emphasized the dignity of women and the importance of female contributions to the Church (as in *Mulieris Dignitatem*), in reality many local parishes have failed to live this in practical terms.<sup>20</sup> This failure is evident beyond the parish level too; an example of note is in the 2014 Synod of the Family wherein much air time was given to Eucharistic Communion for divorced and remarried Catholics, for example, while little discussion was made obvious concerning the effects on families, women, and children of domestic violence, abuse, rape, economic uncertainty, and the simple fact of feeling unwelcome as a divorced mother in many parishes.<sup>21</sup>

The discussion on women in the Church, fifty years from Vatican II, has pieced together a collage of both positives and negatives. On the one hand, we see that in recognizing the concept of the feminine genius and honoring Mary's maternal qualities and role in connection with the work of Christ, women's work as lay ministers and in ecclesial and theological concerns has broadened, with emerging avenues for women's voices to be included in Church discussions and decision-making. In contrast, however, there is room for deep deliberation concerning the role of women in these areas, with a danger voiced that these "accidents" are merely that—appearances of involvement, even tokens of involvement, without substantial debate on what it means to be a woman in the Church today.

It appears, too, that there has been a focus by some female theologians on the role of women in ordained ministry. Arguably, this attacks the substance versus accidents debate head-on, looking for change in the substance of women's contributions to the institutional Church. In fact, one Catholic feminist has stated that the emphasis on obedience to Church teachings in this matter has overshadowed honest debate.<sup>22</sup> Yet, I cannot help but wonder if this debate itself misses some of the reality of the lives of women in the Church, and in the community. Edith Stein noted that a discussion of women should involve the reality of women, "seeing what is."<sup>23</sup> Perhaps in focusing so intently on the vocation of the priesthood and the ordination of women, the debate neglects both the reality of women in society today, and an understanding of the value of other vocations in the Church and in the world. Perhaps these other callings may inadvertently be denigrated in calls for women's ordination, so that we fail to understand how these other callings may utilize the feminine genius of women and minister to women in the actuality of their lives. Discussion of such qualities and ministries would, as *Lumen Gentium* states, emulate Mary's "obedience, faith, hope and burning charity" and thus emphasize Christ's priesthood "shared in various ways both by the ministers and by the faithful."<sup>24</sup>

Pia de Solenni argues that we should strive to avoid defining women within the confines of the (traditional) masculine, to avoid representing the traditional masculine roles as superior to those that have been tradition-

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19 Jacqueline Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response* (Atlanta: American Academy of Religion, 1989).

20 Contrast, for example, John Paul II's call for recognizing women's contributions to the Church and the world in *Mulieris Dignitatem* with the "feminization of the Church" discussed by John L. Allen, "Lay Ecclesial Ministry and the Feminization of the Church," *National Catholic Reporter*, June 29, 2007. <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/all-things-catholic/lay-ecclesial-ministry-and-feminization-church>.

21 Private discussion with a group of divorced and separated practicing Catholic women, November 2014.

22 Patricia Wittberg, "A Lost Generation?" *America* 206, no. 5 (February 20, 2012), <http://americamagazine.org/issue/5129/article/lost-generation>.

23 Edith Stein, cited in Katharina Westerhorstmann, "On the Nature and Vocation of Women," published first in German: *Westerhorstmann, Katharina: Wesen und Berufung der Frau bei Edith Stein vor dem Hintergrund einer radikal dekonstruktivistischen Position des Postfeminismus*, *Brixner Theologisches Forum* 117 (3/2006): 41-62, <http://www.laici.va/content/dam/laici/documenti/donna/filosofia/english/on-the-nature-and-vocation-of-women-edith-steins.pdf>.

24 *LG*, nos. 62, 63.

ally considered feminine.<sup>25</sup> Undoubtedly, if we in the Church wish to join the discussion regarding change and the substance of women's experience of faith and religion, we could look at the discussion of Stein's idea of the "feminine genius," qualities such as sensitivity and empathy, and apply these in our parishes, in our communities, and in our workplaces. In practical terms, this means widening our understanding of the work we do in our lives, in and outside the Church, so that all work is termed our vocation. Such an idea of ministry and work has been termed a "suffering-with," using the narratives of our lives to share in the narratives of others.<sup>26</sup> The understanding of empathy in service as suffering-with aims to "fix" the harsh realities of the lives of many women by approaching the women themselves first, not simply as recipients of ministry but as colleagues, being with the other, sharing the suffering of the cross. Empathy as ministry here implies listening to the voices of women, being empathic, and harnessing the concepts of spiritual motherhood, vocation, and the feminine genius into further developing an inclusive and welcoming Church on a local level, with a concept of mutual caregiving in understanding and sharing the joys and sorrows of the Cross. That this is possible will be demonstrated with a discussion of practical measures undertaken in a similar process.

Significantly, too, *Lumen Gentium* writes of the People of God as sharing in spiritual riches.<sup>27</sup> This is of importance to the notion of mutual ministry within local parishes and can be heralded under the umbrella of the feminine genius as empathy, receptivity, and care-giving, shared in grassroots practical undertakings in our parishes and communities. Examples of this are discussed by Joti Sekhon and Jill Bystidienski, and with women's grassroots organizations across the world, and spanning differing cultures, following a participatory democratic model, involving women acting autonomously to help other women.<sup>28</sup> A "new feminism," approaching the daily lives of women in Western society, has thus arisen in an organic manner, as women share stories and welcome other women in local churches.<sup>29</sup> Examples of such sharing in practice, on local parish levels, will be examined below.

### **Incarnating the Feminine Genius in the Contemporary Church**

A deeper look at empathy and ministry thus adds to our understanding of vocation. In fact, Patricia Fox defines ministry as a vocation, "leading others" to both holiness and discipleship in "God's mission in the world."<sup>30</sup> This definition of ministry encompasses the role of clergy and laity alike in utilizing diverse and separate gifts in the Church, for others and for love of God. It also lays stress on discipleship in the world so that our discipleship, while vital for the life of the Church, is not confined to the Church but spreads to the community, to the workforce, to the environments in which people live. Importantly, *Lumen Gentium* makes note of the secular life of the laity who, in their vocations in the wider community, seek to share the kingdom of God.<sup>31</sup>

It should be noted here, however, that broadening the concept of ministry, with the inclusion of men and women in diverse roles in the Church or in living a life of faith in a variety of milieus, does not denigrate the role and importance of the ordained priesthood. Vatican II highlighted the importance of both the priesthood of all believers and the ordained priesthood while asserting that the differences between the two are essential and "not only in

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25 Pia Francesca de Solenni, *A Hermeneutic of Aquinas's Men Through a Sexually Differentiated Epistemology: Towards an Understanding of Woman as Imago Dei* (Roma: Apollinare studi, 2000). Translated privately with the help of A. Westenberg.

26 "On Coffee Shops and Crucifixes," *Women in Theology Blog*, February 7, 2015, <http://womenintheology.org/2015/02/07/on-coffee-shops-and-crucifixions/#more-10064>.

27 *LG*, no. 13.

28 Jill M. Bystydzienski and Joti Sekhon, *Democratization and Women's Grassroots Movements* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999).

29 Michelle Schumacher, *Women in Christ: Towards a New Feminism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004).

30 Patricia Fox, "A Renewed Theology of Vocation in Response to the Pastoral Challenges Facing the Australian Church," *Australian Catholic Record* 89, no. 1 (2012): 33.

31 *LG*, Chapter IV.

degree.”<sup>32</sup> This is a fundamental, theological, and ontological difference. How, then, do we widen our understanding of vocation, as Fox describes, while utilizing the feminine genius of women within non-clerical discipleship?

I have already hinted of some practical examples of this understanding in grassroots organizations described by Schumacher, and by Sekhon and Bystidienski. These grassroots organizations are run by women for women, in local parish communities or otherwise under the auspices of Catholic teaching. Each heralds a way in which the feminine genius can be utilized in pastoral activities within the idea of “spiritual midwifery,” as described earlier. One such model is the Family Resource Centre in Moyross, a housing estate in Ireland’s county of Limerick.<sup>33</sup> Under a Catholic activist banner, and citing Catholic social teaching especially in the wake of Vatican II, women have formed together to provide resources for other women and to lobby against poor living conditions and family violence. Mothers living on the estate, with the collaboration of Sister Imelda O’Sullivan, L.S.A., have forced the center to grow from an initial drop-in house to a place that offers health care, playgroups, child care, and counseling and education programs. The management committee is portrayed as active ministry, and arose from the need for the women on the estate to have an avenue where their voices could be heard. The Family Resource Centre began as a ministry of the Church firstly through the Little Sisters of the Assumption and then to women helping other women in the spirit of mutual service. This group embodies both the hope and maternal love exemplified by Stein’s and Pope John Paul II’s definition of the feminine genius, and demonstrates how qualities such as empathy and compassion can be valued in grassroots ministry. Here we see a practical outpouring of spiritual motherhood so that the faithful may be “regenerated.”<sup>34</sup>

A further practical example of ministry that involves the particular gifts of women in the Church and community is that depicted by Marguerite Lena, in Schumacher’s book *Women in Christ: Towards a New Feminism*.<sup>35</sup> Lena expounds literary studies as a means of educating both men and women of the value and significance of the feminine genius. It is through education, she argues, that we effect change and offer Christ’s salvific work to others, appealing to intellect, experience, and soul. The practical outpouring of such an education has been the Endow programs in many parishes in the United States.<sup>36</sup> These programs are run by women, initially for other women and with the hope of extending the studies to men and to families. Endow involves education and discussion, a shared experience of theological and literary reading in informal collegial groups followed by integrated questions in relation to women’s personal experiences. The ministry here is that of suffering-with, embodying Mary’s role in the salvific work of Christ, with hope, solace, and education. This is likened in *Lumen Gentium* to a pilgrimage, so that the faithful are journeying with Christ, suffering with Him, and receiving His graces.<sup>37</sup> It is an ongoing pilgrimage and, in the Endow and similar programs, an ongoing education that effects change as more women are empowered in ministering to others in their local parishes and communities.

In Poland, since the “transitioning” of political power, several women’s groups have emerged within the Church, giving voice, education, and identity to women of the working class. Judy Roote Aullette describes her interview with Elizabeth Oledzka concerning the work of women in the strongly Catholic Solidarity movement of the 1980s.<sup>38</sup> Initially, women joined the group as an expression of their political solidarity but, as Oledzka notes, “It was

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32 LG, no. 10.

33 Described in depth by Christopher Gale in “Women’s Participation in Grassroots Initiative in Ireland,” in Bystydzienski and Sekhon, *Democratization and Women’s Grassroots Movements*.

34 LG, nos 63-64.

35 M. Lena writes of literary studies as adding to the “rich polyphony of culture” that is needed on a local and global scale, signifying the importance of the education of men in this area of “intimacy,” in her chapter “A Creative Difference: Educating Women,” in Schumacher, *Women in Christ: Towards a New Feminism*, 312-323.

36 See the Endow website <http://endowgroups.org/>

37 LG, nos 6-7.

38 Judy Roote Aullette, “New Roads to Resistance,” in Bystydzienski and Sekhon, *Democratization and Women’s Grassroots Movements*.

interesting to see working-class women change from meeting to meeting” as they shared their concerns over poor working and living conditions and lack of suitable healthcare for families.<sup>39</sup> Women began educating themselves in this area through the sharing of stories and collection of data concerning health issues and poor conditions in factories for women workers. The coming together in prayer and discussion of the narratives of the women’s lives encouraged the formation of a number of spin-off women’s groups, each independent of larger organizations but each run by local women, effecting change in local communities through an initial exchange of stories that told of the particular needs of the women at work and in the home. While there is a number of such groups, some concerned more with violence against women, some more faith-based and others focussed on education especially for secondary-age girls, they each demonstrate a consensus-based democratic form of organization with a sharing of women’s lives. In this way, the groups represent both Stein’s idea of the feminine genius as embracing that which is living and whole and Pope John Paul II’s comment on the “moral and spiritual strength” of women in ways that address de Solenni’s notion that the new feminism seeks change in organisation and structure, rather than defining womanhood only in traditional ways or by that which is traditionally considered masculine.

Participatory democracy is modelled in the women’s faith-based group Christian Commission for Democracy (CCD) in the Honduras. Forty percent of the organization’s time is devoted to prayer, reflection, and discussion.<sup>40</sup> This structure describes a model of open discussion that allows women to air differing viewpoints and experiences and, in this practice, a continued self-development. Charles McKehey reports that staff of the CCD express spiritual and intellectual growth in their own self-development as facilitators of programs within the CCD.<sup>41</sup> Such a practice of mutual growth and education embodies notions of the feminine genius as cherishing, guarding, and advancing growth in a non-competitive fashion. Instead, the women’s real needs are met in mutual care and respect, for example, in faith-based educational programs that identify social struggles as community struggles. This embraces women’s care thinking; in order for women to flourish, the women themselves demand that the community should flourish.

These examples give a practical illustration of the utilization of women’s gifts in the Church and the community. Each mirrors the idea of the feminine genius as described by both Stein and Pope John Paul II, and each is separate from, but can collaborate with, the sacred, empathetic, and sacramental work of the ordained clergy. These programs provide models of ways in which the feminine genius may be enacted in practical measures in local parishes. Programs such as these can begin at the local, grassroots level, inviting women to share their needs and talents through initial meetings. The connections thus established between women at the parish level can be fostered to extend in a myriad of individual ways, addressing specific issues and strengths of the parish and of the women of the parish in response to prayer, membership, and participation.

## Conclusion

I have attempted to begin an exploration of the experience of women in the Church, some fifty years on from Vatican II, in light of the notion of the feminine genius as described principally by Edith Stein and Pope John Paul II. Changes in society in the last fifty years have caused some to question the relevance of Christianity. Women’s lives have changed, both professionally and in families, in the Western world in particular. We also have a growing awareness of the differences in the lives of women on a global scale, across cultures. While calls for change for women in the Church sometimes center on the issue of women’s ordination, this article has instead provided ex-

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39 Aullete, “New Roads to Resistance,” 220-221.

40 Charles McKehey, “Feminist Organisations and Grassroots Democracy in Honduras,” in Bystydzienski and Sekhon, *Democratization and Women’s Grassroots Movements*.

41 McKehey, “Feminist Organisations and Grassroots Democracy in Honduras,” 206-209.

amples of grassroots change on local and global levels to demonstrate how practical encouragement of the particular gifts and strengths of women can effect change that meets the realities of women and their families. This adds depth to the concept of the feminine genius in the life of the Church. That the incarnation of the feminine genius in the contemporary Church is possible has been highlighted with the practical examples of such ministries in the reality of the lives of women, so that Mary's *fiat* is echoed in the vocation of women and, indeed, in the compassion of the People of God in contemporary society.

## More than a Clanging Cymbal: Nurturing the Prophetic Task

by Jessica Joy V. Candelario

St. Paul could not have said it any better. There is nothing worse than the empty, broken sound of an instrument. Coming from a predominantly Catholic country, I have witnessed how Church influence, especially in the area of morality and political issues, has steadily declined through the years. Ministries have become routine, unable to make a difference and to transform lives. At the same time, people have turned to modern preachers and self-help books in their search for meaning. Indeed, the prophetic voice seems to have lost its power.

Old Testament prophets accompanied the people of Israel in their quest for a full life. Through trials and tribulations, war and conflict, exile and homecoming, the prophets who were attuned to the divine mystery but also skilled in listening to the realities of their people articulated God's judgment and God's undying covenant of salvation. As a person of dialogue, a prophet "speaks forth" God's words and courageously "speaks out" against society's evils.<sup>1</sup> For Brueggemann, prophets "nurture, nourish and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us."<sup>2</sup> Heschel points to the person of the prophet beyond the revealed message. He emphasizes the prophet's "communion with the divine consciousness" that makes the prophet "live not only his personal life but the life of God."<sup>3</sup>

As a Church, we are not only called to be prophets; our mission is prophetic dialogue and dialogical prophecy.<sup>4</sup>

At the outbreak of the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris, a father and son were interviewed by a journalist.<sup>5</sup> Their conversation illumines elements to an effective prophetic ministry.

1 Steve Bevans and Roger Shroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue; Reflections on Christian Mission Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2011), 42.

2 Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 13.

3 Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 26.

4 Bevans and Shroeder, *Prophetic Dialogue*, 55. The term "prophetic dialogue" was coined by the authors as they explored the development of mission theology from Vatican Council II. See also 11–112.

5 "They Might Have Guns but We Have Flowers: French Father to Kid after Paris Terror," *Le Petit Journal*, as featured in USA Today (November 15, 2015), <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2015/11/18/french-dad-explains-paris-terror-attacks-son-touching-video/75990360/>.

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Journalist: “Do you understand what happened? Do you understand why those people did that?”

Boy: “Yes, because they’re really, really mean. Bad guys are not very nice. And ... we really have to be careful because we have to change homes.”

Father: “Oh, no, don’t worry, we don’t need to move out. France is our home.”

Boy: “But there’s bad guys, daddy!”

Father: “Yes, but there are bad guys everywhere.”

Boy: “They have guns, they can shoot us because they’re really, really mean.”

Father: “It’s OK, they might have guns, but we have flowers.”

Boy: “But flowers don’t do anything, They’re for, they’re for ...”

Father: “See all the flowers? It’s to fight against the guns.”

Boy: “It’s to protect?”

Father: “Exactly.”

Boy: “And the candles too?”

Father: “There you go. It’s to not forget those who are gone yesterday.”

Boy: “The flowers and the candles are there to protect us.”

Journalist: “Do you feel better now?”

Boy: “Yes, I’m feeling better.”

***Do you understand what happened?*** Instead of merely providing answers, prophetic ministry enables people to ask questions. Prophetic ministers lead people towards a deeper and more global awareness of their realities; this includes understanding their history and culture. While they can read the present challenges from their particular standpoint, prophets facilitate a re-reading and true listening of people’s stories. Like Isaiah, who sensed that the people “listen carefully but do not understand and look intently but do not perceive (Is 6:9),” prophetic ministers are aware of the blocks that hinder people from coming home to the truth that will set them free. People need to grow in their ability to discern (Hos 14:9; Is 44:18), reopening their eyes, ears, and hearts to the past.

***But there are bad guys. They have guns.*** Prophetic ministers can identify what represents evil in the world. They speak the truth in their outright denouncement of oppression and injustice. In their humanity, they could speak of their fear but could also speak of evil fearlessly. They know that evil can appear among the rich and the poor, men or women, powerful and powerless. While they give voice to God’s anger over sin, they also show God’s face of compassion for the oppressed. They are like Yahweh, who will roar like a lion in defense of God’s people (Hos 11:10; Joel 4:16).

**France is our home.** Prophetic ministers lead people towards a greater love for their identity and heritage as a people. When people can own their past and honor their present, they discover the gifts that can propel them towards victory. At the same time, prophetic ministry believes that the place for change is where people are. One cannot fight a battle from a distance. Change happens when people can discover what breaks and makes them—socially, culturally, and spiritually. In fact, “prophesy becomes effective if it reorganizes knowledge already part of the culture.”<sup>6</sup>

**See all those flowers? It is to fight against guns.** “The anthropology of prophetic dialogue is an anthropology of hope.”<sup>7</sup> Because they know of a world beyond the present, prophets embody possibilities. As mystics and poets rooted in the divine source, prophets could articulate God’s reign even amidst hopelessness. Like Ezekiel and his vision of dry bones (Ezek 37:1-14), prophetic ministers can see beyond death and destruction. Their power of imagination and belief propels them to proclaim and live the vision. Prophets also lead people to the source of endless opportunities. However, they do so first by enabling people to disarm themselves of pride and arrogance and to learn humility by accepting their limitations (Amos 4:6; Jon 3:8; Hag 12:17)

**Do you feel better now?** Prophets are aware that salvation is an everyday goal. While there are problems that may be too insurmountable to be solved in a day, grace is a gift that can be experienced every minute. Prophetic ministry enables people to encounter the face of God that they need where they are. Because prophets are immersed in the context of their people, they are aware what fulfills them. They know that the face of salvation varies from person to person. God can be a teacher for those who need to find their way (Is 30:20-21), a potter for those who need to be shaped and formed (Jer 18:6), or a wonderful stream flowing from the temple for those who need nourishment and purification (Ezek 47).

Just like the alternative community of Moses that became victorious against the Pharaoh and the dominant culture, we become prophets as we live our communion.<sup>8</sup> Pope Francis exhorted the need for evangelizers to “take the smell of the sheep” and the church to “get its shoes soiled by the mud of the street.”<sup>9</sup> At the same time, he called the Church to “adopt a pastoral goal and missionary style that can reach everyone” without diluting the “depth and truth of the Gospel.”<sup>10</sup>

The Church loses its prophetic voice when it fails to acknowledge divine absence within and among its members. When the sex scandal cast a mantle of suspicion and doubt over the Catholic Church, the silence of its leaders was deafening. On the other hand, when bishops and priests admitted their fault and took responsibility for the faults of their brothers, people began to listen and were also willing to forgive.

Prophets are born and nourished in basic ecclesial communities. In my home country, the Philippines, super typhoon Haiyan destroyed many villages and provinces, but it became a showcase of the prophetic presence of the small Christian communities. Despite losing their loved ones, their properties, and source of livelihood, these communities remained united in their journey from despair to hope. Instead of having every reason to be dependent and helpless, or to be angry and resentful, they held on to their faith as a source of strength for the present and

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6 Jonny Baker, “Prophetic Dialogue and Contemporary Culture,” in *Mission on the Road to Emmaus: Constants, Contexts, and Prophetic Dialogue*, ed. Cathy Ross and Stephen Bevans (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2015), 211.

7 Maria Cimperman, “An Anthropology of Prophetic Dialogue: Rooted in Hope,” in *Mission on the Road to Emmaus: Constants, Contexts, and Prophetic Dialogue*, ed. Cathy Ross and Stephen Bevans (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2015), 168.

8 Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, 26–27.

9 Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium: The Joy of the Gospel*, no. 24, 45, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html).

10 Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium: The Joy of the Gospel*, no. 35, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco\\_esortazione-ap\\_20131124\\_evangelii-gaudium.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html).

vision for the future. While they were vocal regarding government failure to address basic needs, they also admitted their negligence towards the care of nature. They realize their need to repent and to reform so that the life they still believe is theirs can be possible. Their faith has made them resilient and hopeful as a community.

Like the father and son and the journalist, our cymbals and gongs can only resound beautifully in dialogue. Our lived communion can bring life in the wilderness. United in the Trinity, rooted in life, our prophetic voice can be heard.

# The Church and the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas: In-Between Colonization and Reconciliation

by Michel Andraos

In his recent book *The Comeback*, public intellectual John Ralston Saul, reading the signs of the times in Canada so to speak, asserted that the situation of the Indigenous Peoples is the single most important issue before us. Until not long ago, he notes, “It was clear—or so the common, self-serving argument went—that these native populations were unfortunately unsuited to the modern world. Backward. Weak. Stuck in irrelevant cultures. Much of this argument was folded into standard Victorian, imperial, Christian notions of charity.”<sup>1</sup> This situation has been changing over the past hundred years and the Indigenous Peoples have made a *comeback*, observes the author. It’s a comeback to a position of self-affirmation with power that, to many observers of history, seems irreversible. Enrique Dussel calls this comeback a cultural eruption beyond modernity.<sup>2</sup> Many Indigenous academics would prefer to call this comeback resurgence or rebirth.<sup>3</sup> While this resurgence for many people is either not noticeable or a surprise, for the Indigenous Peoples in general it is neither. They have been preparing for it and waiting patiently for a long time, sometimes in active silence and at other times with strong protest. They saw the resurgence coming and have been announcing a new dawn for a while. But where is the church in all this?



Annual march of the Pueblo Creyente, a mostly Indigenous peoples’ organization in San Cristobal de Las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico, commemorating the 5th death anniversary of Bishop Samuel Ruiz.

Photo credit:  
Rachel Warden, KAIROS Canada. Chiapas, January 25, 2016

1 John Ralston Saul, *The Comeback: How Aboriginals are Reclaiming Power and Influence* (Toronto: Viking, 2014), 7.

2 Enrique Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of “the Other” and the Myth of Modernity*, trans. Michael Barber (New York: Continuum, 1995).

3 See in particular the works of Leanne Simpson and Taiaiake Alfred.

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Despite the violent history between Western Christianity and the Indigenous Peoples, particularly since 1492, the Second Vatican Council had no mention of this history and relationship. This perhaps was one of the main gaps in the Council. In light of the new Indigenous resurgence, however, the relationship between the churches and Indigenous Peoples globally took a new turn, especially since the 1980s. The preparations for the events commemorating the 500th anniversary of the conquest of the Americas and the colonization of Indigenous Peoples by Western Europeans became an opportunity, particularly for the churches in the Americas, to reflect on the history of this violent relationship during five long centuries and draw some lessons. In the Roman Catholic Church, Pope John Paul II paid particular attention to meeting with Indigenous Peoples all over the world during his pontificate. Between the late 1970s and the mid 1990s he visited many Indigenous communities in the Americas, all the way from Fort Simpson in Canada's North-West Territories to Temuco, Chile, in the southern-most part of the hemisphere, including most countries in between. He did the same in other parts of the world, countries such as

Australia, New Zealand, and the Philippines, among others. His discourse at these meetings—expressing respect for their spiritual traditions and cultural values—was consistent and generally well received. He delivered strong messages to the Indigenous communities he met, to the church, and to society at large. In most of his speeches he affirmed Indigenous Peoples' rights to their lands, cultures, and religious practices, and he denounced the injustices and discrimination they experienced in the past, and, in most situations, continue to experience. The core of his messages was about reconciliation, inculturation of the gospel message in Indigenous cultures, and the need for revitalizing Christianity among Indigenous Peoples.<sup>4</sup> In some instances, he acknowledged the mistakes of the past and the involvement of the church in colonization, but did not offer any formal or specific apologies in that regard. He called for the Indigenous Peoples to take their proper place in the church and affirmed that in many of his speeches. He notes in one of his typical speeches:

Concerning your proper place in the Church, I urge everyone to promote those pastoral initiatives that foster the indigenous communities' greater integration and participation... Ultimately, it is a question of indigenous Catholics becoming the agents of their own development and evangelization in all areas, including the various ministries. What a great joy it will be to see the day when your communities can be served by missionaries, priests, and bishops who have come from your own families and can guide you in adoring God 'in spirit and truth' (Jn 4:23)... The Church, which has been with you in your journey throughout these 500 years, will do everything in her power to help the descendants of the ancient peoples of America to occupy their rightful place in society and the ecclesial communities.<sup>5</sup>

Decades later, however, the pope's wish still has not materialized, and it is still rare to see Indigenous leaders in the church. How do we understand this phenomenon? Did John Paul II's call for the revitalization of Christianity among Indigenous Peoples and his invitation to a new, different relationship come too late, or perhaps are no longer relevant to their resurgence?

At the last conference of the bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean that took place in Aparecida, Brazil, in 2007 during the pontificate of Benedict XVI, the theme of Indigenous Peoples was prominent. The conference affirmed the teachings of Pope John Paul II and of previous bishops' conferences, especially the one that took place in Santo Domingo in 1992, the last conference before Aparecida. The topics of colonization and asking for

4 See Michael Stogre, *That the World May Believe: The Development of Papal Social Thought on Aboriginal Rights* (Sherbrooke, QC: Editions Paulines, 1992), 209–239.

5 "John Paul II's Message to the Indigenous Peoples," in *Santo Domingo and Beyond: Documents and Commentaries from the Fourth General Conference of Latin American Bishops*, ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1993), 159–160.

forgiveness, however, were softened in the Aparecida documents. The teaching and pastoral approach, as in the past, acknowledge the injustice done to Indigenous Peoples and their rights, but there was no breakthrough. The theology of this and previous documents does not go beyond the problematic traditional fulfillment theology. This traditional theological approach acknowledges the “seeds of the Word” in Indigenous cultures, and looks with “esteem” at their religious experience and spiritual life, but is usually very quick to add that this experience “reaches its fullness in the revelation of the true face of God by Jesus Christ,” normally in the church. (Aparecida #528) This is a theological dead end for any interreligious dialogue in general, but particularly for dialogue with Indigenous Peoples.

Pope Francis seems to be taking a new approach. In a landmark speech at the Second World Meeting of Popular Movements in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia, on July 9, 2015, which was co-sponsored by the Vatican Council for Justice and Peace, he spoke to the Indigenous Peoples present very clearly about the impact of colonialism on the poor, past and present. He also asked for forgiveness for the sins committed against them in the name of God. “I humbly ask forgiveness, not only for the offenses of the Church herself, but also for the crimes committed against the native peoples during the so-called conquest of America... There was sin, a great deal of it, for which we did not ask pardon. So for this, we ask forgiveness, I ask forgiveness,” said Pope Francis.

In his more recent visit to San Cristobal de Las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico, on February 16, 2016, where the majority of the faithful in this diocese are Indigenous from Mayan origin, he again asked for forgiveness during his homily. Not only that, but he also emphasized the important contribution of Indigenous Peoples to humanity and to the church. “You have much to teach us, much to teach humanity,” he said. In addition, he quoted in the same homily the *Popol Vuh*, the sacred book of the Maya. Symbolically, his visit and actions are very significant and meaningful gestures in a region of Mexico considered to be the heartland of Indigenous Peoples’ resistance and resurgence, and where the ongoing uprising against the Mexican government began on January 1, 1994. In a very insightful article on this papal visit, Indigenous Mexican theologian Eleazar López Hernández notes that the pope, in deciding to visit San Cristobal de Las Casas, realized the best symbolic gestures of his visit to Mexico. With his presence, said Hernández, the pope “healed the wounds caused by misunderstanding and unjust accusations [by the Vatican] directed against this prophetic and martyr local church.”<sup>6</sup> There was no affirmation of a fulfillment theology in his discourse, which is a departure from previous papal homilies at Indigenous gatherings.

Ironically, it is precisely in this diocese that the Vatican had imposed a ban on ordaining Indigenous permanent deacons since 2000. The ban was announced during the pontificate of John Paul II and was maintained during the pontificate of Benedict, despite many attempts by the diocese asking the Vatican for permission to restore the program. The permanent diaconate program was the cornerstone of Indigenous leadership in this local church.<sup>7</sup> The Vatican’s ban was lifted and the program restored only recently, in May 2015, a few months before Pope Francis’s visit to Chiapas. At the end of the mass in San Cristobal, representatives of the Indigenous communities thanked Pope Francis, saying, “Thank you for having again authorized the role of the indigenous permanent diaconate, with its own culture, and for having approved the use of our languages in the liturgy.”<sup>8</sup> After the liturgy, Pope Francis visited the tomb of Bishop Samuel Ruiz, who died in January 2011, and who had also suffered from imposed sanctions by the Vatican in the 1990s. Ruiz is globally known for his bold ecclesial and pastoral approach toward the Indigenous Peoples in his diocese and beyond.<sup>9</sup>

6 Eleazar López Hernández, “El Papa Francisco En México. Análisis de Los Textos Y Contextos de La Visita Desde La Perspectiva Indígena,” *Social Apostolate of the Jesuit Provincials’ Conference of Latin America—CPAL*, <http://www.cpalsocial.org/1120.html>.

7 See Michel Andraos, “Indigenous Leadership in the Church: The Experience of the Diocese of San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas, Mexico,” *Toronto Journal of Theology* 21 (Spring 2005): 57–65.

8 Vatican Information Service, February 16, 2016.

9 See Michel Andraos, *Seeking Freedom: Bishop Samuel Ruiz in Conversation with Jorge S. Santiago on Time and History, Prophecy, Faith and Politics, and Peace*, ed. and trans. Michel Andraos (Toronto: Toronto Council, Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, 1999).

At the present moment, the comeback and resurgence mentioned above are with us and are unsettling to both the nation-states and the churches. According to their civilizing and Christianizing joint mission, there was not supposed to be Indigenous Peoples to deal with by now; they should have all been either assimilated into the modern states and into Christianity or disappeared. But the project failed and the Indigenous Peoples, as small as they are in numbers, are back as peoples and nations with moral, cultural, political, and spiritual force, and with determination. They want their land, and they affirm their cultural worldviews, ways of life, languages, and spiritual traditions. They affirm their distinct identities in the society at large, and also in the churches, for those who remained Christian. Modern states and the churches, as we know them today, do not seem structurally capable of dealing with the “others” within who claim and affirm both difference and at the same time full equality. This is why they do not know what to do with Indigenous Peoples. The colonial project of assimilation has failed. The churches have been trying for some decades to promote processes of inculturation and a theology of reconciliation. But these too have failed for the most part. The fulfillment theology, which seems to be in the DNA of the churches, like the assimilation projects of the states, is not an option for the future. The mistrust between Indigenous Peoples and the institutions of Christianity and the states goes very deep. Both states and churches need to re-invent themselves if they are to have a new relationship. But are they capable of doing that? Moreover, a growing number of Indigenous organizations and scholars do not want to use the language of reconciliation. Many believe that this rhetoric is not fully genuine, does not go far enough, and undermines their resurgence. Theologically, the desired reconciliation requires, in addition to asking for forgiveness, proposing a new theology and ecclesiology, radically different from the colonial past and present. For many, the new moves by Pope Francis are steps in the right direction. But are the churches and theology there yet?

## God and Science in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

by Br. Guy Consolmagno, SJ

“The eternal war between science and religion” is not much of a war; plenty of deeply religious people are also excellent scientists. And certainly, it is not particularly eternal. The relationship between theology and science is constantly evolving.

Obviously the basic premise that science is inherently inimical to religion is demonstrably false. Science began with religion. Most of the originators of science in the middle ages were priests. Most scientists at the birth of modern science (Kepler, Newton, and even Galileo) cited theological ideas as their inspiration. Indeed, through the nineteenth century, many scientists were clergymen; who else had the education and free time to pursue science? Our science today is founded on the work of priests: Mendel (genetics), Secchi (astrophysics), Lemaître (Big Bang cosmology).

The myth of this eternal war was strongly promoted, however, as a part of the “whiggism” of the late nineteenth century: Science, alone, would lead humankind to a new paradise of peace and plenty. The twentieth century’s history of pollution and mechanized warfare should have put that idea to rest, though there are some even today who cling to that quaint Victorian notion.

One response from the Church to the slander that religion must somehow be anti-science was to establish in 1891 the Vatican Observatory: an astronomical institute dedicated to doing scientific research, under the direct sponsorship of the pope. I’ve been a part of that Observatory for twenty-five years, and for the past year I’ve had the honor of being its director. Today we are a dozen Jesuit scientists (along with diocesan and lay collaborators) working in fields from cosmic dust, to galaxies, to cosmology and string theory.

Since our mission is to show the world that the Church supports science, a good portion of my time beyond my own research has been spent in public outreach. And the responses I have heard from my audiences have evolved over the past twenty-five years.

One fascinating development has been a shift away from the so-called “new atheists.” They were the science popularizers (mostly white, mostly male, and now mostly elderly) who, in the 1990s, started promoting anti-religious views in many popular books and television appearances. For a while, they were the vanguard of a social current that got great pleasure in storming the religious establishment with the glory of Science.

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But while there are still plenty of young people searching for truth who question (or simply ignore) religion, a casual perusal of social media shows that many of them have a distinct unease with the old prophets of the new atheism.

Part of the change, ironically, is that to an unchurched generation religion is no longer seen as a part of the establishment that youth must rebel against. Furthermore, there is a sense that the new atheists have overplayed their hand; their brand of atheism has started to become a fundamentalism as rigid and intolerant as their view of the religion it once opposed.

In the same way, many of the “new atheists” have revealed themselves via social media to be stunningly insensitive to ethnic and religious minorities. And parallel to how the sexual abuse crises in the Church discredited religion, the once stylish “free thinking” sexual mores of some in the new atheist movement is recognized now by a younger generation as abusive and repugnant.

Feeding the demise of the new atheist movement is a new growth in understanding the actual history of the relationship between science and religion. Consider a widely used astronomy textbook of the 1990s, which summarized “everybody knows” attitudes about Galileo:

In 1616 Cardinal Bellarmine interviewed [Galileo] and ordered him to end his astronomical work. Books relevant to Copernicanism were banned, including *De Revolutionibus*... [At his trial in 1632, Galileo] must have thought often of Giordano Bruno, tried, condemned, and burnt at the stake in Rome in 1600. Bruno had been an outspoken critic of the Church in many respects, but one of his offenses was Copernicanism... Italy was no place to introduce unorthodox ideas that might challenge Church teachings.

Every element of that passage is at least an oversimplification, and, in some cases, simply false. Worse, the underlying assumption is conflict—the “eternal war” paradigm. But since the 1990s, a significant amount of academic progress has been made into the roots, and dynamics, of the Galileo affair and its aftermath. To quote a scholarly paper (*History of Science*, vol. 46, 2008) by the Yale historian David Marshall Miller, “studies of the Galileo Affair written in the past few decades have exploded this older ‘myth’ that Galileo’s condemnation was a conflict between science and faith, novelty and authority, or rationality and irrationality.”

To mention but two of many recent advances in our understanding of the origins of modern science, J. L. Heilbron’s 2010 biography *Galileo* puts the roots of his thinking into a broader intellectual and literary context, showing Galileo not as a lone genius but as a worthy product of a rich background. Meanwhile, C. Graney’s work (see papers in the *Journal of the History of Science* and a recent book, *Setting Aside All Authority*) on Galileo’s counterpart Riccioli has explored the legitimate scientific debate surrounding seventeenth-century heliocentrism. Graney’s work begins with the apparently revolutionary idea of actually reading the seventeenth-century literature rather than merely relying on what nineteenth-century authors had said about it. Much of the previous scholarship on Riccioli and other prominent skeptics of Galileo was tainted by a nineteenth-century hagiography of Galileo.

Modern work honors both Galileo and his rivals, revealing the depth of their debates; in the process it provides a fascinating insight into how scientific knowledge actually progresses. Another and perhaps most far-reaching effect of this new scholarship is that many modern astronomy textbooks (including later editions of the book quoted above) now devote a far more nuanced and detailed account of the Galileo affair.

But of all the developments in our understanding of how science and religion relate, the most notable to me, as someone working as a scientist within the hierarchy of the Church, is the change seen within the Church itself.

Back when Pope Leo XIII founded our observatory his intent was clearly apologetic; he wanted an institution that could defend the good name of the Church. But by the 1930s, the emphasis began to shift. Science (and astronomy in particular) was beginning to be recognized as worthy in its own right as an important way to come to know and appreciate the Creator. Pope Pius XI re-established a Pontifical Academy of Sciences in 1936, and his successor, Pope Pius XII, addressed it in 1939 with the wonderful insight “Man ascends to God by climbing the ladder of the Universe.”

But what is new in the last ten years has been the recognition that the intellectual pursuit of knowledge through science is not only a route to God and a means of worship, it is also intimately tied into the Church’s mission in faith and justice. Technology drives our economy. Training in science and technology is a route out of poverty, as has been clearly seen in so much of Asia. But more than that, a scientific worldview of cause-and-effect can empower people to analyze and understand their own situations. When oppression is seen not as a state of nature but a problem to be solved, solutions can be sought, analyzed, and implemented.

“In the beginning was The Word”—the *Logos*; logic. The Church and its theology promote reason. Its schools can bring a knowledge of reason to those who are hungry for it. Its moral precepts can provide standards for evaluating reasoned solutions to problems. And its focus on our Creator, whose love enlightens and sustains the universe, is the ultimate compass to guide our steps as we advance in wisdom and age.

*Laudato Sí* is the strongest expression to date of this connection between science and justice. In embracing the need to respond to the modern ecological crisis Pope Francis makes the exhilarating case that using science to understand this crisis is necessary but not, in itself, sufficient. The ultimate source of pollution is not technology, but sin. The ultimate cost of the sin of denying the science of climate change can be seen in the dire effects of our misuse of our planet on the poor. And the ultimate solution will not be found in technology, but in a change of heart of the people who use that technology.

Science advances by breaking complex systems into smaller, more understandable parts. An unfortunate side effect, however, has been an alienation between different academic fields or different aspects of the human experience. From such, myths such as a war between science and religion arise. But we can advance when those links are re-established. Our progress today is found in understanding science within history... and discovering the connections between science and justice.

# Collecting Connections: Praying, Believing, and Living

by Anne McGowan

In his famous series of meditations before Mass penned in the middle of the last century, Romano Guardini noted that God's living Word is more likely to receive a fruitful hearing and eager response in the liturgical context if those who participate in the Church's liturgies are disposed to pay attention. "Through the liturgical word," Guardini notes, "our inwardness passes over into the realm of sacred openness which the congregation and its mystery create before God."<sup>1</sup> The liturgy's many words, some of which we receive *from* God and some of which we speak *to* God, tell us something about who we are in Christ, help us to claim this redeemed identity more and more fully, and call us to live differently as a result. Despite our best intentions, internal and external distractions abound and often keep us from attending fully to the liturgical action and our role in it. Thankfully, the liturgy also incorporates many opportunities to call us back to ourselves and call our attention back to the God who first called us to gather together as this liturgical assembly in this particular place and time.

If what we pray shapes what we believe and forms how we live (*lex orandi, lex credendi, lex vivendi*), the words we speak to God in our liturgies are vital to our lived experience of faith. Some brief and often underappreciated invitations to connect liturgy and life (distractions and all) occur in the form of the proper presidential prayers that punctuate the Mass, the other sacramental rites, and the Liturgy of the Hours. These occur at important junctures where something significant is about to happen or has just happened—times when it is good to pause and ensure that *we* are collected and recollected rather than displaced and scattered. These prayers draw on the classic Western prayer form known as the collect and typically feature the following five parts: (1) an address to God, (2) an attribution recalling some of God's qualities or characteristics, (3) a petition in which the assembly makes a formal request of God, (4) a purpose clause expanding the rationale behind the petition and aligning it with God's will as revealed in salvation history, and (5) a conclusion (which closes the prayer and cues the assembly to respond, "Amen").<sup>2</sup>

1 Romano Guardini, *Meditations Before Mass* (Westminster, MD: The Newman Press, 1966), 10. Guardini was a priest, theologian, and leading figure of the liturgical movement in Germany.

2 For some brief introductions to the collect form, see Laurence Hull Stookey, *Let the Whole Church Say Amen! A Guide for Those Who Pray in Public* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 15-26, and "What Is a Collect?" Reformed Liturgical Institute, August 05, 2006, accessed August 23, 2016, <https://liturgicalinstitute.wordpress.com/2006/08/05/what-is-a-collect/>. Scholarly treatments include James G. Leachman and Daniel P. McCarthy, eds., *Appreciating the Collect: An Irenic Methodology* (Farnborough, Hampshire: St. Michael's Abbey Press, 2008) and Lauren Pristas, *The Collects of the Roman Missals: A Comparative Study of the Sundays in Proper Seasons before and after the Second Vatican Council* (London/New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013). The collects in the Liturgy of the Hours are discussed briefly in J. D. Crichton, *Christian Celebration: The Prayer of the Church* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1976), 86-87 and 117.

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The Mass features three such prayers. The first, simply designated “Collect” in the Missal, is the liturgy’s formal opening prayer that concludes the introductory rites and highlights some aspects of the feast, season, or liturgical rite now well-begun as the assembly gathered by God prepares to listen to God’s word in the Scriptures. For example, one of the new collects in the second typical edition of the Order of Celebrating Matrimony situates the marriage of a particular couple within the context of God’s plan for all of humanity and offers a concise catechesis on the graces of the sacrament prayed for on this liturgical occasion. The various parts of the collect prayer are designated below in capital letters within square brackets:

O God [ADDRESS], who since the beginning of the world  
have blessed the increase of offspring [ATtribution],  
show favor to our supplications  
and pour forth the help of your blessing  
on these your servants (N. and N.) [PETITION],  
so that in the union of Marriage  
they may be bound together  
in mutual affection,  
in likeness of mind,  
and in shared holiness [PETITION].

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever [CONCLUSION].<sup>3</sup>

The second presidential prayer at Mass, the Prayer over the Offerings, connects the preceding preparation of the gifts and the forthcoming eucharistic prayer—and provides an opportunity to unite the gifts we bring to Christ’s once-for-all offering for us re-presented in the eucharistic sacrifice. Observe, for example, how the Prayer over the Offerings for the Memorial of Saints Andrew Kim Tae-gŏn, Priest, and Paul Chŏng Ha-sang, and Companions, Martyrs (September 20), links the martyrs’ sacrifice, the contemporary celebration of the Eucharist as a sacrifice of praise, and the sacrificial transformation that results from deepening communion with Christ:

Look with favor, almighty God,  
on the offerings of your people  
and, through the intercession of the blessed Martyrs,  
grant that we ourselves may become

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<sup>3</sup> *The Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, translated by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 2<sup>nd</sup> typical ed., no. 193. (This collect also appears in the third typical edition of the Roman Missal among the texts for Ritual Masses.)

a sacrifice acceptable to you

for the salvation of all the world.

Through Christ our Lord.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, the Prayer after Communion closes the communion rite and prepares for the community's sending forth in the concluding rites. This prayer frequently connects the holy food just received with hope for renewal in this life and/or a share in eternal life. This example from the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord resonates on all these levels:

Nourished with these sacred gifts,

we humbly entreat your mercy, O Lord,

that, faithfully listening to your Only Begotten Son,

we may be your children in name and truth.<sup>5</sup>

Those charged with presiding, preaching, preparing liturgies, or preparing people for liturgies can capitalize on these collect-style prayers in several ways. As new vernacular translations of liturgical texts developed according to the vision of *Liturgiam Authenticam* appear, presiders can help the assembly to attend more fully to the theological connections the collects invite us to make by reviewing these prayers in advance so as to pray them well in the liturgy, rather than tripping over unusual syntax and stumbling through poorly timed pauses. Presiders might also respect more consistently the rubrical guidelines that provide space for *everyone* to pray before voicing the prescribed prayer that "collects" the myriad prayers articulated within a short span of silence. For example, note the rubric in the Missal within the Order of Mass related to the Collect. After the invitation ("Let us pray"), "all pray in silence with the Priest for a while" (no. 9).

Preachers might use these prayers, at least occasionally, as a means to focus their message. The opening collects in particular often feature carefully crafted connections between the theological themes of a particular feast, season, or sacrament and some of *the* key themes of Christian life (e.g., baptismal identity as children of God, communion with Christ in the Eucharist, and life in the Spirit which drives us to apostolic mission in the world).<sup>6</sup> Since the preacher's task involves "explain[ing] the text of the Sacred Scriptures proclaimed in the readings *or some other text of the Liturgy*,"<sup>7</sup> giving collects a second hearing in a homily or reflection would help the assembly pay more attention to these rich liturgical texts.

Liturgy planners and catechists might draw the assembly's ears or eyes to a collect (or a memorable image or phrase contained therein) in the intercessions, a catechetical or mystagogical session, or a paragraph in the parish bulletin. Liturgical catechesis that explores the contribution of collects fulfills the task of "explain[ing] the content of the prayers" and could counter the critique that "Frequently . . . the practice of catechetics testifies to a weak and fragmentary link with the liturgy."<sup>8</sup>

4 *The Roman Missal*, translated by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy 3<sup>rd</sup> typical ed., Proper of Saints, September 20.

5 *The Roman Missal*, Proper of Time, The Baptism of the Lord.

6 For an example of this approach, see Daniel McCarthy, *Listen to the Word: Commentaries on Selected Opening Prayers of Sundays and Feasts with Sample Homilies* (London: The Tablet Publishing Company Limited, 2009). This book is based on a series of articles that originally appeared in *The Tablet*. A more extensive index is available at McCarthy's webpage: <http://danielmccarthyosb.com/prayer-commentaries/>.

7 *General Introduction to the Lectionary*, translated by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy, 2<sup>nd</sup> typical ed., no. 24, <http://www.catholicliturgy.com/index.cfm/FuseAction/documentText/Index/2/SubIndex/11/ContentIndex/132/Start/126>; emphasis added.

8 See Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, nos. 71 and 30, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_17041998\\_directory-for-catechesis\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cclergy/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html).

The Church's liturgies immerse us in the mystery of God's salvation accomplished for us through Christ and sacramentally communicated to us here and now by the Holy Spirit. Its significant short prayers can help the members of Christ's ecclesial body recollect themselves by connecting the memorial of the paschal mystery at the heart of the liturgy to its recapitulation in their own lives. They also propose a pattern, perhaps grasped only subconsciously, by which individuals might shape their personal prayer at other times, helping the liturgy function as the "source and summit" of the Church's life (see *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 10). As we pray to God in silence and speech, let us believe what we pray and live our prayer well!

Dianne Bergant. *A New Heaven, a New Earth: The Bible and Catholicity*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2016. 200 pp. \$25.00 ISBN: 9781626981805.

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This book seeks to address the tendency of humankind to see ourselves as separate from, rather than part of, the rest of the natural world. This perspective, according to Bergant, has led us to ascribe merely instrumental value to Earth and its various components, rather than see their intrinsic value apart from their usefulness for us. Such human blindness to the interconnectedness and interdependence of all elements of the cosmos has created problems both for humans and for other species, and for the Earth itself. At this critical moment, Bergant suggests, it “behooves us to correct our myopic perspective and focus anew on the oneness we share with the rest of Earth creatures, a oneness that already exists” (p. 5). To that end, Bergant—a biblical scholar—offers the reader what she calls an “experiment in hermeneutics,” an ecosensitive way of reading the Bible to discern what it has to offer in support of emerging ecotheologies. The lens through which Bergant examines key biblical passages and theological perspectives is a set of ecojustice principles from ecotheologian Norman Habel, principles that recognize the intrinsic worth, interconnectedness, and interdependence of the Earth and all its components. Such principles also call for resistance to manipulation and exploitation. This lens Bergant calls “the community of Earth.”

Bergant proceeds through the Christian Bible, selecting passages that feature some aspect of natural creation and examining them through the community of Earth lens. Chapter 1 looks at the Pentateuch, where Bergant finds several passages that show how dependent the personages and events recounted in those pages were on water, an observation that highlights both the intrinsic value of water and human dependence on it. In Chapter 2 she turns her attention to Joshua through 2 Kings, where the motif of land is particularly prominent. Key ideas that emerge here are that land is a fruitful, life-sustaining gift from God that humans are called to steward carefully, with full recognition that God, and not they, are sovereign “owners” of the land. Chapter 3 focuses on prophetic stories and oracles that highlight the human temptation toward greed and exploitation and the divine rejection of this disastrous attitude toward Earth and others. In Chapter 4 Bergant explores the biblical Wisdom tradition, which highlights the essential and divinely given order of creation, which humans must honor and live in accordance with in order to thrive. Of particular interest here is Bergant’s observation that the Wisdom tradition routinely draws its insights and lessons from the non-human world, which often models behaviors humans are called to emulate.

Turning to the New Testament, Bergant also notes in Chapter 5 that Jesus routinely used parables and images from the natural world to teach his disciples, further highlighting the principles of intrinsic value, interconnectedness, and interdependence. In Chapter 6 Pauline theology of the cosmic Christ and the redemption of all creation provides further support for these ecojustice principles. A notable feature of this chapter is Bergant’s extended and insightful exploration of the christological hymn in Col 1:15–20. Finally, in Chapter 7, Bergant finds in the book of Revelation’s promise of a new heaven and a new earth a hopeful message of the glorious cosmic transformation that emphasizes God’s love for all creation. Throughout the book Bergant finds ample support in the biblical witness for an ecojustice theology and ethic.

This book largely assumes that readers are at least familiar with the work of Habel and other ecotheologians and that they are already persuaded of the validity and importance of ecojustice principles. Readers who are not familiar with ecotheology, or who wish to explore it further before accepting all of its premises, will find a helpful bibliography at the end of the book.

Whether or not they have embraced ecotheology, all readers should find much to appreciate in this book. Although Bergant reads the biblical texts through a particular lens, her readings are not tendentious or implausible. She chooses central rather than peripheral texts and theological perspectives, which are quite representative of the biblical witness. Her discussion is always careful, informed, and insightful, and she finds many important, well-grounded implications for how humans ought to relate not only to God but also to their earthly home and to their fellow creatures.

Yiu Sing Lúccas Chan, James F. Keenan, Shaji George Kochuthara, eds. *Doing Asian Theological Ethics in a Cross-cultural and an Interreligious Context*. Asian Theological Ethics, Vol. 2. Bengaluru, India: Dharmaram Publications, 2016. 372 pp. Paperback. ISBN: 9789384964368.

Reviewed by Dawn M. Nothwehr, OSF  
Catholic Theological Union

**T**his remarkable volume holds the work of twenty-six Asian scholars from ten different countries, presented at the first-ever pan-Asian conference, “Doing Catholic Theological Ethics in a Cross-cultural and Interreligious Asian Context,” held in Bangalore, India, July 17-20, 2015.

This conference engaged the visionary mission of the Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church, first articulated at Padua (2006) and renewed at Trento (2010)—“to appreciate the challenge of pluralism; to dialogue from and beyond local cultures; and to interconnect within a world church not dominated by a northern paradigm.”

The concentration of multiple diversities in the vast reaches of Asia where Catholic theological ethicists live and work is unique in the ways it challenges the Catholic moral tradition and dominates how ethics needs to be done. Asian Christians often live as a minority amid overriding linguistic, cultural, religious, political, and economic systems -- which often militate against them. Thus, a central question is how can bridges be built among and beyond theological ethicists in a way that is adequately Catholic and adequately Asian (16)? An Asian response requires a unique kind of knowledge, sophistication, and creativity that is not so blatantly called for elsewhere. This volume is replete with exemplary demonstrations of scholarship carried forward in fidelity to Catholicism and authentic engagement with the wisdom and spiritualities of many cultures and traditions, while also empowering societies that are most marginalized.

This volume is organized according to three sections of the conference agenda: Doing Cross-Cultural Ethics; Doing Interfaith Ethics; and Catholic Theological Ethics in a Cross-Cultural and Inter-Religious Context: Future Perspectives. Three examples illustrate.

In the Opening Keynote, Vimal Tirimanna, CSsR, of Sri Lanka, challenged Asian ethicists to take seriously the “vast corpus of teachings since the 1970’s,” of Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences, concerning how to lead a true and meaningful Christian life in the region (21-33). A truly Asian and Catholic moral theology is about an Asian moral agent within an Asian context; takes the Asian circumstances seriously; gives high priority to issues of those already born and living, along with beginning and end of life concerns; needs to address structural injustices that create abject poverty; recognizes moral behavior is addressed in Asian stories, symbols, and metaphors; knows that a rich plurality of options can coexist within the framework of fundamental Christian beliefs and enrich the life of Asians and beyond; and sees that engagement with healthy pluralism can open the way for doing theological ethics in the Asian public square.

Sharon Bong, in the Second Plenary Session, addressed a topic that rarely confronts Westerners: “A God by Any Other Name” (181-193). In Malaysia, where Christians number 9.2 percent and Muslims 60.3 percent of the population, the Church filed a series of lawsuits challenging the government’s ruling that allows only Muslims to use “Allah” to name God. In 2008 courts forced the Catholic press and Churches to use other terms. This was despite the fact that the translation of the Bahasa Malaysia Bible or *Al-Kitab* is based on the Hebrew and Greek texts of the Bible. “The word ‘God’ in Hebrew has the same root as the Arabic language. So when ‘God’ was first translated into Bahasa Malaysia or Malay, the translators merely followed the Arabic Christian usage and retained the word ‘Allah.’ As ‘Allah’ predates Islam, it is *not* a creation of the Muslims and its existence does not begin in the *Al-Quran*” (183). Bong asked whether forgiveness or resistance marks the proper ethical response.

In her Third Plenary presentation, “Through Her Eyes: The Role of Women Theological Ethicists in Terms of the Future Development of Moral Theology,” Sr. Vimala Chenginimattam, CMC, calls for greater opportunities for women ethicists in moral theology in India (305-311). She laments the absence of lay women theological ethicists, and the few of India’s 60,000 women religious in leadership positions. Yet she finds hope in numerous women who as physicians, theologians, and lawyers work for justice motivated by faith. Issues including health care, marriage and family, gender justice, surrogate decision makers, social security, poverty, education, and the commercialization of women require women’s scholarship and reflection, she concludes.

This is a “must read” for experts and graduate students, and a fitting text for courses in Asian theological ethics. The substantive biographies of the contributors provide a helpful introduction. The extensive index is a welcome study aid.

Roger Haight, SJ. *Spiritual and Religious: Explorations for Seekers*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2016. xviii, 203 pp. \$25.00. Paperback. ISBN: 9781626981614.

Reviewed by Christopher D. Tirres  
DePaul University

In *Spiritual and Religious: Explorations for Seekers*, the eminent Jesuit theologian Roger Haight offers a collection of fourteen essays that highlight “the primacy of the spiritual over the religious” (1). Spirituality, argues Haight, is more fundamental to our human constitution than is religion, a secondary development that arises through the institutionalization of certain spiritual practices, beliefs, and worldviews. Similarly, spirituality enjoys a certain methodological primacy over theology, which must orient itself toward spirituality if it is to remain relevant. In this book, Haight ventures to “remain on the plane of spirituality” (xv). But rather than create a chasm between spirituality and religion, or between spirituality and theology, Haight repeatedly underscores their alliances. As the title of the book indicates, the pressing question is not so much “What does it mean to be spiritual and *not* religious?,” a position that so many hold today, but instead “How can one be authentically spiritual *and* religious?”

Given Haight’s ongoing commitments to his own religious tradition and to theological inquiry at large, the book will likely resonate more with those who find at least some potentially redeeming qualities in religion than for those who do not. While the book is not likely to win over aggressive atheists, Haight certainly has much to offer to those who are trying to square their spirituality with their religion. As Haight explains, ten of the book’s essays address spirituality, while four focus more directly on the Christian life. An alternative way of configuring the book’s contents might go something like this: the book deals with several noticeable themes — spirituality (chap. 1-2), the spirituality of Jesus (chap. 3,4,6), the spirituality of the church (chap. 5,7,10), liberation spirituality (chap. 8-9), and spirituality and pluralism (chap. 11, 12, 13). The book finishes with a chapter on the narrative character of the trinity (chap. 14). This last chapter may sound like a bit of an outlier given that there is little attention given to spirituality per se, but it is in fact quite in line with the definition of spirituality that Haight establishes in the book’s first two core chapters. Drawing on the work of Paul Tillich, Paul Ricouer, and Stephen Crites, Haight defines spirituality as the “logic, or character, or consistent quality of a person’s or a group’s pattern of living insofar as it is measured before some ultimate reality” (2). And as Haight makes clear, spirituality also has a narrative structure, pointing simultaneously toward the past and future. All of this is true for both individuals as well as communities: both individuals and groups participate in patterns of living, and both individuals and groups embody narrative structures that are oriented, in some way, toward ultimate concerns. Haight maintains that the true test of spirituality is how authentically one can correlate the narrative world of public spirituality with one’s own existential narrative. Thus, the connection between the spiritual and religious is for Haight not merely a formal one, wherein spirituality is a necessary precondition for religion. Rather, the connection suggests a qualitative, dynamic, and ever-changing relationship wherein the interpreter must continually venture to correlate the narratives of public spirituality (most often passed down through “religion”) with one’s own existential narrative and ultimate concern.

Considering how important the idea of ultimacy is to Haight’s argument, I would have liked to see just a little more discussion of this central topic. What if one’s ultimate concern is fame or fortune, or self or group preservation?

Haight does acknowledge a difference between an ultimate concern and an idol, as suggested by a passing footnote to Tillich, but the point, I believe, is worthy of further discussion, especially for those who are seeking the kind of authentic and liberating spirituality to which Haight is so committed. This suggestion notwithstanding, Haight amply succeeds in widening the concept of spirituality beyond the confines of individual psychology, connecting it to modes of behavior and underlying values that are shaped, explicitly and implicitly, over time.

Pluralistic in scope and practical in its intent, *Spiritual and Religious* invites seekers into an honest and open conversation about spirituality and religion. While squarely acknowledging the inevitable discomfort that seekers of varying stripes may feel toward religion, the book demonstrates that spirituality and religion, when critically and authentically retrieved, need not be anathema to each other but may instead jointly lead to new forms of freedom.

Charles E. Curran. *Tradition and Church Reform: Perspectives on Catholic Moral Teaching*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2016. 294 pp. \$32.00. Paperback. ISBN: 9781626981713.

Reviewed by Kate Ward  
Marquette University

This new volume from the dean of U.S. Catholic moral theology collects 15 scholarly essays published in various places from 1998 to 2015. An introduction summarizing the chapters, a conclusion reflecting on Pope Francis's reforms, and cross-references between its chapters help the book cohere. It is divided into sections on social perspectives, bioethical and sexual perspectives, and reform. The chapters range from broad historical surveys, to deep dives on particular authors or topics, to critical or constructive works, yet two themes radiate throughout: *Method matters* and *Tradition can change*.

Both themes are evident in several chapters showing the magisterial command of history readers expect from Curran, all of which would make excellent reading in an introductory course on moral theology. In particular, chapters entitled "Overview of the Development of the Catholic Social and Political Tradition," "Human Rights in the Christian Tradition," and "The Catholic Moral Tradition in Bioethics" provide sweeping overviews of their respective topics in clear language, with key terms defined for neophytes. These chapters demonstrate the stake of historical debates in moral theology for their contemporaries and for Christians today. Insights for specialists are here as well: for example, Curran suggests that Catholics developed a bioethics well before other Christians because of their tradition's emphasis on the role of works in salvation.

In all his work, Curran insists and clearly shows readers that tradition can change. His essay on "The Need for Reform of the Sacrament of Reconciliation" packs in a compelling history of the sacrament of penance, reflections on its contemporary decline, and suggestions for its retrieval. A brief essay on *Humanae Vitae* and a more comprehensive one on Catholic social teaching in the United States explore the reception of Vatican moral teaching by local bishops and the Catholic faithful.

Curran shows us that method matters in essays looking closely at the works of George Higgins, J. Deotis Roberts, John Paul II, John XXIII, and Enda McDonagh. Key questions in method are a theologian's embrace (or not) of historical consciousness and the breadth of consultation a scholar practices. This volume's only new work, the essay on Pope Francis, praises him on these two criteria while calling for continued work by those who hope for Church reform. Two essays on the influence of Vatican II on moral theology and spirituality explore how the Council succeeded and failed at linking its proposed reforms to a fully realized theology.

The volume offers welcome insight into Curran's own life as a theologian, as in a confessional essay confronting white privilege and a moving appreciation of Bernard Häring that includes reflections on Curran's own investigation by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The book's final essay, proposing "A Theology and Spirituality for Church Reformers," points to the reality of changing tradition, needles reformers for a "triumphalist"

view that expects the Church to be perfect, and notes that Christians hope against hope—hope is not based on experience.

Many collections like this are aimed at specialists who want a desk-reference copy of works by a single author. Certainly moral theologians will find this book useful, but Curran's comprehensive view and careful, clear writing make it a genuinely accessible introduction to many significant debates in Catholic moral teaching throughout history. Teachers who want students to understand developments in Catholic social ethics, human rights, bioethics, and sexuality should consider it as a text. General readers will gain insight into the living Catholic tradition Curran values so highly and the stakes of his hope-filled call for reform.