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*Hope and Joy
in the Thought
of Pope Francis*

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ABSTRACT

In studying the different addresses of the first five years of Pope Francis' pontificate especially on the themes of hope and joy, one observes how this corresponds with his mission with regards to peace, poverty and the environment, three challenging areas in the contemporary world. The first chapter takes a look at various individuals and experiences that have played a part in shaping Pope Francis. The second chapter delves into the crux of the subject matter, namely, hope and joy, looking at various addresses in the first five years of Pope Francis' pontificate. The third chapter offers a reflection on how one may usher hope and joy in the midst of some trying contemporary situations such as poverty, lack of peace and the threat to the environment. By taking the inspiration of St Francis, one observes the present Pontiff also leading a reform on how one sees the Church living a "culture of encounter".

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

On 13th March 2013, Pope Francis became the 266th pontiff in the Church's 2,000-year history at a time of great crisis and difficulty. This election may have simply been another election to the papacy that was being carried out in the Roman Catholic Church's history. But commentators have remarked how since his greeting from the balcony he struck a chord with the people. Appearing down to earth, minus the regular papal regalia, and asking the people gathered to pray for him before granting them his apostolic blessing are just few of the things that immediately endeared him to the people. His frugal lifestyle having no pomp whatsoever in his manner of living and moving around speaks volumes on the character of the man.

One notices a certain transparency in Francis that may be hard to come by for a leader in our day and age. On being asked who Francis is, in one of the first interviews after being elected Pope, he responded by saying that he was a sinner. Such forthrightness may be uncalled for, yet shows the integrity of the person and one, as we shall see later, who would have experienced God's mercy in a profound manner to now lead the Catholic Church and the over 1.2 billion members that constitute the Church. It is no doubt that mercy happens to be a key element of his papacy and also gave rise to the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy (December 2015- November 2016). One finds the Indian Jesuit, John Chathanatt affirming this when he writes, "A new Pentecost seems to have accompanied Pope Francis on to the papal scene: a revival of the heart, beyond the head; a revival of wisdom, beyond knowledge; a revival of mercy and forgiveness, beyond rules and regulations and judgment and condemnation; an advent of *joy and hope...*"¹

The man who was featured not just in the weekly magazine, *Time*, but many others too, has a lot to offer to today's contemporary world. For someone who has had his

¹John Chathanatt, "Pope Francis and India: Mutual Enrichment and Challenges," A. J. Lyon et al. (eds.), *Pope Francis as a Global Actor*, Palgrave Studies in Religion, Politics, and Policy, 207, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71377-9_12

priestly and religious seminary formation during the time of the Second Vatican Council and is the first Pope to be elected who was ordained after Vatican II, one may hope for a more pastoral approach to guiding the Church in the contemporary times. In fact, he has stated that all he is trying to achieve is implement the conclusions of the Second Vatican Council.

During his tenure as Archbishop of Buenos Aires, he had the reputation for his love for the poor and the search for social justice while being always close to his flock. Even though he keeps to the orthodoxy of his predecessors, one does observe a more pastoral style brought forth in his papacy. One needs to only look at the various gestures undertaken in his encounter with the people to be convinced of this fact.

In covering the content of this work, we shall delve in the first chapter on the varied influences that Francis has had in his life: his grandmother who nurtured him in the faith, a religious nun through whom he found meaning in his suffering, a communist sympathizer who showed him the importance of doing a job well, the Ignatian influence that has shaped his spirituality as a Jesuit and now continues to shape the Church in a significant manner, the political situation in his native country of Argentina and how Peronism may have had its influence on him.

One should also consider the Argentine brand of liberation theology, namely, *teología del pueblo* that Francis espouses. This is a theological reflection from the lived reality of the “holy faithful people of God” who are largely the poor whom Bergoglio encountered during his pastoral work as archbishop of Buenos Aires. Alongside this, one ought to consider the influence of not only some Argentine priests, but also Pope Paul VI who shaped the pastoral ministry of Pope Francis.

We shall delve briefly into the *Aparecida Document* which was the final document of the Fifth General Conference of the Episcopate of Latin America and the Caribbean which met between 13-31 May 2007. Cardinal Bergoglio had a big part to play in it and its influence is notable in the apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*.

Some intellectual influences — from Guardini to a distinguished Uruguayan thinker, Methol Ferré — will be introduced. Ferré was one who prophesied that the Latin

American Church would become a source Church i.e. play an important role of guiding the universal Church, especially if one notes that 40 percent of the Catholic population comprises the Latin American Church.

As one attempts to make sense of the Church, one finds various challenges. From financial trouble that came to the fore during Pope Benedict XVI's tenure to the many reported sexual abuse cases, one may find oneself drowning in a pit of sadness, sorrow and disgust. In these situations, one feels an innate need to accuse and point fingers at others, particularly blaming those in leadership. It may be easy for one to get stuck in judgment, comparison and disgust. If this seems to be the present scenario what can be done towards rekindling a new vision so that one may begin anew and work with a sense of commitment, truth, vision and hope?

Between 7 December 2016 and 25 October 2017, Pope Francis conducted his weekly catechesis for the Wednesday audiences on the theme of Hope. He mentioned the need to deal with this topic because of its need to overcome the discouragement and disorientation felt by many due to the prevailing evil and violence around. One shall study not only look at these addresses but also other sources.

As one may discover, Pope Francis has a lot to offer in this regard. While writing against a "sterile pessimism" in *Evangelii Gaudium*, he invites readers to look upon negative things as challenges and affirms, "let us not be robbed of hope."² Fr Diego Fares, an Argentine Jesuit and someone who has worked with Pope Francis in Argentina for over forty years, mentions that Francis' contribution this far has been as follows:

"[He] has awakened in the Lord's faithful people hope in the God of mercy and in the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This grace is an "active" grace that spurs us all to move, to go forward toward encountering God himself and our fellow beings, beginning with those most in need, the marginalized"³

² Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 24 November 2013. n.86

³ Diego Fares, *The Heart of Pope Francis: How a New Culture of Encounter is Changing the Church and the World*, trans. by Robert H. Hopcke, (New York: Crossword, 2015), 15.

This then is an inkling of the hope we may discover as we unravel this topic in the chapters that follow.

One finds that in contemporary Catholicism the theme of joy is not really new. One discovers it from the inaugural address given by Pope John XXIII at the Second Vatican Council, namely, *Gaudet Mater Ecclesia* 1962, which was then followed with the Pastoral Constitution on the Church, *Gaudium et Spes* (1965). This was followed by the apostolic exhortation of Paul VI, *Gaudete in Domino* (1975), and in our present times it continues with Pope Francis' apostolic exhortations, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), *Amoris Laetitia* (2016) and *Gaudete et Exsultate* (2018).

One may observe that the theme of joy seems like a thread running through the documents above. There is then in some sense a continuity for what one first observes, starting from the time of the Vatican Council II and to which Pope Francis is now carrying out. He has himself admitted as desiring to implement the proposals found in those documents.

The final chapter will take one into the practical implications of how hope and joy play out in praxis. One may take a look at the contemporary challenges of poverty, lack of peace and harm caused due to environmental degradation to see what Francis has to offer. In taking the name of St Francis, one discovers also the priorities of Pope Francis' papacy.

Having taken a glimpse at some aspects, let us now immerse ourselves into the subject matter by first taking stock of the influences which shaped Pope Francis.

CHAPTER 1- THE INFLUENCES THAT SHAPED POPE FRANCIS

1.0 Introduction

Why “hope and joy”? – Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* 80 mentions that among the many obstacles to evangelization it was “above all lack of *joy* and *hope*” that constituted the main obstacle.¹ The bishops at Vatican II called the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes* – ‘joy and hope’.

The first pope from outside Europe in 1200 years, *Time magazine*’s Man of the year for 2013, Jorge Mario Bergoglio talks of wanting to have a poor Church for the poor. In the early addresses of Pope Francis, two key words that were repeatedly used were “joy” and “mercy”. He delivered a series of Wednesday Catechesis on the theme of “Hope”.

What is it that has shaped Pope Francis (Jorge Mario Bergoglio) and where does he intend to take the Church? He brings a unique set of ideas and experiences to his role as bishop of Rome and universal pastor of the Catholic Church. We shall commence by looking at some of these ideas and experiences that have shaped Bergoglio and so have a better grasp on the direction he is leading the Church towards.

It is his pastoral approach that concerns us and in a special way this dissertation, particularly the *hope* that he offers to the Church in the midst of many challenges she faces and doing that with a *joyous* spirit.

1.1 THE INFLUENCES IN THE UPBRINGING OF JORGE MARIO BERGOGLIO

It is appropriate to investigate the formative influences in his life, namely, with his family, his upbringing, and the context of the Church in Argentina that have shaped his thinking while also considering the intellectual influences he has had in his life.

¹ Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 8 December 1975, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_p-vi_exh_19751208_evangelii-nuntiandi.html, n.80.

1.1.1 Sister Dolores Tortolo

This Mercy nun is one of the three women whom Austen Ivereigh mentions as having influenced Bergoglio's life. She was the one who prepared him for his First Communion at the age of eight. He has acknowledged receiving from her a catechetical formation that was balanced, optimistic, joyful and responsible. When in the year 2000 the nun received an award for a lifetime's teaching, Bergoglio spoke on that occasion that the value of the interior life and fraternal love was witnessed through the testimony of Sister Dolores' life.² She was by his side when just a year after entering the Buenos Aires seminary he was acutely sick with pleurisy, an inflammation of the chest cavity. When others unsuccessfully tried to cheer him up it was Sr Dolores who told him that in his pain, he was imitating Christ. Thus, bearing it became possible by looking at its redemptive value. In some way it helped him understand that a suffering person needs the love of others who respect one's silence.³ She would also be present at his first Mass as priest.

1.1.2 Grandmother Rosa Vassallo

Rosa was Jorge's godmother as well as his grandmother with whom he spent most of his first five years. Almost every morning, Rosa picked up Jorge and took him around the corner to her home, where he stayed until late in the day.⁴ A woman of deep faith and political skill, she took him to Church and taught him to pray. José Ignacio, the pope's nephew, confirms that it was Rosa who taught not only the future Pope to pray but did so also with his parents, Regina and Mario, handing down those values as an inheritance to all of them.⁵ Bergoglio himself acknowledged that when talking of his grandmother in a 2012 radio interview, "She had a big influence on my faith.... . She'd tell me stories about the saints. She left a deep spiritual imprint on me."⁶

² Austen Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer: Francis and the Making of a Radical Pope*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 2014), 12.

³ *Ibid.*, 49

⁴ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵ Salvatore Cernuzio, "Pope's Nephew: Francis Was Always an 'Attentive and Thoughtful' Uncle," 11 August 2015, accessed 9 October 2018, <https://zenit.org/articles/pope-s-nephew-francis-was-always-an-attentive-and-thoughtful-uncle/>

⁶ Mark K. Shriver, *Pilgrimage: My Search for the Real Pope Francis*, accessed on 2 October 2018, <https://www.chapters.indigo.ca/en-ca/books/pilgrimage-my-search-for-the/9780812987553-item.html>.

Her faith recognized goodness of people beyond the boundaries of religion. At a time when a good number of Catholics believed that non-Catholics were going to hell, she transmitted to him that there are good people doing good things.⁷ Not surprisingly then do we find Pope Francis being very ecumenical and wanting to dialogue with people of different religious traditions. She impressed on him the awareness that everything must end, and everything had to be left behind in good order.⁸ His grandmother was a supporting presence and he keeps a letter of hers in his breviary.

1.1.3 Esther Ballestrino de Careaga

Esther was his boss for three years at a food laboratory while Bergoglio was doing his diploma as a chemical technician. She was a Paraguayan communist who in 1949 had fled the country's dictatorship and moved to Buenos Aires. Here she founded a movement of mothers who denounced the killing of their children by the then regime in Argentina. She taught Bergoglio to think about political reality.⁹

According to Bergoglio she also taught him a key lesson about work and about doing a job properly, as well as the seriousness of hard work.¹⁰ He also acknowledged that he owed a lot to her.¹¹

1.1.4 Peronism

Argentinian politics saw Juan Domingo Perón come into power in 1946 when Bergoglio was ten years old. Perón and his wife laid the foundations for what was to become a defining political framework for Argentine politics – the ideology of *Peronism*.

⁷ Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer*, 15.

⁸ Paul Vallely, *Pope Francis: Untying the Knots: Struggle for the Soul of Catholicism*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 27.

⁹ Claire Giangravè, "'I consulted a psychoanalyst,' Pope Francis reveals in new book", accessed 2 October 2018, <https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2017/09/01/consulted-psychoanalyst-pope-francis-reveals-new-book/>

¹⁰ Vallely, *Pope Francis*, 17

¹¹ Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer*, 37.

In Perón's first term as president there was a remarkable period of social advancement for the Argentine working class. For instance, the average wage of the workers increased by one third in Perón's first five years. Also, the number of unionized workers became the highest in Latin America and significant progress was made in access to medical care, social security and education for ordinary Argentines. Alongside this one mentions the charitable concerns of Perón's wife, Evita which together with the President's initiatives shaped and influenced the Argentine psyche greatly.¹²

According to Fr Deck, Bergoglio himself had been charged with being a Peronist in a Buenos Aires journal.¹³ One of Argentina's leading scholars and broadcasters, Pedro Brieger opines that 'Peronism' has clearly influenced Bergoglio. He claims that as Peronism is a popular movement, if one wanted to be close to the masses, one had to be Peronist.¹⁴

However, it is said that Peronism is not a simple movement to interpret as there are right-wing and left-wing forms of Peronism. This is due to the fact that Juan Perón himself adopted a range of positions at different times of his political career. Samuel Gregg identifies some broad features of Peronism like: i) Reliance on charismatic figures, i.e. based on a cult of personality; ii) Populism, i.e. seeking the appeal of "the people" especially those from the working class and lower middle-class backgrounds; (iii) Nationalism of the political and economic type.¹⁵

Fr Deck lists certain traits of Peronism that influenced Bergoglio: firstly, the inclusion of and concern for all social classes and forgotten elements of society; secondly, the ability to communicate with the broadest possible audience; thirdly, an ability to avoid or transcend narrow ideologies of left or right; and fourthly, the using of the resulting popularity as a source of leverage for further change.¹⁶

¹² Allan Figueroa Deck, *Francis, Bishop of Rome: The Gospel for the Third Millennium*, (New York: Paulist Press, 2016), 13-14.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁴ Andrew West, "Pope Francis: how Buenos Aires made the man," 13 March 2014, accessed 19 October 2018, <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/religionandethicsreport/5317996>

¹⁵ Samuel Gregg, "Understanding Pope Francis: Argentina, Economic Failure, and the *Teología Del Pueblo*." *Independent Review* 21/3 (Winter, 2017): 361-374. <https://search-proquest-com.ejournals.um.edu.mt/docview/1848785312?accountid=27934>

¹⁶ Deck, *Francis, Bishop of Rome*, 14.

However, on the other hand though Bergoglio lived in these times and has been named by some as a ‘Peronist Pope’, Rev Dr Federico Colautti mentions that he finds this term superficial and unjust as the social justice that Perón implemented came from the Church and not the other way around.¹⁷ There are mixed opinions on the influence Perón has had in Bergoglio’s life but the years of the Perón administration happen to also coincide with Bergoglio’s Jesuit priestly formation and have therefore influenced him in one way or another.

1.1.5 Fr Enrico Pozzoli

Pozzoli belonged to the Salesian order. His acquaintance with Mario, Bergoglio’s father, took place during his visits to Buenos Aires and later became Mario’s mentor, adviser and spiritual director. Don Enrico had arranged for a sum of 2000 pesos to be lent to the family to buy a cafeteria. Bergoglio acknowledged the fact that the family took their Christian commitment seriously was due to Fr Enrico.¹⁸

He was himself baptized on Christmas day 1936 by Fr Enrico. When Bergoglio was keen to respond to the call of joining the seminary, he was instrumental to prepare the family to surrender to God’s plans especially since Bergoglio’s mother was reluctant to do so at first.¹⁹ He guided Bergoglio for many years and in the first book that Bergoglio published he paid him a warm tribute.²⁰

1.1.6 Ignatian Spirituality

Matthew Shelly writes that Bergoglio, “has made it clear on more than one occasion that his Jesuit formation and his experience as a Jesuit, including his time as provincial of the Jesuits of Argentina in the 1970s, have decisively shaped his thought and papal practices much more than particular theological figures or schools.”²¹

¹⁷ Dr. Federico Colautti, “Pope Francis: Understanding His Language and Mission,” 1 October 2015, accessed 17 October 2018, https://iti.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Pope_Francis_Language_and_Mission.pdf.

¹⁸ Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer*, 10.

¹⁹ Ibid, 38.

²⁰ Ibid, 50.

²¹ Matthew Ashley, "Pope Francis as Interpreter of Ignatius's Spiritual Exercises," *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 17, no. 2 (2017): 165-179, accessed 7 October 2018, <https://muse.jhu.edu/>.

He was a young man of twenty-one years at the time he joined the Jesuits. In the interview with Fr Spadaro, he mentions that the Jesuits' missionary spirit, community and discipline is what made him decide to join them.²²

One notices the influence of St Ignatius of Loyola when for instance Francis cites Ignatius' maxim on more than one occasion: "Non coerceri maximo, contineri tamen a minimo, divinum est, we find a happy balance in the heart's attitude towards things great and small." He explains that Ignatius was able to combine severity with sweetness, rigour with gentleness. He was always ready to make exceptions. The key is discernment: first know what is big and what is little, and then correct the big, and gloss over the small, always keeping the whole, the larger picture in mind.²³

This influence is seen in his first Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* where he writes that "We need to pay attention to the global to avoid narrowness and banality. Yet we also need to look to the local, which keeps our feet on the ground."²⁴ So too when he claims, "We must see and seek the greater good but must also work on a small scale, in our own neighborhood, always keeping the large perspective in mind."²⁵

In his address to the Roman Curia on December 21, 2017, he highlighted Ignatius' use of the senses, starting with the external ones, thus enabling the person to perceive reality, as mentioned in his *Spiritual Exercises*, n. 121.²⁶ Moreover in the exhortation, *Gaudete et Exsultate* one finds him make use of the Ignatian principle of "holy indifference":

²² Antonio Spadaro, "A Big Heart Open to God: The exclusive interview with Pope Francis", *America* (209/8):16-17, 30 September 2013, <https://search-proquest-com.ejournals.um.edu/mt/docview/2203277117?accountid=27934>.

²³ Peter Schineller, "Pope Francis - Deeply Ignatian and Deeply Jesuit", 28 January 2016, accessed 6 October 2018, <http://saltandlighttv.org/blogfeed/getpost.php?id=68151&language=en>.

²⁴ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, n.234.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, n.235.

²⁶ Pope Francis, Audience, To the Roman Curia for the exchange of Christmas greetings, 21 December 2017, accessed 28 November 2018, <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2017/12/21/171221.html>.

“We need to train ourselves to be indifferent in our attitude to all created things, in all that is permitted to our free will and not forbidden; so that on our part, we do not set our hearts on good health rather than bad, riches rather than poverty, honour rather than dishonour, a long life rather than a short one, and so in all the rest.”²⁷

These are just some references that highlight the Ignatian spirituality which permeates his spirituality.

1.2 ARGENTINE LIBERATION THEOLOGY

It is not inappropriate to commence with a cursory view of Argentine history here. Catholicism came to the southern continent of present-day Latin America in the early sixteenth century through the evangelization of Spanish and Portuguese missionaries accompanying the colonists. In 1508, Pope Julius II gave authority to King Ferdinand of Spain to appoint bishops in the Spanish colonies in the New World, subject to papal approval. The resulting system was called *real patronado* “royal patronage”.²⁸ Bishops would be chosen from the elite classes even after Spain was expelled. Many priests felt alienated from the bishops and the hierarchal Church was equated with privilege, elitism and the injustices of particular political regimes. With the entry of liberal and masonic thought in the nineteenth century there was anti-clericalism that led to animosity towards priests which is said to have left a lasting memory.²⁹ The May Revolution of 1810 in Argentina led to the ousting of the Spanish Viceroy, and the colony declared independence in 1816, though fighting with Spanish royalists would continue until 1824. With struggles with different factions over the years on how the country should be governed, the Constitution was approved in 1853.³⁰

²⁷ Pope Francis, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 9 April 2018, accessed 29 November 2018. http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap_20161120_misericordia-et-misera.html. n 69.

²⁸ Keith Lemna and David H. Delaney, “Three Pathways into the Theological Mind of Pope Francis”, *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, 12/1 (2014): 28, accessed on November 14, 2018, https://www.academia.edu/16136926/Three_Pathways_into_the_Theological_Mind_of_Pope_Francis.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

Argentina shares the experience of Latin America in many ways but there are differences too. One striking aspect is that the indigenous population quickly declined, almost to disappearance, primarily due to nineteenth-century European immigration; today the population is about 97 percent white.

Argentina has had an unusually large middle class for much of its history, though one economic collapse in the 1980s and a second one at the beginning of the new millennium reduced its size to its present-day dimensions. Even so, Argentina has throughout its history been one of the most prosperous countries in Latin America. Although the class divide between rich and poor was not as pronounced in Argentina as it was in neighbouring countries, most Argentinians were still aware of this acute poverty from experiences in certain areas of the cities and from the situation in rural areas and neighbouring countries.³¹

1.2.1 The Theology of the People (*Teología del pueblo*)

Despite its countless forms of natural resources, Latin America is a continent marked by poverty. At the same time, Christianity is another of its more conspicuous characteristics. This is expressed through various colourful forms of popular piety such as processions, vigils and public prayer. This has evolved over a span of five centuries. In recent decades it was first labeled “popular religion,” then Paul VI called it “popular piety,” and finally the 2007 Aparecida document called it “popular spirituality.”³² This is expressed in practices like the veneration of local saints, public processions, localized religious art and specific prayers that draw from the experience and history from which the prayer emerged.³³

It was during and immediately after the Second Vatican Council that the ‘theology of the people’ emerged in Argentina. The Argentine Bishops Conference formed the Bishop’s Pastoral Commission known as COEPAL in 1966 and issued a pastoral declaration for the post-conciliar period that recognized the paradigm shift Vatican II represented and pointed the Argentine Church in a new direction.

³¹ Ibid., 31.

³² Andrea Gagliarducci, “The ‘theology of the people’, according to Pope Francis,” 27 April 2015, accessed on 20 October 2018, <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/the-theology-of-the-people-according-to-pope-francis-83384>.

³³ Gregg, Samuel. “Understanding Pope Francis: Argentina, Economic Failure, and the *Teología Del Pueblo*.” *Independent Review* 21, no. 3 (Winter, 2017): 368, <https://search-proquest-com.ejournals.um.edu.mt/docview/1848785312?accountid=27934>.

While radical liberation theologians looked to Marxist interpretations of the Gospel, theology of the people was founded on common peoples' culture and devotion, including their spirituality and sense of justice. From the four currents of liberation theology, one of these was, “theology of the people”, a term coined by Juan Luis Segundo.³⁴

The main proponents of this theology were mainly three priests, though not the only ones: Lucio Gera, Rafael Tello and the Jesuit Juan Carlos Scannone. Bergoglio used their theological conclusions in his pastoral ministry at Buenos Aires.³⁵ The contribution of each will be analyzed next.

1.2.2 Lucio Gera

Gera (1924-2012) has been regarded as the most important Argentine theologian of the second half of the twentieth century.³⁶ “In Argentina we have two very important people with whom we were formed in the theology of the people: Fathers Lucio Gera and Rafael Tello,” writes an Argentine priest, Fr Di Paola from the archdiocese of Buenos Aires when Bergoglio was archbishop there.³⁷ Aspects of *realism*, *humanity* and *pilgrimage* echoed in Bergoglio have been markedly influenced by Gera.³⁸

³⁴ Juan Carlos Scannone, “Pope Francis and the Theology of the People,” *Theological Studies* 77 (2016): 124.

³⁵ Rafael Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People*, trans. by Philip Berryman, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017) x.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 161.

³⁷ Scannone, “Pope Francis and the Theology of the People,” 118-119.

³⁸ Deck, *Francis, Bishop of Rome*, 37.

Lucio Gera was a diocesan priest who had a long productive life as a pastor, teacher and theological writer. He was consultant and writer in both CELAM (*Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano*) conferences of Medellin (1968) and Puebla (1979). He served in a similar capacity also in the San Miguel Conference of Argentine Bishops in 1969. In his teaching and writings, he focused on workers' issues, the poor and the beatitudes and the inculturation of the faith in the popular culture of Argentina and Latin America. He was instrumental in investigating the situation on the ground as *La teología del pueblo* was produced. The *Document of San Miguel* (1969), a foundational document for post-Vatican II Argentina, included his contributions. The sixth chapter of this document dealt with pastoral ministry as the embodiment of the Church that wanted to become the People of God in the midst of poor people.³⁹ He wrote salient paragraphs of the *Document of Puebla* that gave importance to people's religion. He linked popular piety to the doctrine of *sensus fidei* which affirms the presence of the Holy Spirit in the faithful institutions of all the baptized.⁴⁰

According to Luciani, Bergoglio is influenced by Gera's theology of historical processes and personal lives. Here the present geopolitical vision of the Church is not a mere strategic vision for the sake of its own power, or for world domination as it was in the past, but is called to follow the spirit of Jesus who accompanies and promotes the processes of humanization among brothers and sisters and of salvation in history.⁴¹

1.2.3 Rafael Tello

Allan Deck cites Bergoglio who wrote: "Fr Tello's life was a gift of the Holy Spirit to our Church. His creativity was unequalled".⁴² Francis' pastoral vision resonates with the original insights and concerns of Rafael Tello (1917-2002) which shall be highlighted below.⁴³

³⁹ Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People*, 6.

⁴⁰ Deck, *Francis, Bishop of Rome*, 38-39.

⁴¹ Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People*, 125.

⁴² Deck, *Francis, Bishop of Rome*, 44.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 58.

Tello's influence on the development of popular devotion is notable. Two popular sanctuaries in the Buenos Aires area are: San Cayetano de Liniers and Nuestra Señora de Luján. He saw to a type of rebranding for both sanctuaries in the 1970s which saw to an integration of sociopolitical with devotional concerns. The bringing together of religious fervor and spirituality with direct response to the reality of poverty was done in a nonviolent and non-Marxist manner.

The principle of 'popular culture' was at work here. This means that it is not arm-chair ideology of the right or left but a blend of popular religion, spirituality and mysticism, coming from (*desde*) the people that is the source of evangelization. The distinctive character of these places continues decades later where expressions of deep faith and piety are noticeable as also aspects of social services like food, clothing, housing and medical needs being provided for. The areas of advocacy, empowerment of the community and political mobilization are also catered for.⁴⁴ Luciani quotes theologian Rafael Tello:

The Argentine Church must see itself and its problems from the standpoint of the people. The people would then be the illuminating and unifying element of the problematic of the Church. That means seeing it not in terms of its internal conflicts, its internal difficulties, or its internal issues but in terms of its insertion, as people of God, in the Argentine people. This would lead to a course of action connected to that insertion, namely, the retrieval of the Christian values that are in the people ... seeing from the viewpoint of the people and adopting a people-centered approach to pastoral action.⁴⁵

The focus of Tello is on the concrete human person as found in the documents of Vatican Council II, as expressed in popular culture in what he terms *pastoral popular*.⁴⁶ In the evangelization of Latin America five hundred years ago, a distinctive culture came about whose essence is captured in the category of the *pueblo* (people). Two things required of the Church in the Spirit of Vatican II are firstly, to find ways for the faithful to exercise leadership and ministry within it and secondly, to be engaged in the historic movement of the people that goes beyond the Church itself.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Deck, *Francis, Bishop of Rome*, 47-48.

⁴⁵ Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People*, 6-7.

⁴⁶ Deck, *Francis, Bishop of Rome*, 49-50.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 50.

This influence is seen in Bergoglio who believes each people creates its own culture and is protagonist of its history and should be respected as its own agent of evangelization (*Evangelii Gaudium* 122). He speaks on the need for people to evangelize the people as a sign of true inculturation.⁴⁸

Bergoglio's closeness to popular devotion and being a man of popular piety is highlighted by Fr Francisco de Roux, the Provincial Superior of the Jesuits in Columbia. This experience of God is captured in the simplicity of popular practices, processions, shrines, the Christmas novena and the family saying the rosary. All comprise the way simple people live their faith.⁴⁹ Indeed in *Evangelii Gaudium* one reads:

the different peoples among whom the Gospel has been inculturated are active collective subjects or agents of evangelization. This is because each people are the creator of their own culture and the protagonist of their own history. Culture is a dynamic reality which a people constantly recreates; each generation passes on a whole series of ways of approaching different existential situations to the next generation, which must in turn reformulate it as it confronts its own challenges... Once the Gospel has been inculturated in a people, in their process of transmitting their culture they also transmit the faith in ever new forms; hence the importance of understanding evangelization as inculturation... One can say that "a people continuously evangelizes itself" This is an ongoing and developing process, of which the Holy Spirit is the principal agent.⁵⁰

In conclusion, we find that the considerations of language, culture, spirituality of the people that Rafael Tello proposes are key elements that have shaped the pastoral approach of Bergoglio. Tello, as one of the most important representatives of the theology of the people has been quoted by Bergoglio on several occasions. The writings of Father Tello, first opposed by the hierarchy, had been subsequently rehabilitated by Bergoglio when he became Cardinal of Buenos Aires. In a nutshell, key elements of *the people as subjects of evangelization, the path of the evangelization of culture and the option for the poor* may be considered as significant contributions of Rafael Tello.

⁴⁸ Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People*, 21.

⁴⁹ Vallely, *Pope Francis*, 26.

⁵⁰ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* n. 122

1.2.4 Juan Carlos Scannone

Juan Carlos Scannone (born 1931), one of the most influential voices for a theology of the people is a professor in the Faculties of Philosophy and Theology in the Universidad del Salvador (Área San Miguel) in Argentina, the same faculty where Pope Francis was rector between 1980 and 1986. When Bergoglio had come to study humanities at the Seminary, Scannone taught him Greek and literature. Scannone has published eight books and authored numerous articles on philosophy, theology, and the social doctrine of the Church.

Scannone, a Jesuit priest, enumerates the characteristics of the methodology of theology of the people which are: (1) the use of historical-cultural analysis, privileging it over structural social analysis without discarding the latter; (2) the employment of more synthetic and hermeneutical sciences such as history, culture, and religion (as complements to more analytical and structural sciences) as a form of mediation to get to know reality and to transform it; (3) the rooting of such scientific mediations in a sapiential knowledge and discernment for the sake of the “affective connaturality that love gives” (*Evangelii Gaudium* n. 125), which, in turn, confirms their scientific character; and (4) taking a critical distance from the Marxist method of social analysis and its categories of understanding and practical strategies.⁵¹ His view on the Latin American culture, is that it is neither uniform nor homogenous nor without sharp contradictions. However, it has sufficient historical unity and similar nuclei to consider it in terms of a pluralistic or analogical unity.⁵²

⁵¹ Scannone, “Pope Francis and the Theology of the People,” 124.

⁵² M. Daniel Carroll R. ed., *Contexts for Amos: Prophetic Poetics in Latin American Perspective*, accessed 24 February 2019. <https://books.google.com.mx/books?id=j2-A05X9sIIc>, p 94.

To conclude then, Luciani citing Victor Fernandez states that the theology of the people has been accused of opting for the ignorant masses, people lacking in culture and critical thinking. However, what the theology of the people advocates is something different. Here the poor are not merely the object of liberation or education but are seen as individuals capable of living the faith legitimately in their own manner and capable of forging paths based on their popular culture. In looking at life differently or expressing themselves, it implies they have a different culture, one that differs from the middle class.⁵³

⁵³ Luciani, *Pope Francis and the Theology of the People*, 9.

1.2.5 Pope Paul VI

Pope Paul VI (1897 – 1978) led the Church from 1963 to 1978, when Bergoglio was in his mid-20s to his early 40s. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, Paul VI's apostolic exhortation published in December 1975, is considered to be Bergoglio's favourite Church document, one that he would cite throughout his time as provincial, rector and later bishop in Argentina.⁵⁴ Inspired by this document he would organize missionary teams of priests to venture further afield, into the most remote parts of the country to preach the Gospel.⁵⁵ Towards the end of his Angelus address on 5 August 2018, Pope Francis recalled Paul VI, calling him a "great pope of modernity," and remembering him "with much veneration and gratitude."⁵⁶ For him Paul VI's genius in writing *Humanae Vitae* was prophetic in having the courage to go against the majority to defend moral discipline and to oppose present and future neo-Malthusianism.⁵⁷ This is theory considers earth's resources can only support a finite population and hence population growth needs to be kept in check.

In a recently published book, French Jesuit Fr Pierre de Charentenay mentions a special relationship between the two pontificates.⁵⁸ He notices a lot of similarities in viewpoints found between Pope Paul VI's *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and *Ecclesiam Suam* with *Evangelii Gaudium* of Pope Francis. Themes such as possessing fervour in the work of evangelization; bearing witness; presenting the Gospel in a language that is simple, clear, direct and well-adapted; Jesus' command to love one another; their criticisms of a consumer society; dialogue as an important dimension of ecclesial life; reading the signs of the times; an emphasis on poverty and charity; the goal of the long journey being joy. These dimensions were highlighted by both Popes.

⁵⁴ Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer*, 121-122

⁵⁵ Valley, *Pope Francis*, 41.

⁵⁶ Pope Francis, *Angelus*, Saint Peter's Square, 5 August 2018, accessed 26 October 2018, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/angelus/2018/documents/papa-francesco_angelus_20180805.html.

⁵⁷ Valley, *Pope Francis*, 194.

⁵⁸ Ary Waldir Ramos Diaz, "10 Amazing similarities between Pope Paul VI and Pope Francis", August 10, 2018, accessed 28 October 2018, <https://aleteia.org/2018/08/10/10-amazing-similarities-between-pope-paul-vi-and-pope-francis/>.

John Allen Jr., editor of an online Catholic Publication, states that like Paul VI in his time, Francis seems to want a group of pastorally-minded, centre-left prelates to steer the Church in a direction perceived as more dialogical and less rigid. According to Allen, Paul VI was looking for pastors — men who weren't necessarily dogmatic theologians, but who were in touch with trends of modern culture, and able to project a friendlier and more open face to the world.⁵⁹ Paul Valley adds that in the last year of Vatican II, Paul VI set up the Synod of Bishops that sought to make greater use of the bishops' assistance for the good of the Universal Church.⁶⁰

Paul VI also wanted a Church that was open to evolving, and in dialogue with the modern world. The theme of dialogue would be treated at great length in his 1964 encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, which was intended to set the table for the final stages of Vatican II's reflections. Allen concludes that the canonization of Paul VI by Pope Francis wasn't just ratifying the life of Paul VI, but in a certain sense, his legacy as well.⁶¹

Massimo Borghesi, who has authored a book on the intellectual formation of Bergoglio, has this to add in his email comments to the *National Catholic Register*: “Bergoglio is a model disciple of the Council, not in the sense of progressivism that he has never shared, but in the sense of Paul VI, the pontiff in whom he most recognizes himself.”⁶²

⁵⁹ John Allen Jr., “Francis canonizing not only Paul VI's life, but also his legacy”, 21 February 2018, accessed 26 October 2018, <https://cruxnow.com/news-analysis/2018/02/21/francis-canonizing-not-paul-vis-life-also-legacy/>.

⁶⁰ Valley, *Pope Francis*, 328.

⁶¹ John Allen Jr., “Francis canonizing not only Paul VI's life, but also his legacy”.

⁶² Edward Pentin, “Pope Francis Is a ‘Mystic’ Trying to Solve Left-Right Dichotomy in the Church”, 21 April 2018, accessed 27 October 2018, <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/author-pope-francis-is-a-mystic-trying-to-solve-left-right-dichotomy-in-the>.

1.2.6 The Aparecida Document

Since his election in 2013 Pope Francis has quoted or borrowed from the Aparecida Document many times. For instance, in the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* there are twenty references to Aparecida. The Fifth General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean (CELAM V) was held in Aparecida, Brazil, during 13–31 May 2007. Bergoglio, who was then the archbishop of Buenos Aires, the largest diocese in the country, was both an important protagonist at the conference and redactor-in-chief of the concluding document.⁶³

The cultural and ecclesial context in Argentina gives some idea of what Bergoglio faced around that time. Some years earlier, in December 2001, the president of the republic of Argentina resigned during a financial crisis. Turmoil was felt across Argentina and especially in the Argentine cities where riots broke out and “deepened the wounds in the nation’s fragile social tissue.”⁶⁴ The Argentine Bishops’ Conference in a document (*Navega Mar Adentro*) published in 2003 recognized a transformation within different areas of society and culture revealing an underlying paradigm shift, an “epochal change” that compromised national identity. Political corruption and power struggles undermined the possibility for true progress. The resultant cultural and economic crisis affected the family, and at the religious level there was a sense of individualism and religious indifference. However there still seemed to be a strong sense of belonging in Catholicism and expression of the same through popular piety.⁶⁵

⁶³ Duncan Dormor & Alana Harris, *Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium and the Renewal of the Church*, (New York: Paulist Press, 2017), 20.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 23.

The Church had not been able to provide relief and answers that the flock were looking for and had not given importance to the members' formation, and many endeavours lacked imagination and interest. There was an inadequate pastoral response to various pastoral challenges and a widening gap between growing pastoral needs and the lack of people equipped to address them; one observes the growth of relationships between certain Church personalities and members of government creating a network of power and influence, independent of the bishops conference.⁶⁶ *Navega Mar Adentro* identified these difficulties not as problems but as challenges and with an energetic call for evaluation and renewal of the Church in Argentina during the years of Bergoglio as archbishop.

The Aparecida document is a hefty text of 554 paragraphs and covers a wide range of topics. The document underscores the elements seen to be a key to the Church's path in Latin America. Awareness of many changes taking place in the continent called for a renewed impetus for evangelization. "We must all start again with Christ".⁶⁷ Thus starting again is found in the personal and communal encounter with Jesus Christ which the Church must rediscover. There is no discipleship without mission and no mission without a collective and personal intimacy with the Lord. Jesus transforms all dimensions of human existence so that the people may have a full and dignified life.⁶⁸ The Church's missionary style is "by attraction" as Christ attracts by the power of his love.⁶⁹ Ecumenical dialogue is encouraged to promote discipleship and mission in communion.⁷⁰ One of the key passages in the document talks about "pastoral conversion".⁷¹

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶⁷ Fifth General Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops, *Aparecida Document*, May 2007, accessed 30 October 2018, <https://www.celam.org/aparecida/Ingles.pdf>, n.12.

⁶⁸ *Aparecida Document*, n. 356.

⁶⁹ *Aparecida Document*, n. 159.

⁷⁰ *Aparecida Document*, n. 233,234.

⁷¹ *Aparecida Document*, n. 370.

The pastoral conversion of our communities requires moving from a pastoral ministry of mere conservation to a decidedly missionary pastoral ministry. Thus, it will be possible for “the program of the Gospel to continue to take root in the life of the Church everywhere” with new missionary zeal, making the Church visibly present as a mother who reaches out, a welcoming home, a constant school of missionary communion.⁷²

The document stresses the need for the Church “to be jolted to prevent it from becoming well established in comfort, stagnation, and lukewarmness, aloof from the suffering of the continent’s poor. (DA 362). In *Evangelii Gaudium*, one finds numerous references being made to the Aparecida document, which in essence places the emphasis for the Church to grow in her missionary outreach.⁷³ The task the Church had set herself to in Latin America, has with Pope Francis’ pontificate, now gained a global reach with two implications: firstly, that the mission shapes the model the Church adopts to fulfil her apostolic calling and secondly, it is by attraction and sharing of the life received from the Trinity that the Church finds conversion and renewal in her missionary work. This reform is to be done in a decentralized manner.⁷⁴

Methol Ferré had stated that the Latin American Church would have its time in becoming a source church for the entire Church just as the European Church has been for almost two millennia. One may conclude that with the Aparecida document’s influence on the apostolic exhortation by Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, one can see this as being prophetic. One observes the welcoming and maternal dimensions of the Church coming to the fore. The sharing of the Gospel message is not so much through means of proselytism as by attraction to the fundamental message of the Gospel which is addressed to all. In a nutshell, one finds that the Aparecida document is instrumental in shaping the papacy of Pope Francis.

⁷² *Aparecida Document*, n.370

⁷³ Dormor & Harris, *Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium and the Renewal of the Church*, 28.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.

1.3 INTELLECTUAL INFLUENCES

We shall now deal with the thought that has shaped Bergoglio to what he is today and what shapes his Petrine ministry. According to Massimo Borghesi, in response to his questions, the Pope responded through recorded audio files in which he shared more details on his intellectual formation. He listed six intellectuals who have influenced him at different times in his life: French Jesuit Father Gaston Fessard, Argentine philosopher Amelia Podetti, Uruguayan historian Methol Ferré, Polish-German Jesuit Father Erich Przywara, Italian-German Father Romano Guardini, and Swiss theologian Father Hans Urs von Balthasar.⁷⁵ One may note on the varied influences, both European and Latin American that have shaped Francis. We shall look at them briefly to show what specific influence they have had on Bergoglio's life.

1.3.1 Fr Gaston Fessard

French Jesuit Gaston Fessard (1897-1978) was a prominent member of the French Resistance during World War II. Some believe he tried to give a Christian reading to the thinking of the 19th-century German philosopher George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, who saw history not in a Christian way, but as an intelligible process moving toward the realization of human freedom. Fessard is also considered by some to have been central to the revival of Hegelian thought on history in France. However, there are those like Borghesi who maintain that this is not true and that Fessard developed a non-Hegelian dialectical model, one that was far from Hegel. And so, it would be false to say Bergoglio is "Hegelian".⁷⁶

Fessard's book, *La Dialectique des 'Exercices Spirituels' de Saint Ignace de Loyola*, had a major role to play in Francis' intellectual formation according to Borghesi. In it the French Jesuit showed how Ignatian spirituality was determined by a polar tension between God and man, grace and freedom, the infinitely great and the infinitely small. This would develop into the "tensioned thinking" of Pope Francis.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Edward Pentin, "Author: Pope Francis Is a 'Mystic'".

⁷⁶ Ibid.,

⁷⁷ Borghesi, Massimo. *The Mind of Pope Francis*, 6-10.

1.3.2 Alberto Methol Ferré

Methol Ferré (1929 – 2009), a Uruguayan from Montevideo was raised the son of an agnostic. At the age of nineteen, he converted to Christianity thanks to the influence of the writings of G.K. Chesterton. He then taught both history and philosophy. He died at the age of 80. He has been considered as the most original Latin American lay Catholic thinker of the second half of the twentieth century and the dawn of the twenty first.⁷⁸

Methol Ferré played an important role in the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM), where he worked during the 1970s and the 1980s. This position allowed him to travel throughout Latin America and make himself known in intellectual and religious circles. He had a key role in the Third General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate, held in Puebla, in 1979.⁷⁹ It was during the preparatory work for the Puebla conference in 1979 that Bergoglio and Ferré came to know each other.⁸⁰ Bergoglio admits having liked reading Ferré and assimilating things from those writings; things such as the dialectic thought between finite and infinite, particular and universal which are considered as foundation of Ferré's thought.⁸¹

⁷⁸ Ibid., 85.

⁷⁹ Bárbara Díaz & Ramiro Podetti, "Catholicism and the building of Latin American culture: The reflections of Alberto Methol Ferré", 13 October 2017. <https://doi-org.ejournals.um.edu.mt/10.1111/rec3.12239>.

⁸⁰ Borghesi, Massimo. *The Mind of Pope Francis*, 86.

⁸¹ Ibid, 88.

1.3.3 Amelia Podetti

The thought of Amelia Podetti (1928 - 1979), dean of philosophy at the Jesuits' Salvador University (USAL), a specialist in Hegel who died young has influenced Bergoglio. She was part of a group of thinkers like Alberto Methol Ferré who saw the Church as key to the emergence of a Latin American consciousness which could take place in the modern world and become an important influence on it.⁸² Bergoglio acknowledges taking the intuition of the “peripheries” from her.⁸³ This, one discovers, is being mentioned in *Evangelii Gaudium*. Though a specialist in Hegel, she herself was not Hegelian and Bergoglio absorbed something of the “dialectic in an anti-Hegelian form” from her.

1.3.4 Romano Guardini

Bergoglio has long admired Guardini (1885 – 1968), having kept a copy of Guardini's book *The Lord* on his shelf, as a young Jesuit seminarian in the 1950s. There are some similarities, one finds, in their background: both men were the sons of Italian migrants, both answered calls to the priesthood, and both spent time studying chemistry.

In 1986, after his opponents gained control of the Argentine Jesuit province, Francis moved to Germany with the intention of writing a thesis on an early Guardini work, *Contrasts*. The thesis was never written, but according to Matthew Schmitz, the encyclical *Laudato Si'* provides us with Francis' fullest attempt to apply Guardini's thought.⁸⁴ Bishop Robert Barron sees on practically every page of this document, the influence of Romano Guardini and his distinctive take on modernity.⁸⁵

⁸² Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer*, 106

⁸³ Borghesi, *The Mind of Pope Francis*, 296.

⁸⁴ Matthew Schmitz, “Who is the philosopher who holds so much influence over Pope Francis?”, 25 June 2015, accessed 30 October 2018, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/acts-of-faith/wp/2015/06/25/who-is-the-philosopher-who-holds-so-much-influence-over-pope-francis/>.

⁸⁵ Robert Barron, “Laudato Si and Romano Guardini,” 23 June 2015, accessed 01 November 2018, <https://www.wordonfire.org/resources/article/laudato-si-and-romano-guardini/4808/>.

Romano Guardini's *The End of the Modern World* had mentioned the technocratic paradigm. In this reduction of the human person to the abstract, Bergoglio sees this prophecy being fulfilled. In a speech he gave at a conference of EU politicians on Re-thinking Europe he mentions:

“There are no citizens, only votes... .there are no migrants, only quotas. There are no workers, only economic markers. There are no poor, only thresholds of poverty.”⁸⁶

One shall discover more of Romano Guardini's influence on Francis in the chapters to come.

1.3.5 Hans Urs von Balthasar

Balthasar (1905 – 1988) was a Swiss Catholic priest who had to leave the Jesuits in 1950 after he founded a lay spiritual community with a female mystic. The Jesuits did not see the running of the institute as compatible with belonging to the Society. Hence, Balthasar had to choose between remaining a Jesuit and his involvement with the institute and so he left the Society of Jesus, feeling that God had called him to continue his work with this secular institute, a form of consecrated life that sought to work for the sanctification of the world from within the world. He accordingly remained without a role in the Church until 1956 when he was incardinated into the Diocese of Chur as a diocesan priest.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Austen Ivereigh, “In speech on Europe, Pope Francis lays out his own ‘Benedict option’”, October 30, 2017, accessed 29 November 2018, <https://cruxnow.com/news-analysis/2017/10/30/speech-europe-pope-francis-lays-benedict-option/>.

⁸⁷ “Hans Urs von Balthasar”, *Wikipedia*, assessed 03 December 2018, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Urs_von_Balthasar.

He has been influential in the papacies of John Paul II and Benedict XVI and likewise with the present pontiff. He was concerned about the secularization of the modern world and spoke eloquently about beauty and truth and authenticity, as ways to commune with God and witness the Gospel. One discovers in Balthasar's writings the need for the Church to shed some of the riches that tend to be more of a burden than a witness while drawing attention to the simplicity of holiness. Dr. Thanh Ha Tu cites Peter Caserella's remarks that, "there's a connection between von Balthasar's emphasis on the attractiveness of Jesus Christ and these gestures of Pope Francis, about a way of life that's simple and humble, that can be attractive..."⁸⁸

1.3.6 Fr Luigi Giussani

Giussani (1922 – 2005) was an Italian priest who grew up in the Milan area and founded the Communion and Liberation Movement ("Comunione e Liberazione," often shortened to CL). One aspect of its charism is that of *encounter*.

Robert Moynihan the co-founder and editor of *Inside the Vatican* magazine, affirms that Pope Francis is close to the thought of Giussani who felt the need for an authentic religious experience in order to respond to the challenge of secularism and the image of the Church as a museum piece from the past. Giussani reached out particularly to young people in Italy, but the movement also has a presence in many places including Buenos Aires.⁸⁹

Between 1998 and 2008, Bergoglio presented the Spanish editions of four different books by Giussani not as a "formal gesture of protocol" or "demonstrating merely a scholarly interest", but as "a dutiful act of gratitude".⁹⁰ In his address to the movement in 2015, Pope Francis mentions with gratitude the influence of Giussani in his priestly life.⁹¹ He mentions two reasons where he has

⁸⁸ Tu, Thanh Ha. "The 'Simplicity of Holiness': Why Popes Echo One Cleric's Words." *The Globe and Mail*, 29 March 2013, accessed 10 November 2018, <https://search-proquest-com.ejournals.um.edu.mt/docview/1321321415?accountid=27934>.

⁸⁹ YouTube video [23:30], "EWTN Bookmark - 2013-06-23- Robert Moynihan- Pray for Me..." 24 June 2013, accessed 16 November 2018, c.

⁹⁰ Borghesi, *The Mind of Pope Francis*, 276.

⁹¹ Pope Francis, *Address*, To the Communion and Liberation Movement, 7 March 2015, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/march/documents/papa-francesco_20150307_comunione-liberazione.html.

seemingly been influenced: firstly, on the personal dimension. Indeed, he states: “the good the man has done for me, in my life as a priest.” Secondly, he affirms: “I am convinced that his thought is profoundly human and reaches the human person’s most profound desires.”⁹²

The themes of encounter, awe, experience, method, the encounter of Jesus with John and Andrew as a paradigm are in some way significant categories of the formational vision of Father Giussani according to Borghesi.⁹³ This is visible in what Giussani writes in *The Religious Sense*:

One time, while I was teaching in a high school, I asked: “So then, according to you, what does “evidence” mean? Can one of you define it?” One boy, to the right of my chair, after a very long and embarrassed silence on the part of the students, exclaimed: “But then evidence is an inexorable presence!” Becoming aware of an inexorable presence! I open my eyes to this reality which imposes itself upon me, which does not depend upon me, but upon which I depend; it is the great conditioning of my existence—if you like, the given. It is this awe which awakens the ultimate question within us: not as a cold observation, but as a wonder pregnant with an attraction, almost a passivity in which simultaneously is conceived an attraction.⁹⁴

He finds in the reflections by Don Giussani a “phenomenology of nostalgia”, the feeling of being called home, being attracted to what is particularly our own, to what is most in keeping with our being.⁹⁵

This dynamic of “encountering Christ” is something Bergoglio can relate to. As a young teenager who loved to dance, he was on the way to a school picnic one day when he chanced to enter the family Church to say a prayer and he encountered a new priest he had never met before. Asking to have his confession heard, led to a significant *encounter* with God for him. He found God seeking him, as Valley states: “He saw him through the eyes of mercy and chose him.”⁹⁶ Bergoglio realized that God was indeed inviting him to look upon others with much compassion as if he was choosing them on behalf of the Lord, and not excluding

⁹² Borghesi, *The Mind of Pope Francis*, 277.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁹⁴ Luigi Giussani, *The Religious Sense*, trans. John Zucchi (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), 101.

⁹⁵ Borghesi, *The Mind of Pope Francis*, 277.

⁹⁶ Valley, *Pope Francis*, 20-21

anyone as all are being chosen by God. It was a defining experience for him that put him on the path of pursuing the priesthood. For Ivereigh, it is this characteristic of God who takes the initiative, who comes to find us and surprises us with his forgiveness, that Bergoglio has insisted on all his life.⁹⁷

This encounter has carried on and shapes his pontificate which is to show God's mercy especially as he invites visitors to Rome to visit the Church of St. Louis of France, and there to contemplate the painting of 'The Calling of St. Matthew,' by Caravaggio. This line of thought is in continuation with what previous popes have said. For instance, one finds in Pope Benedict XVI's *Deus Caritas Est* this aspect on the encounter of God with the person in. He had stated that we must all start again from Christ, recognizing that "being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction."⁹⁸

1.3.7 Other notable Influences

There are still some other notable influences that one considers in this section such as Pedro Arrupe, Yves Congar and the like. Fr Pedro Arrupe was the superior general of the Jesuits between 1965 and 1983. At the end of the Second Vatican Council, Fr Pedro Arrupe asked Jesuit provincials worldwide to survey the purpose of Jesuits in the modern world. After three years and around four hundred responses, Ivereigh in his biography, notes that what had become clear was the call to stand with the poor in their thirst for peace.⁹⁹ Bergoglio was an admirer of Arrupe and his influence in shaping Bergoglio can be seen as when Ivereigh points out how Bergoglio had quoted Arrupe's 1977 message which had spoken on the importance of contact with the reality and life experiences of the poor, as without it one ran the unhealthy risk of being abstract ideologists or fundamentalists.¹⁰⁰

Yves Congar, a French Dominican influential during Vatican Council II is another person who has impacted the thought of Bergoglio. For instance, one notices in Francis' pastoral vision, the influence of Congar's classical 1950 text, *True and*

⁹⁷ Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer*, 12-13.

⁹⁸ Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 25 December 2005, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20051225_deus-caritas-est.html, n. 1.

⁹⁹ Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer*, 92.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 193.

False Reform in the Church. In this text Congar affirms that true reform in the Church is concerned with pastoral issues that pertain to ordinary faithful people. Reform thus consisted in aspects such as restoring the Church to its poverty, holiness, missionary focus, obedience to the pope and unity.¹⁰¹ True reform, in Congar's vision, often comes from outsiders and those far from the centre of the Church and can require new structures.

From Ivereigh's biography, one notes that Bergoglio seems to have taken over from one of his predecessors in Argentina, Cardinal Eduardo Pironio, whose mission was the implementation of Vatican II in Latin America. According to Ivereigh, Pironio alienated not just the conservatives with his commitment to social justice but also the Left by failing to endorse the Marxist version of liberation theology. His pastoral strategy prioritized the poor.¹⁰² One observes a similar approach with Pope Francis.

1.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on some influences on Bergoglio's life that continue to direct his Papacy and it gives some clues on how he is shaping the leadership of the Church. His devout upbringing within his family has definitely shaped him into the person he is today. But undeniably, the Jesuit formation in which he has been trained has a bearing on the discernment that guides him in his decision making. Having not always made the right decisions as a young rector he has learnt from his mistakes and is more consultative in the decisions he now takes. One has only to note the number of synods we have had already in these few years to verify this fact. In choosing cardinals from the ends of the world he desires to make the church truly represented at the highest level. One also notes that he was in constant touch with some great Catholic thinkers and philosophers of the last century, not just in Latin America but from Europe too. He makes use of various sources in his homilies and meditations showing he is well read. His desire for 'a poor church for the poor' is not merely empty rhetoric but witnessed through his austere lifestyle and gestures of compassion to the lesser privileged ones. In him

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 93-94.

¹⁰² Ibid., 122-123.

one observes a beautiful living model of the words of our Lord: “I have not come to be served but to serve” (Mt 20:28). This gives one some background on Pope Francis as we move into the chapters ahead.

CHAPTER 2- HOPE AND JOY IN THE PASTORAL VISION OF FRANCIS

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The three theological virtues – faith, hope and charity – are central to the Christian spiritual life. Faith is the foundational one, and charity – ‘always patient and kind, never jealous’ (1 Cor 13: 4) – is seen as the greatest of the three. But hope too is essential and is a precious spiritual gift. Hope has been termed the forgotten virtue of our time, though one could see it as an important virtue that builds a bridge between faith and charity.

Writing nearly forty years ago, the Argentine Cardinal Pironio stated that the contemporary world needed the daily witness of souls to communicate to men and women the joy of salvation and the hope of the kingdom already begun, especially in a world paralyzed by pessimism and sorrow. To “be joyful in hope” is an invitation for all the baptized. It is passing on the joy of the kingdom to all and to be fervent prophets of hope.¹

One does observe a sense of turmoil not just in the world around but within the Church itself. While beginning his series of catechesis on the topic of hope in December 2016, Francis affirmed that it is imperative to address this subject in the contemporary dark situation, in which a noticeable number of persons sometimes feel disoriented at the surrounding evil and violence and are distressed.² Alongside this catechesis on hope we shall delve into other addresses of Francis, namely, his various Wednesday General Audiences, his homilies and the apostolic exhortations to take stock of what he has said and written. Though we shall look at the aspect of *joy* too it is good to note that it is an important corollary to the theme of *hope* and considered to be one of the hallmarks of Francis’ papacy.

¹ Eduardo Pironio, Tr. Ken White, *Joyful in Hope*, (Rome: St Paul’s Publications, 1979), 10-11.

² Pope Francis, General Audience, 7 December 2016. Accessed 12 January 2019. http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20161207_udienza-generale.html.

What is the connection between hope and joy? Is there a connection itself so that they may be addressed together? We can get a glimpse of this from what John Piper, the founder and teacher of desiringGod.org, states on his website: “Without Christian hope my life and your life cannot yield Christian joy or love or boldness or endurance. There are kinds of joy and love and courage and endurance that people have who don’t hope in God, but these are not the Christian graces that glorify God and give evidence of his saving work in the soul. Joy and love and boldness and endurance that do not grow on the tree of hope in the ground of grace and truth are of no spiritual or eternal value.”³ From this statement one could consider a close relationship between hope and joy. One may now attempt to study in some detail and investigate what hope is, and thereafter to explore the theme of joy.

2.1 TOWARDS A RIGHT UNDERSTANDING OF HOPE

At the conclusion of the Extraordinary Jubilee of mercy Francis published an apostolic letter, *Misericordia et Misera*, in which one finds him mentioning the need of witnesses to *hope* and true *joy* for our present times.

In a culture often dominated by technology, sadness and loneliness appear to be on the rise, not least among young people. The future seems prey to an uncertainty that does not make for stability. This often gives rise to depression, sadness and boredom, which can gradually lead to despair. We need witnesses to *hope* and true *joy* if we are to dispel the illusions that promise quick and easy happiness through artificial paradises. The profound sense of emptiness felt by so many people can be overcome by the hope we bear in our hearts and by the joy that it gives. We need to acknowledge the joy that rises up in a heart touched by mercy. Let us keep in mind, then, the words of the Apostle: “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Phil 4:4; cf. 1 Thess 5:16).⁴

Hope differs from optimism as Francis teaches: “it is something else, more! It is as if believers have an additional ‘piece of heaven’ over their heads. This is beautiful: we

³ John Piper, “The Fruit of Hope: Joy”, accessed 1 March 2019, <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/the-fruit-of-hope-joy>.

⁴Pope Francis, Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et Misera*, 20 November 2016, accessed 14 January 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap_20161120_misericordia-et-misera.html, n.3

are people with an extra piece of heaven over our heads, accompanied by a presence which some are not even able to sense.”⁵

According to Anthony Kelly, hope seems to have become a “nonrenewable resource”.⁶ A common misunderstanding is that of confusing hope with optimism. Kelly writes that optimism is not a bad thing in itself and seems fine within a system that is reasonably predictable. But genuine hope according to Kelly is “against hope”, meaning it stirs when the “secure system shows signs of breaking down.” Hope relies on “something that comes from outside the system”, according to him.⁷ Hope is considered to thrive in bad circumstances and in times of trials. Furthermore, hope is not a mere wish for something more but a virtue, the capacity to act well and which inspires action. For a Christian this arises from God who grants this gift, as Josef Pieper writes when he states that hope cannot exist except through and in Christ.⁸

2.2 THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS: THE FOUNDATION OF HOPE

Drawing from chapter 15 of St Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, in his catechesis on hope, Francis talks of Jesus’ resurrection as pivotal to experiencing life and joy. Christianity begins not as a philosophical system but in the graced event of a resurrection to which there were many witnesses (1 Cor 16:6-8). “Death thus being defeated brings a smile to one’s face” according to Francis.⁹ The risen Lord is the basis for an unfailing hope that never disappoints. A Christian’s hope is strong, safe and sound on the earth, where God has called him or her to walk, and it has an openness to eternity because it is founded on God who is always faithful.¹⁰

⁵ Pope Francis, General Audience, 4 October 2017, accessed 19 January 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20171004_udienza-generale.html.

⁶ Anthony Kelly, *Eschatology and Hope*, (New York: Orbis Books, 2006), 1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁸ Josef Pieper, Tr. by Mary Frances McCarthy, *On Hope*, [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986], 36.

⁹ Pope Francis, General Audience, 7 December 2016, accessed 20 January 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20161207_udienza-generale.html.

¹⁰ Pope Francis, General Audience, 10 April 2013, accessed 29 January 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130410_udienza-generale.html.

Francis asks that we remind one another on the angels' admonition at the site of the empty tomb: "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" He mentions that this is a question one needs to ask oneself. Doing so would help the hearers leave behind their empty sadness and open them to the horizons of joy and hope. This is the kind of hope which rolls back the stones from tombs and encourages one to proclaim the Good News, generating new life for others.¹¹ This true and deep joy that one has is founded on the certainty that the risen Christ shall never die again; rather, he is alive and at work in the Church and in the world. This certainty, for Francis, has abided in the hearts of believers since the first Easter morning.¹²

While preaching at an Easter Vigil ceremony one finds him stating:

The Church gives us the light of the Risen One, that in us there will not be the regret of the one who says: "if only...", but the hope of the one who opens himself to a present filled with future: Christ has conquered death, and we are with Him. Our life does not end at the stone of the sepulcher, our life goes beyond with hope in Christ who is risen from that very tomb. As Christians we are called to be sentinels of the dawn, who can discern the signs of the Risen One, as did the women and the disciples who ran to the tomb at dawn on the first day of the week.¹³

While one observes that the consequences of sin abound, but for a believer in the resurrection of Christ, a new creation comes about. Even though a Christian lives in a world surrounded by sin and selfishness, the content of hope lies in seeing with the eyes of faith that this is a time of waiting until that time of fulfillment. The Spirit of God is the protagonist who guides one beyond pessimism and disappointments and breathes hope of "a new heaven and a new earth the Lord is preparing for mankind"¹⁴ The encounter with the risen Jesus markedly transformed the early witnesses to the

¹¹ Pope Francis, General Audience, 23 April 2014, accessed 30 January 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140423_udienza-generale.html.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Pope Francis, General Audience, 1 April 2015, accessed 2 February 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140423_udienza-generale.html.

¹⁴ Pope Francis, General Audience, 22 February 2017, accessed 4 February 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170222_udienza-generale.html.

appearances of the risen Lord. This invitation to a renewed encounter is one that Francis invites all to.

2.2.1 The Scriptural foundations of Hope

Francis highlights alongside the centrality of the person of Christ also the scriptures in order to have hope. One recalls from the letter to the Romans: “For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.” (Romans 15:4)

The attributes of *endurance*, that quality to sustain burdens when they are unbearable and secondly, *encouragement* due to God’s compassionate presence are the two attitudes Francis brings to the fore from Paul’s letter to the Romans. One finds encouragement through the knowledge of Sacred Scripture that one is a beloved child of God, for in Christ all are “wanted, loved, desired”, asserts Francis. He adds:

There is someone who has impressed within us a primordial beauty, which no sin, no bad choice can ever completely erase. In the eyes of God, we are always small fountains made to gush forth good water.¹⁵

In order to be a “sower” of hope, Francis highlights the importance of staying close to the Lord who is the source of strength and having his Word occupy the central place in one’s life.¹⁶ One may also draw likewise from various scriptural texts, like for instance, from the book of Isaiah,

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not thither but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.” (Isa 55:10,11)

¹⁵ Pope Francis, General Audience, 14 June 2017, accessed on 24 February 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170614_udienza-generale.html.

¹⁶ Pope Francis, General Audience, 22 March 2017, accessed 24 February 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170322_udienza-generale.html.

God, who is love, continues to walk by our side. This is noticed clearly in the journey of the dejected disciples on the way to Emmaus. Reflecting on the risen Lord's encounter with the disciples there, Francis states:

Despite appearances to the contrary, we continue to be loved and God will never stop loving us. God will walk with us always, always, even in the most painful moments, even in the worst moments, even in moments of defeat. That is where the Lord is. And this is our hope. Let us go forward with this hope! Because he is beside us and walks with us. Always!¹⁷

As our Lord explained through the Scriptures, the necessity for him to suffer and die in order then to rise again, the disciples' minds are opened, and hope is rekindled in their hearts.¹⁸ One can notice the impact of recounting the words of Scripture in eliciting hope in the disciples. They would go on to tell the others of this joy-filled unexpected encounter.

An important dimension when dealing with Scriptures is the ability to *listen*. "Take heed then how you hear; for to him who has will more be given, and from him who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away." (Luke 8:18). In the life of Mary, mother of Jesus, one finds a fitting example. Mary is called the mother of hope by Francis who draws a connection between hope and listening. Mary welcomes life in accepting not just the joys but also the tragedies coming across her path. The Gospels show her in the position of "standing by" her son as mothers normally do, according to Francis, "not knowing the future resurrection of the son."¹⁹ Mary teaches one the virtue of *waiting* on the unfolding of Divine plans even when God "seems to have eclipsed himself due to the evil of the world."²⁰

¹⁷ Pope Francis, General Audience, 24 May 2017, accessed 25 February 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170524_udienza-generale.html.

¹⁸ Pope Francis, General Audience, 30 April 2014. accessed 25 February 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140430_udienza-generale.html.

¹⁹ Pope Francis, General Audience, 10 May 2017, accessed 1 March 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170510_udienza-generale.html.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

One could then notice that there is a passive dimension to hope which involves waiting patiently for God to act but it also denotes an active ability in one who is encouraged to take some concrete steps as one observes in the life of Judith.

2.3 VIRTUES RELATED TO CHRISTIAN HOPE

What constitutes true and genuine Christian hope? In this section we shall highlight some key aspects of what Christian hope entails. Magnanimity and humility characterize the lifestyle of Christians who truly want to be witnesses to the Gospel to the farthest reaches on earth, said Francis.²¹ We shall start by looking at specific aspects of magnanimity and humility while exploring what hope is and then delving also into some other dimensions.

2.3.1 Magnanimity

Magnanimity literally means "great-souled", and it refers to a striving towards that which is the greatest, a desire for the highest, most noble goals. It is the ambition to become the absolute greatest thing one can be and to achieve the greatest accomplishment possible. One may come across persons who are not magnanimous and may be content with mediocre aspirations and fritter their lives on lesser projects. In such a context one sees that a magnanimous individual has an ambition to do great things for God.²²

Abraham, we find in scriptures, chose to expect a child as God had promised and was even ready much later to sacrifice him when asked to do so. Reflecting on Abraham, Francis finds a person who hopes despite any possibility of human hope, going beyond human reason or the prudence of the world, as one who believes in the impossible. Thus, Francis adds: "Hope opens up new horizons, making us capable of dreaming of what is not even imaginable. The virtue of hope is that it gives us great strength to go on in life".²³ In the case of Abraham, one notes, that his faith is not

²¹ Pope Francis, Morning Meditation, 25 April 2013, Accessed 5 March 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2013/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20130425_magnanimity-humility.html.

²² Catholic News Agency, "Hope", CNA, Accessed March 02, 2019, <https://www.Catholicnewsagency.com/resources/virtue/theological-virtues/hope>.

²³ Pope Francis, General Audience, 28 December 2016, accessed 13 March 2019, c.

merely an act of recalling God's words but is also that which is future-oriented. In *Lumen Fidei*, Francis states:

Yet this remembrance is not fixed on past events but, as the memory of a promise, it becomes capable of opening up the future, shedding light on the path to be taken. We see how faith, as remembrance of the future, *memoria futuri*, is thus closely bound up with hope.²⁴

Thus, one is able to find a relationship between the virtue of faith and hope.

Just as men and women have given the world 'scientific and technological discoveries', one sees that Francis encourages his listeners to dream, to be responsible for the world and the life of each person just like them, to have the courage for truth, to bear in one's heart the suffering of every creature, to believe in people in spite of bitter experiences, and to be a light shining in the darkness. These are some of the inspiring aspects that underscore the magnanimity of a person of hope because the bottom-line is that one is not alone in this endeavour but is accompanied by God, as Francis says, "God is your friend".²⁵

Kevin Spinale, in citing St Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, claims that magnanimity denotes the stretching forth of the mind to great things. Since a magnanimous individual tends to aspire to great things that are deserving of honour, magnanimity is oriented toward great honour. One is not considered to be magnanimous if one is presumptuous, inordinately confident in divine mercy, overly ambitious, or vainglorious.²⁶ In citing Aristotle (4 ad 3) and Thomas Aquinas (II, II,129), Josef Pieper considers magnanimity as the jewel of all virtues as at any given

²⁴ Pope Francis, Encyclical, *Lumen Fidei*, 29 June 2013, accessed 29 May 2019. http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20130629_enciclica-lumen-fidei.html.

²⁵ Pope Francis, General Audience, 20 September 2017, accessed 15 March 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170920_udienza-generale.html.

²⁶ Kevin Spinale, "The Intellectual Pedigree of the Virtue of Magnanimity in the Jesuit Constitutions," *Journal of Jesuit Studies*, 2/3 (June 2015), accessed January 10, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22141332-00203004>.

moment it decides in favour of “the greater possibility of the human potentiality for being.”²⁷

2.3.2 Humility

We find this element in Francis’ speeches and writings on various occasions. For instance, we encounter him stating, “hope is not a virtue for people with a full stomach”,²⁸ or “we have to be humble, but with real humility, from head to toe.”²⁹ Francis claims how in the face of adversity there is hope: “If bitterness strikes you, believe firmly in all the people who still work for the good: in their humility there is the seed of a new world.”³⁰

Pieper opines that humility is a ‘protective barrier’ and a ‘restraining wall’ toward the virtue of magnanimity.³¹ Though it has been misunderstood and misinterpreted, humility is the knowledge and acceptance of the inexpressible distance between Creator and creature.³² Magnanimity would direct hope to its true possibilities. Even though at the surface they may seem as contradictory virtues, according to Thomas Aquinas, humility and magnanimity are actually complementary virtues. Although they may seem to be tending in contrary directions, both actually incline moral agents to attitudes and actions in accord with the order of right reason which is the overarching function of human virtue.³³ The humble approach, according to John M. Templeton, is a search which looks forward, and not backward, and which expects to grow and learn from its mistakes.³⁴

²⁷ Pieper, *On Hope*, 28.

²⁸ Pope Francis, General Audience, 27 September 2017, accessed 12 March 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170927_udienza-generale.html.

²⁹ Catholic News Agency, “Be humble 'from head to toe,' Pope Francis says”, 14 June 2013, accessed 28 February 2019, <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/be-humble-from-head-to-toe-pope-francis-says>.

³⁰ Pope Francis, General Audience, 20 September 2017, accessed 23 March 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170920_udienza-generale.html.

³¹ Pieper, *On Hope*, 28.

³² *Ibid.*, 29.

³³ Mary M. Keys, “Humility and Greatness of Soul”, *Perspectives on Political Science*, 37/4(2008), 217-222, DOI: 10.3200/PPSC.37.4.217-222.

³⁴ John M. Templeton, *The Humble Approach: Scientists discover God*, (New York: Continuum, 1995), 35.

Quoting Christ's words, "He who loves his life loses it" (Jn 12:25), Francis states that those with self-interest only swell with pride, but those who serve become "seeds of hope" for the world. Christ humbled himself to die on a cross. "Earthly hope" differs from the hope born from the cross. This is like a grain that dies in the soil that eventually results in a plant bearing fruit.³⁵ This indeed is a mark of genuine humility as the evocative hymn in the letter to the Philippians affirms of Christ humbling himself to take human form for the sake of human beings (Phil 2:5-11). One can find that humility is that which makes room for progress. In a way it says the best is yet to come. One might say it is giving God his due, remembering that as finite human beings lacking complete knowledge of things, one is prone to make mistakes.

2.3.3 Fortitude

One considers another aspect, that of fortitude. To highlight a person who through her courageous leadership gives hope to the people, Francis takes up the biblical character, Judith and her encounter with General Holofernes, the leader of Nebuchadnezzar's army that had once laid siege to a Judean city, Bethulia. With various challenges being present, especially that of water shortage, the people's trust in the Lord seems exhausted and the elders are asked to surrender to the enemy. Judith appears on the scene at this juncture and in courageously reproaching her people, invites them to turn to God for help. In her words, Francis finds the "language of hope". The hope is in the fact that God will act in bringing forth salvation for her people. This may be realized either in the liberation from the enemies or even in being allowed to die. Francis finds in the example of Judith the path of hope, "one of faith, of waiting peacefully, of prayer, and of obedience."³⁶

It can also be seen in Abraham who longed to have an offspring and believed in God. Francis adds, "hope is not the certainty that shelters you from doubt and perplexity.

³⁵Pope Francis, General Audience, 12 April 2017, accessed 30 March 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170412_udienza-generale.html.

³⁶Pope Francis, General Audience, 25 January 2017, accessed 25 March 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170125_udienza-generale.html.

Often hope is dark, but it is then that hope carries you forward.”³⁷ It is the courage to be bold in the relationship with God that goes beyond the natural order of things.

Accompanying this virtue of courage is a sense of confidence by which one is also able to boast. In the letter to the Romans (Rom 5:1-5) there are two instances where Paul exhorts one to boast. The first instance is “to boast of the abundance of the grace with which we are permeated in Jesus Christ”.³⁸ The basis of this attitude is in seeing that everything one possesses is a gift from God. The second instance Paul mentions is to “boast even in tribulation.”³⁹ It is when during life’s hard and challenging times, one becomes aware of God’s mercy and goodness accompanying one on life’s journey. This certainty of God’s love in spite of one’s failures and shortcomings are what Francis considers as the “root of hope”.⁴⁰

The certitude of hope is based on the experience of God’s love for oneself. The parable of the merciful father in the Gospel of Luke has impressed Francis greatly and it gives him great hope.⁴¹ Francis cites Romano Guardini who said that God responds to one’s weakness by his patience, and this is the reason for one’s confidence and one’s hope.⁴² The certainty that God’s love is continuous, no matter how good and bad one may be morally or ethically, keeps hope alive. This hope in turn enables one to become a channel of God’s grace to those seemingly distant and those needing consolation and support.

2.4 ICONS AND METAPHORS OF HOPE

An image speaks a thousand words. One observes that Francis likes to illustrate his homilies with examples and images one finds not only in Sacred Scripture, but also

³⁷ Pope Francis, General Audience, 28 December 2016, accessed 26 March 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20161228_udienza-generale.html.

³⁸ Pope Francis, General Audience, 15 February 2017, accessed 12 April 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170215_udienza-generale.html

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Pope Francis, *The Church of Mercy: A Vision for the Church*, (Chicago: Loyola Press: 2014), 4.

⁴² Francis, *The Church of Mercy*, 5

in classical works, from literature and culture. One may see it worthwhile to ponder over these images, so as to gain some insight into the subject under consideration.

2.4.1 Agile Feet

Francis focuses on the ‘feet’ in the text from prophet Isaiah: “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings...” (Isa 52:7). Despite negativities that abound or the prevalence of sin, the images of “swift feet” is something that ensures God’s coming to establish a kingdom of peace. This for Francis is an invitation for all to “run like the messenger on the mountains, because the world cannot wait, humanity is hungry and thirsty for justice, truth, peace.”⁴³

One is also reminded of the example of the Lord who was driven to go on in proclaiming the Good News. He says: “Let us go on to the next towns that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out” (Mk 1:38). Once the seed has been sown in one place, Jesus does not stay behind to explain things or to perform more signs; the Spirit moves him to go forth to other towns.⁴⁴ This imagery of the feet spreading the Gospel is one of ushering hope despite the challenges one faces. The trust that the seed sown will have its desired effect inspires one to continue on one’s mission.

2.4.2 A Woman in Labour

Hope is not a prediction of the future but is the vision of the present in a state of pregnancy, wrote Erich Fromm.⁴⁵ One may possibly infer that broken communion with God results in disfiguring things around oneself, out of shortsightedness. In the midst of this, one finds, if one pays attention, according to Francis, creation groaning and so do we as human beings groan. However, this is not in a “disconsolate lament” but is like the groaning of a woman awaiting to give birth (Jn 16:21). Thus, Francis

⁴³ Pope Francis, General Audience, 14 December 2016, accessed 5 April 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20161214_udienza-generale.html.

⁴⁴ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, n.21

⁴⁵ Samim, 25 April 2018, accessed February 15, 2019, <https://twitter.com/samim/status/989081583813611520>.

adds, “the woman in labour is in pain, because the time has come; but when her child is born, she no longer remembers the suffering”.⁴⁶

Taking the same image of the pregnant woman on another occasion, Francis observes:

Something comes to mind, when I think of hope, an image: a pregnant woman, a woman expecting a child. She goes to the doctor; she sees the ultrasound. [Is she indifferent? Does she say,] “Oh look, a baby. Ok.” No! She rejoices! And every day she touches her belly to caress that child, in anticipation of that child, living in anticipation of that son. This image can help us understand what hope is living for that encounter. That woman imagines what her son’s eyes will be like, what his smile will be like, whether he’ll be blonde or dark-haired... but she imagines meeting her son. She imagines meeting her son.⁴⁷

In spite of difficulties, one sees the outcome as something positive. There is a joyful outcome to something that seems very painful. Thus, this demonstrates that hope is not outdone by the presence of pain and challenges. Though there may be the cross in one’s life, it is not the goal, but an obligatory passage compared to the birth pangs of a woman in labour who in giving birth to a child results in having joy.⁴⁸

2.4.3 A Steadfast Anchor

When speaking about the virtue of hope, reference is traditionally made to this text from the letter to the Hebrews:

so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain... (Hebrews 6:18-19)

The image of an anchor for Christian hope that one observes in the verses above is one that Francis seems particularly fond of. This is for him the “certainty of what God

⁴⁶ Pope Francis, Morning Meditation, 6 May 2016, accessed 5 April 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2016/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20160506_with-joy-and-hope.html.

⁴⁷ AsiaNews.it, “Pope: Christian hope is not abstract, but waiting for a concrete encounter with Jesus”, 23 October 2018, accessed 25 February, 2019, <http://asianews.it/news-en/Pope:-Christian-hope-is-not-abstract,-but-waiting-for-a-concrete-encounter-with-Jesus-45280.html>.

⁴⁸ Pope Francis, General Audience, 12 April 2017, accessed 4 April 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170412_udienza-generale.html.

has promised us and accomplished in Jesus Christ”. Since the anchor is on “heaven’s shore,” the people of God can walk with confidence, with hope. Having anchored one’s life in heaven one has to hold fast to the rope which is always present.⁴⁹ One could observe that this resonates with the attributes of confidence and assurance one has observed earlier.

2.4.4 A Sail as a Driving Force

“Throw open the windows of the church and let the fresh air of the spirit blow through;”⁵⁰ this is a statement famously attributed to St John XXIII, as he invoked the opening of the Second Vatican Council on January 25, 1959. Many have considered this as a significant moment in the life of the Church. To harness the power of the wind in moving ahead, a sail is key. In Francis’ words: “Hope is truly like a sail; it gathers the wind of the Holy Spirit and transforms it into a driving force that propels the boat, as the case may be, out to sea or to the shore.”⁵¹

At the pre-synod vigil for the Synod on Family in 2014, Francis prayed that, “the wind of Pentecost blow upon the Synod’s work, on the Church and on all of humanity... ..undo the knots which prevent people from encountering one another, heal the wounds that bleed, rekindle hope.”⁵² To harness the wind of the Spirit the image of a sail that manoeuvres the movement of the ship accordingly does seem a worthy one. In contrast to the image of the anchor seen earlier which gives the impression of being more rooted, Francis compares the image of a sail in terms of the boat being propelled forward on the waters of the sea. One could offer a similar

⁴⁹ Pope Francis, General Audience, 26 April 2017. Accessed 4 April 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170426_udienza-generale.html.

⁵⁰ Cedric Prakash, “Pope John XXIII: Windows Opener,” 11 October 2017, accessed on 21 March 2019, <https://indiancatholicmatters.org/pope-john-xxiii-windows-opener/>.

⁵¹ Pope Francis, General Audience, 31 May 2017. Accessed on 21 April 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170531_udienza-generale.html.

⁵² Pope Francis, Address during the Meeting on The Family, 4 October 2014, accessed 16 April 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/october/documents/papa-francesco_20141004_incontro-per-la-famiglia.html.

analogy that hope is that which makes one move along further. It is as, Peter Kreeft writes, “a reason to get out of bed in the morning, a reason for doing anything.”⁵³

2.4.5 A Helmet of Hope

We find a reference in scripture to the image of the helmet in the descriptive passage on the spiritual armour in Ephesians, “helmet of salvation (Eph 6:17). One encounters the same image in the Old Testament book of Isaiah (Isa 59:17). Francis notes from Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thess 5:8) that this community readily professed its belief in the resurrection of Jesus but encountered difficulties in believing in the resurrection of the dead, especially the ones dear to them. In that context, St Paul had urged the community to wear the helmet which is the ‘hope of salvation’.

In reflecting on hope from this perspective, Francis states that to hope is not being merely hopeful like the weather one hopes may turn out to be favourable on the morrow, but to live in expectation of that which has been objectively fulfilled and will take place, as convincingly affirmed by the Apostle, “We shall always be with the Lord” (1 Thess 4:17). It does however require a period of waiting for which a disposition of humility is necessary. “To hope means and entails a humble heart, a poor heart. Only a poor man knows how to wait. Those who are already full of themselves and of their achievements, are not able to place their trust in anyone other than themselves.”⁵⁴ This may seem countercultural in a world where we seek instant answers and gratifications. However, hope relies on the certitude of the salvation accomplished by Christ.

In his epic poem *Paradise Lost*, John Milton composed the lines, “The mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.” It brings to the fore the primacy of one’s thoughts. In the face of many philosophies and ideologies one is constantly challenged with, a safeguard is the right understanding for the basis

⁵³ Peter Kreeft, “Hope”, Accessed 28 February 2019, <https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/religion-and-philosophy/apologetics/hope.html>.

⁵⁴ Pope Francis, General Audience, 1 February 2017. Accessed 15 April 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170201_udienza-generale.html.

of one's faith. The imagery of the helmet does seem an appropriate image in that regard.

2.4.6 Pandora's Box

While speaking on the enemies of hope, Francis once made reference to “Pandora’s box”⁵⁵ where, after all the evils contained in the box were released, only hope was left behind.⁵⁶ According to an interpretation by Dr John G. Messerly, the box/jar — while it originally served as a prison for the evils like pain and suffering — also serves as a residence for this good, hope. It is as if hope, separated from evil, takes on a new character—it becomes a good. But had hope been released into the world with the other evils, it would have been another evil, a bad kind of hope.⁵⁷

2.4.7 The Three Sisters

Pope Francis quotes a French poet, Charles Péguy (1873 -1914) who in a poem, *Le Porche du Mystère de la Deuxième Vertu* (commonly translated as ‘The Portal of the Mystery of Hope’), composed a song in honour of hope. In this poem, the poet affirms that God is not so much fascinated by the virtues of faith and charity as much as hope. This latter virtue shines forth in the poor ones, who despite the many hardships faced, believe the next morning will be better. It is those who have undergone many trials and who have “fought for their children” to have a more serene life.⁵⁸

Alongside what we consider the important theological virtues of faith and love, hope occupies an important place. Bishop Mario Grech cites the French poet, Charles Péguy, who likens these three virtues to three maidens who always go out together

⁵⁵ In Greek mythology, Pandora was the first human woman created by the gods. Zeus ordered her to be moulded out of earth as part of humanity’s punishment for Prometheus’ theft of the secret of fire. According to the myth, Pandora opened a jar (in modern accounts often mistranslated as “Pandora’s box”) releasing all the evils that visit humanity like pain and suffering, leaving only hope (expectation) inside, once she had closed it again. The Pandora myth is a theodicy—an attempt to explain why there is evil in the world.

⁵⁶ Pope Francis, General Audience, 27 September 2017. Accessed 30 March 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170927_udienza-generale.html.

⁵⁷ John G. Messerly, “Hope and Pandora’s Box”, 11 March 2017, Accessed March 28, 2019, <https://reasonandmeaning.com/2017/03/11/hope-and-pandoras-box/>

⁵⁸ Pope Francis, General Audience, 27 September 2017, accessed 20 April 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170927_udienza-generale.html.

holding hands: the two adult sisters (faith and love) hold the hands of their younger sister (hope).⁵⁹ According to Péguy, it is not the adults who guide the little one, but it is the little girl who pulls the elder sisters behind her. If she (hope) stops, the other two also stop – if she is extinguished, everything comes to an end!

Teresa White, in reflecting on the theological virtues from within the poem writes,

Faith sees what is, in time and in eternity; hope sees what not yet is and what will be, in time and in eternity. Charity loves what is, in time and in eternity; hope loves what not yet is and what will be, in time and in eternity. Péguy presents hope as at once natural and supernatural, as time-bound and eternal, as earthly and spiritual, as mortal and immortal. She is a flickering flame, diminutive, feeble, but she cannot be extinguished, even by the breath of death itself. That little flame will pierce the darkness of eternity.⁶⁰

Hence, given its importance, as noted above, one ought not to deny the possibility of hope to anyone. The virtue of hope is thus presented as taking its place of importance in the trio of the theological virtues.

2.5 THE ENEMIES OF HOPE AND JOY

Are there dangers and difficulties in journeying towards a life filled with hope and joy? In *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis writes that being robbed of hope is a real possibility in an era where one builds without God and tries to do away with Christian roots.⁶¹ Thus, hope is like anything good in the world that has enemies, according to Francis. What might these enemies look like?

One of the temptations against hope is “the noonday devil”. One finds Francis mentioning that, precisely when the sun is shining high in the sky, one is tempted to break one’s life of commitment. Francis mentions some of the symptoms such as when the days become monotonous and boring, and there is no aim in life. Fatigue,

⁵⁹ Mario Grech, “Pastoral Letter on the occasion of the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary 2017”, 11 August 2017, accessed 15 February 2019, <http://gozodiocese.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/55-2017-for-hope-to-blossom.pdf>.

⁶⁰ Teresa White, “The Mystery of Hope”, 7 December 2016, accessed 15 May 2019, <https://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/mystery-hope>.

⁶¹ *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 86.

then, dominates one's life.⁶² This is the sin of sloth. The Greek word for this is *acedia*, meaning indifference or negligence. St Thomas Aquinas speaks of sloth as the sorrow for spiritual good. By it one shuns spiritual good, as it seems toilsome.⁶³ The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* mentions "acedia or spiritual sloth as that which refuses the joy that comes from God and is repelled by divine goodness."⁶⁴

Another enemy to hope and joy is a lack of gratitude that manifests itself in complaints. Complaining "is bad", the Pope said, because "it does away with hope." He urges that one resists the "game of living in complaint."⁶⁵

Another term Francis makes use of is 'spiritual desertification' to describe the demise of hope. He remarks on the experiences where in some places Christian roots are being eliminated, while in other places Christianity faces violent opposition. This desertification can also be present much closer, as in one's workplace or family where faith does not seem to be preserved and communicated.⁶⁶ This is a climate which affords very little possibility for hope.

Yet another temptation against hope is to resort to idolatry. In this regard, one encounters Francis reflecting on Psalm 115. He observes there are challenges that arise when one is "tempted to seek even ephemeral consolations that seem to fill the void of loneliness and alleviate the fatigue of believing."⁶⁷ False ideologies abound and one may give in to the security of money or making alliances with the powerful and be caught up in worldliness. Francis reflects on the fortune tellers from his home city of Buenos Aires whom people sought out to know their future and sees how this

⁶² Pope Francis, General Audience, 27 September 2017.

⁶³ Charles Pope, "What is Sloth? It's a bit more subtle than laziness" 21 March 2012, accessed March 27, 2019, <http://blog.adw.org/2012/03/what-is-sloth-its-a-bit-more-subtle-than-laziness/>.

⁶⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, <http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc/para/2094.htm>, para 2094.

⁶⁵ Pope Francis, Morning meditation, 3 April 2013, accessed 27 March 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2013/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20130403_complaining.html.

⁶⁶ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 86

⁶⁷ General Audience, 11 January 2017. Accessed 15 March 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170111_udienza-generale.html.

is a form of idolatry. Idols according to him may not be merely in the material/physical sense but also in one's minds, so much so that God is made to fit in man's image. One seems happier turning to idols and placing one's hope in them and ending up by becoming like them. In contrast to the real danger of being sucked up in worldliness, the antidote is to be found in genuine hope in God, as Francis states:

...in trusting in the Lord, we become like him. His blessing transforms us into his children who share in his life. Hope in God allows us to enter, so to speak, within the range of his remembrance, of his memory that blesses us and saves us.⁶⁸

Anthony Kelly writes, "Genuine hope has no use for idols."⁶⁹ It is on this idolatry that Francis has encouraged people to take on the right type of hope.

2.6 THE SUPPORT WHICH HOPE REQUIRES

Having looked and gained some grounding on what the virtue of hope is, one can now attempt to see which are the factors that enable and help this virtue thrive. What are some of the expressions of hope and joy that are manifested? These will now be considered.

2.6.1 The Communal Dimension of Hope and the Role of Young People

In *Spe Salvi*, Benedict XVI poses the question whether Christian hope is individualistic. He goes on to answer by writing that "sin is understood by the Fathers as the destruction of the unity of the human race, as fragmentation and division. Babel, the place where languages were confused, the place of separation, is seen to be an expression of what sin fundamentally is. Hence 'redemption' appears as the reestablishment of unity, in which we come together once more in a union that begins to take shape in the world community of believers."⁷⁰

Neil Pembroke writes that nurturing hope is fundamentally a communal endeavour: *we witness to hope together*. This comes across especially in the Jewish and Christian

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Kelly, *Eschatology and Hope* 5.

⁷⁰ Benedict XVI, *Spe Salvi*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20071130_spe-salvi.html, n.14

traditions.⁷¹ In a similar manner, one finds Francis highlighting the fact that Christian hope has a communitarian and ecclesial dimension. In his view, one does not hope alone but does so in the context of a community where hope is nourished particularly through the witness of those experiencing trials and standing firm in their trust in the Lord. To the question of what constitutes this communal dimension, Francis replies: “In the case of Christian hope this body is the Church, while the vital breath, the soul of this hope is the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit one cannot have hope.”⁷²

What is the mission of this ecclesial community? It is to be a place of “God’s mercy and hope, where all feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live according to the good life of the Gospel. And to make others feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged, the Church must be with doors wide open so that all may enter. And we must go out through these doors and proclaim the Gospel.”⁷³ Thus, one finds a definite link between hope and community.

Pope Francis sees the many challenges of today’s young people and the difficulties of youth ministry.⁷⁴ But he also realizes that “young people call us to a renewed and expansive hope, for they represent new directions for humanity and open us up to the future, lest we cling to a nostalgia for structures and customs which according to Francis are no longer life-giving in today’s world”.⁷⁵

The World Youth Day (WYD) instituted by St John Paul II in 1985 is one such attestation of hope. The testimony of the pilgrims who are filled with the enthusiasm and joy of the love of God is witnessed by the call to unity and solidarity. This is a call that is inclusive and transcends frontiers and is addressed to all young people without distinction. It is a call that strengthens and renews the bonds by which young

⁷¹ Neil Pembroke, “Witnessing to Hope in the Christian Community Through Irony”, *Pastoral Psychology* 58 (2009):433–443, 434, accessed March 21, 2019, DOI 10.1007/s11089-008-0192-4.

⁷² Pope Francis, General audience, 8 February 2017, accessed 20 March 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170208_udienza-generale.html.

⁷³ General audience, 12 June 2013, accessed 23 March 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130612_udienza-generale.html.

⁷⁴ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, n.105-6.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, n.108.

people are united. It is a sign of hope. At the WYD in Krakow in 2016, Francis noted something very striking when looking at the expanse of multicoloured flags waved by the young people. He stated that the flags of nations at war with each other were being waved in very close proximity. This image and, consequently, the experience of fraternity witnessed at WYD is a beacon of hope for Francis.⁷⁶

This collective sense of hope is also to be realized individually for each person. Francis challenged the young people at the WYD in Rio de Janeiro:

... a boy, a girl who in the eyes of the world counts for little or nothing, in God's eyes is an apostle of the Kingdom, is a hope for God! I would like to ask all young people forcefully, but I don't know if there are any young people in the Square today. Are there any young people in the Square? There are a few! I would like to ask all of you forcefully: do you want to be a hope for God? Do you yourselves want to be a hope? [Youth: "yes!"]. Do you want to be a hope for the Church? [youth: "yes!"]. A young heart that welcomes Christ's love becomes hope for others, it is an immense force! But you, boys and girls, all young people, you must transform us and yourselves into hope! Open the doors to a new world of hope. This is your task. Do you want to be hope for us all? [youth: "yes!"]⁷⁷

There seems to be a lot Francis expects from the young especially their hope for a better world. Reflecting upon the WYD theme for 2013, Ruane Remy writes that hope is at the heart of these ecclesial gatherings, the hope that every pilgrim will be filled with Christ and a personal mission to "go and make disciples of all nations."⁷⁸ In the midst of a culture of individualism that seeks one's own interests, to be altruistic and share Christ's love with all is a sign of genuine hope. Through this, one underlines the importance of gathering the young and enabling them to fulfill their potential through listening to them. This enables them to experience proper guidance at various stages in their lives and to discover and fulfill their God-given potential.

⁷⁶ General Audience, 3 August 2016, accessed 23 March 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20160803_udienza-generale.html.

⁷⁷ General Audience, 4 September 2013, accessed 15 March 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130904_udienza-generale.html.

⁷⁸ Ruane Remy, "Francis just the leader we need", accessed March 11, 2019, <http://www.catholicregister.org/digital/2013/wydspecial/CRDWYD073013.pdf>.

2.6.2 Hope and the Sacraments

One may now consider how hope is facilitated in the church's sacramental life as this section explores.

2.6.2.1 Baptism

Baptism, the first and fundamental sacrament is the gate to the other sacraments. Through baptism, new faithful are gathered into the People of God. Baptism is so fundamental that Francis considers even the denial of the sacrament to children of single mothers as being pastorally cruel.⁷⁹ One can understand the reason, especially as he mentions this is the sacrament that offers one new hope.

“... the hope of going on the path of salvation our whole life long. And this hope nothing and no one can extinguish, for it is a hope that does not disappoint. Remember, hope in the Lord never disappoints. Thanks to Baptism, we are capable of forgiving and of loving even those who offend us and do evil to us. By our Baptism, we recognize in the least and in the poor the face of the Lord who visits us and makes himself close. Baptism helps us to recognize in the face of the needy, the suffering, and also of our neighbour, the face of Jesus. All this is possible thanks to the power of Baptism!”⁸⁰

One thus notices the great importance Francis attaches to the graces that one is enabled to open up to through this sacrament especially in the recognition of the poor. In fact, if a Christian considers that an indelible mark is left imprinted on the soul, then it seems right to stress on this fact, though not undermining in any way the importance given to one's upbringing and a right environment in the transmission of the faith.

⁷⁹ Daniele Palmer, “Priests who refuse baptism to babies of single mothers are 'animals'”, 17 June 2016, accessed 03 March 2019. <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/5718/priests-who-refuse-baptism-to-babies-of-single-mothers-are-animals->.

⁸⁰ General Audience, 8 January 2014, accessed 5 March 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140108_udienza-generale.html.

2.6.2.2 Confirmation

Pope Francis finds that the sacrament of confirmation has been considered as a “sacrament of farewell.”⁸¹ It is a hard fact that many Catholics do not continue to remain part of a Church community. This unfortunately occurs in many local churches. Such a situation seems anything, but one filled with hope. However, while observing the failure, Francis encourages all to trust in the Lord Jesus who is not an illusion and to listen to him:

Hear Jesus’ words as though they were addressed to you: put out into the deep and let down your nets, young people of Sardinia! Put out into the deep! Be ever more docile to the Lord’s word; it is he; it is his word; it is following him that brings to fruition your commitment to witnessing.⁸²

Just as the disciples, after the Lord’s death, experienced dejection and would go out fishing, they were stirred up to hope again as they encountered the risen Jesus. So too, Francis states, “Faith in Jesus leads to a hope that goes further, to a certainty based not on our qualities and skills alone, but on the word of God, on the invitation that comes from him.”⁸³

In the first celebration of the sacrament of confirmation as the bishop of Rome, he reminded the congregation that the Holy Spirit does something new through a transformation which in turn leads one to transform the world. This may, one observes, occur in small steps such as Francis states:

How beautiful it would be if each of you, every evening, could say: Today at school, at home, at work, guided by God, I showed a sign of love towards one of my friends, my parents, an older person! How beautiful!⁸⁴

⁸¹ Pope Francis, Meeting with Young people, Cagliari, 22 September 2013, accessed 12 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/september/documents/papa-francesco_20130922_giovani-cagliari.html

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Pope Francis, Homily, Holy Mass and Conferral of The Sacrament of Confirmation, St Peter’s Square, 28 April 2013, accessed 12 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130428_omelia-cresime.html.

One may make recourse to a “firm hope in the Lord” which is the secret through the journey of faith that lends courage to one swimming against the tide. One is able to do so, because as Francis states, “God grants strength to our weakness, riches to our poverty, conversion and forgiveness to our sinfulness. The Lord is so rich in mercy: every time, if we go to him, he forgives us.”⁸⁵ The true effects of what the sacrament disposes oneself to is that “Christ makes himself present in us and takes shape in our lives; through us, it will be he — Christ himself — who prays, forgives, gives hope and consolation.”⁸⁶

The aspect of hope in this sacrament is observed when one sees it in the larger context of a community, in union with previous generations. “Its effect is to unite those who receive it more closely to the Church, to her apostolic origins, and to her mission of bearing witness to Christ.”⁸⁷ Thus one may observe that the sacrament of confirmation is linked with hope having an interior dynamic in the Church and also an exterior one. Confirmation is the anointing with the Spirit of the Risen Christ, that gives an authorization to the baptized to express divine justification through their mission that is filled with hope.⁸⁸ In receiving the sacrament, the grace of living an authentic Christian life is given in the hope that there will be a fruition of that grace in the individual’s life.

2.6.2.3 The Sacrament of Reconciliation

From a profound experience of God at the confessional as a teenager, the Sacrament of Reconciliation bore the grounds of a priestly vocation for Francis. His experience was of God as someone who had been waiting for him. In a homily he seems to extend an invitation to rediscover the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation. This, for Francis, lets one pass from the shadows of sin to the light of grace and of friendship

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Pope Francis, Audience, Saint Peter's Square, 29 January 2014, accessed 12 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140129_udienza-generale.html.

⁸⁷ Pope Francis, Audience, St Peter's Square, 6 June 2018, accessed 12 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2018/documents/papa-francesco_20180606_udienza-generale.html.

⁸⁸ Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation, *Thesis*, accessed 20 May 2019, http://theologie.fr/Thesis%2010c.%20Baptism%20and%20Confirmation%20_www.dogmatique.net_.pdf.

with Jesus. The great power this Sacrament has in Christian life must not be forgotten, he adds, as it enables one to grow in union with God and lets one reacquire lost joy and experience the comfort of feeling personally held in God's merciful embrace.⁸⁹ According to Francis, the confessional is not a torture chamber, but the place in which the Lord's mercy motivates one to do better.⁹⁰ This is indeed a sign of hope. The act of going to confession, like the act of reading, is a practice of hope in which there is a certain reordering of human relations. Hope is only in the action.⁹¹ St John Vianney is said to have rated this sacrament highly that he spent hours administering this sacrament. As Francis reminds his fold, one needs to regard this sacrament of healing for what it truly is, to enable one to move on through the encounter with God's abiding mercy.

2.6.2.4 The Sacrament of the Eucharist

From the period between November 2017 and April 2018, Francis devoted his Wednesday audiences to a catechesis on the topic of the Mass. One finds Francis inviting all to ponder on Jesus' words recounted in the Gospel: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" as it fills one's heart with trust and hope.⁹² Participating in Holy Communion, conforms one in a singular and profound way to Christ, giving the individual a foretaste now of the full communion with the Father. This characterizes the heavenly banquet, where together with all the saints one will have the joy of contemplating God face to face.⁹³ The eschatological hope is brought to the fore through one's active participation at Mass which is the source and summit of Christian life.

⁸⁹ Homily, *Third Sunday of Lent*, 7 March 2015, accessed 15 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150307_omelia-parrocchia-ognissanti.html.

⁹⁰ Spadaro, "A Big Heart Open to God", *America*, 30 September 2013, 26.

⁹¹ Graham Ward, "Narrative and Ethics: The Structures of Believing and the Practices of Hope," *Literature and Theology*, 20/4, (December 2006), Pages 438–461, accessed 13 March 2019, <https://doi-org.ejournals.um.edu.mt/10.1093/litthe/frl057>.

⁹² General Audience, 12 February 2014, accessed 14 April 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140212_udienza-generale.html.

⁹³ General Audience, 5 February 2014, accessed 15 April 2018, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140205_udienza-generale.html.

2.6.2.5 *The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick*

For those with serious illness, Francis highlights the importance to call on a priest in the administering of the Anointing of the Sick.

It is Jesus himself who comes to relieve the sick person, to give him strength, to give him hope, to help him; and also, to forgive his sins. And this is very beautiful! And one must not think that this is taboo, because in times of pain and illness it is always good to know that we are not alone: the priest and those who are present during the Anointing of the Sick, in fact, represent the entire Christian community that as one body huddles around the one who suffers and his family, nurturing their faith and hope, and supporting them through their prayers and fraternal warmth. But the greatest comfort comes from the fact that it is the Lord Jesus himself who makes himself present in the Sacrament, who takes us by the hand, who caresses us as he did with the sick, and who reminds us that we already belong to him and that nothing — not even evil and death — can ever separate us from him.⁹⁴

Being vulnerable when one is sick and in not knowing what the future may hold out, the grace of the sacrament administered by the priest and the loving presence of people around the individual are a source of strength and hope for things to turn to the better. To be comforted by the Lord's special care for the sick person is of great value and is appreciated not only by the sick person but also the close members of that person's family.

2.6.2.6 *The Sacrament of Matrimony*

In the context of many a troubled family situation across the world, the apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* is Francis' invitation to families to experience the "joy of love."⁹⁵ This "joy of love" may not be something given simply but needs to be cultivated. This resulting joy has the ability to grant one a sense of fulfillment even when physical pleasure may have ebbed.⁹⁶

One gleans from the Scriptures an important element as to what constitutes joy.

⁹⁴ General Audience, 26 February 2014, accessed 15 April 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140226_udienza-generale.html.

⁹⁵ Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*, n.1

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, n.126.

Our Lord especially appreciates those who find joy in the happiness of others. If we fail to learn how to rejoice in the well-being of others, and focus primarily on our own needs, we condemn ourselves to a joyless existence, for, as Jesus said, “it is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35).⁹⁷

This is one of the two sacraments alongside Holy Orders that is especially oriented for service. It is in seeking to serve the well-being of one’s spouse, that one finds fulfillment. Francis cites St Thomas Aquinas who explained that the word “joy” refers to an expansion of the heart.⁹⁸ We have referred to this earlier in the chapter when we reflected on the virtue of magnanimity.

In *Amoris Laetitia*, Francis explains that there is “no stereotype of the ideal family, but rather a challenging mosaic made up of many different realities, with all their joys, hopes and problems.”⁹⁹ To deal with such situations, one is struck when Francis makes use of the “logic of mercy”. He underlines three verbs — to accompany, to discern and to integrate — in addressing complex or irregular situations. This involves taking into consideration the importance of discernment, the need for graduality in pastoral practice and the attenuating norms and circumstances in pastoral discernment. One finds, in what Francis has to say, elements of hope for those who may see themselves as being outside the Church, which appears now to be much more inclusive, or as Francis says, a field-hospital for the sick.

According to Francis, hope is the leaven that, particularly in the first years of one’s engagement and marriage, makes it possible to look beyond arguments, conflicts and problems and to see things in a broader perspective. Uncertainties and concerns are seen as opportunities for growth. Hope is an invitation to live fully in the present by giving one’s all for the life of the family.¹⁰⁰ One thus finds a grounding needed to see marriage as a project to be worked through rather than something that one has arrived at.

⁹⁷ *Amoris Laetitia*, n.110.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, n.126.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, n.57.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, n.219.

2.6.3 Hope and the Liturgical Seasons

The liturgical cycle of the Church divides the year into a series of seasons, each with their own theological emphases, styles of prayer, scriptural texts at Mass, different ways of setting up the churches, etc. As Christians participate in these celebrations, how may their active participation enable them to become a more hopeful and a joyful people?

2.6.3.1 *The Season of Lent*

The liturgical season of Lent is that time in the Christian liturgical calendar that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends approximately six weeks later, before Easter Sunday. Francis considers this season as being a time of hope.¹⁰¹ He refers to the experience of the Israelites in their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land, a journey that had many challenges including the temptations to return to Egypt. It was an experience which was faced “in hope”. It was during this long span of years that God taught the Israelites the law and to love each other.

According to Francis, the Lenten exodus is the journey in which hope itself is formed. Christ has opened the path for men and women to follow into eternal life, thereby freeing them from sin. Their participation is however required and through the graces offered in prayer, through the sacraments, works of charity and self-denial and penance, one undertakes the demanding journey from slavery to freedom. One not only finds in this spiritual journey, the eschatological goal of eternal life, but even in the here and now, one experiences what it means to live in a relationship with God.

“Lent is a good time to recover the joy and hope that make us feel like beloved sons and daughters of the Father. The Father who waits for us in order to cast off our garments of exhaustion, of apathy, of mistrust, and so clothe us with the dignity which only a true father or mother knows how to give their children, with the garments born of tenderness and love.”¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ General Audience, 1 March 2017, accessed 12 April 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2017/documents/papa-francesco_20170301_udienza-generale.html.

¹⁰² Homily, Apostolic journey of His Holiness Pope Francis To Mexico, 14 February 2016, accessed 2 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20160214_omelia-messico-ecatepec.html.

Rather than seeing Lent as a time of giving up things, be it chocolates or wine or something else of one's liking, it needs to be seen in the perspective of embracing something new that assists in one's eternal wellbeing. Lent is the time when we see that change is possible, particularly when in the northern hemisphere one notices the leaves on the trees and the chirping of the birds at the onset of spring.

2.6.3.2 *The Season of Easter*

The risen Lord is the foundation of hope and the cause of one's joy. This hope, according to Francis, is neither a psychological attitude nor a mere desire of one wanting to be courageous. Rather, he states in his Easter Vigil homily in 2016 that,

Christian hope is a gift that God gives us if we come out of ourselves and open our hearts to him. This hope does not disappoint us because the Holy Spirit has been poured into our hearts (cf. Rom 5:5). The Paraclete does not make everything look appealing. He does not remove evil with a magic wand. But he pours into us the vitality of life, which is not the absence of problems, but the certainty of being loved and always forgiven by Christ, who for us has conquered sin, conquered death and conquered fear. Today is the celebration of our hope, the celebration of this truth: nothing and no one will ever be able to separate us from his love (cf. Rom 8:39).¹⁰³

One finds in the above message that, in spite of the fact that the reality that surrounds oneself may be anything but positive, hope for a Christian relies on someone beyond; the person of the Holy Spirit enables one to an experience of God's love. This experience assists one in weathering the storms across one's path. The experience of Easter joy, for Francis, makes Christians, "joyful servants of hope."¹⁰⁴

In this regard, one finds that memory is an important aspect. After the resurrection of Jesus, the disciples were given instructions to go to Galilee, the place they had first encountered the Lord in the Gospels. It was there they would meet him again. Drawing from this, one finds Pope Francis inviting his listeners to return to "a more existential Galilee", wherein one returns to the place where God's grace had touched one at the start of one's journey and once more discover a humble joy that cannot be

¹⁰³ Pope Francis, Homily at Easter Vigil, 26 March 2016, accessed 20 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20160326_omelia-veglia-pasquale.html.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

undone.¹⁰⁵ To refresh one's memory and trace oneself back to those encounters with God do have an important role in being hopeful and experiencing joy.

2.6.3.3 The Season of Christmas

Next to the yearly celebrations of the paschal mystery, the Church considers the importance of the memorial of Christ's birth and his early manifestations. This is the purpose of the season of Christmas. For Francis, the Incarnation of Jesus realizes the feast of trust and of hope which overcomes uncertainty and pessimism. He states, "And the reason for our hope is this: God is with us and God still trusts us! Think well on this: God is with us and God still trusts us. God the Father is generous. He comes to abide with mankind, he chooses earth as his dwelling place to remain with people."¹⁰⁶

The immensity of God's love is shown in the humble act of God becoming man, the Creator taking the form of a creature with the primary aim of showering his love on all. This is one who is called Emmanuel – God with us. Through one's faithful observance of all the liturgical celebrations, one is invited into a deeper participation and thereupon to a much more intimate relationship with God. Indeed, Paul asks: "Who will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord?" (Rom 8:38) In the Incarnation one discovers a definite choice has been made by God to enter the human condition and this gives rise to hope.

2.7 CHRISTIAN JOY: THE HALLMARK OF THE DISCIPLE

A modern-day person tends to equate happiness by the amount of pleasure one experiences at any given moment. In various physical or psychological pleasures, one seeks to experience joy. Twenty-four centuries ago, Plato knew that true joy and lasting happiness could never be the same as pleasure.¹⁰⁷ Joy does ensue from a genuine hope and trust in God and his promises. The American Jesuit, James Martin

¹⁰⁵ Pope Francis, Homily at Easter Vigil. 19 April 2014, accessed 25 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2014/documents/papa-francesco_20140419_omelia-veglia-pasquale.html.

¹⁰⁶ General audience, 18 December 2013, accessed 17 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20131218_udienza-generale.html.

¹⁰⁷ George Maloney, *That your Joy may be Complete*, (New York: New City Press: 1994), 13.

who has authored a book on the importance of joy, humour and laughter in the spiritual life, writes that

“Unlike happiness, joy is not simply a fleeting feeling or an evanescent emotion, it is a permanent result of one’s connection to God. While the more secular definition of joy may be simply an intense form of happiness, religious joy is always about a relationship. Joy has an object and that object is God. The ultimate response to the good news is joy, one that is lasting and can endure even in the midst of difficulties.”¹⁰⁸

In taking the name of his namesake, St Francis of Assisi, Francis desires to make joy one of the hallmarks of his papacy. The term ‘joy’ appears close to fifty times in the first chapter of *Evangelii Gaudium*. Francis signals unambiguously his conviction that ‘joy’, the joy derived from knowing the presence of God, is to underpin every expression of every Christian and the Church’s life.¹⁰⁹

2.7.1 The Centrality of Joy in the Scriptures

The Psalter is filled with verses expressing a religious joy. One finds, for example, at the end of Psalm 65 a description of how the valleys and hills “shout and sing together for joy.” Another instance is of the final psalm in the Psalter, Psalm 150 where the invitation is extended to praise God with different musical instruments. Even the penitential psalm 51, the *Miserere* extends an invitation to joy thrice.

One finds that in both *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Gaudete et Exsultate* the themes of rejoicing and joy from the Old Testament books are highlighted. For instance, the prophet Zephaniah gladly announces, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he” (Zech 9:9). In the New Testament, once again, among many references, one notices, Mary rejoicing in God (Lk 1:47) and the early Church experiencing great joy wherever the disciples went (Acts 8:8).

¹⁰⁸ James Martin, “Have Faith in Joy: The ultimate response to the good news,” *America*, 12 December 2013, Accessed 12 May 2019, <https://www.americamagazine.org/issue/have-faith-joy>.

¹⁰⁹ *Evangelii Gaudium* n.4

2.7.2 Welcoming Joy

While quoting from the second-century *Shepherd of Hermas*, Francis extends an invitation to all:

“Clothe yourselves in joy, which always is agreeable and acceptable to God, and rejoice in it. For all who are joyful do what is good, think what is good, and despise sadness... All who put aside sadness and put on joy will live in God”.¹¹⁰

One may be enthusiastic, according to Francis, when one’s team wins a game at a stadium, but joy is a more profound experience of awe that one finds in one’s relation with Jesus.¹¹¹ An important dimension for Francis is that through the experience of God’s mercy, joy results, and this needs to be deeply rooted in one’s hearts so that one is not robbed of that joy.

One notes that joy does seem to have a deep spiritual connotation; it is related to one’s awareness of God’s love for each person. For a Christian believer, Jesus’ message, in fact, brings joy. “I have said these things to you, so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete” (Jn 15:11). From the moment of the angel’s greeting to Mary (Lk 1:28) to the birth and growth of the Church in the Acts of the Apostles, one can find the elements of joy present in the Gospels.¹¹² But even the books of the Old Testament predicted that the joy of salvation would abound in messianic times.¹¹³

We describe individuals as being joyful when they bring a special light into life. In striving to be joyful, one develops interior resources which one draws from.¹¹⁴ “Rejoice in the Lord always; I say it again, rejoice!” (Phil 4:4). This is the joy that is inspired by the Holy Spirit. Christian joy, Francis states, is usually accompanied by a sense of humour as witnessed in the lives of saints, for instance, St Thomas More, St Vincent de Paul and St Philip Neri.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ *Misericordia et Misera*, n. 3.

¹¹¹ Francis, Morning Meditation, 4 April 2013, accessed 28 April 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2013/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20130404_peace-priceless.html.

¹¹² *Evangelii Gaudium* n. 5

¹¹³ *Evangelii Gaudium* n. 4.

¹¹⁴ Diane M. Houdek, *Pope Francis and Our Call to Joy*, (Cincinnati: Franciscan Media, 2014), ix.

¹¹⁵ *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 126.

However, as Francis observes, the reality one is faced with is far from ideal. This is indeed a great challenge:

There are Christians whose lives seem like Lent without Easter. I realize of course that joy is not expressed the same way at all times in life, especially at moments of great difficulty. Joy adapts and changes, but it always endures, even as a flicker of light born of our personal certainty that, when everything is said and done, we are infinitely loved.¹¹⁶

Therefore, Francis will add that “an evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral!”¹¹⁷ Unless Christians can model the transformation that the Gospel offers, no one will believe them. Hence every Christian needs to be evangelized constantly and be transformed by the joy of the Gospel.¹¹⁸ Thus the invitation to discover joy ought not to be taken for granted but needs to be pursued and responded to as best as one can, so that the words of Scripture, “the joy of the Lord is my strength” (Nehemiah 8:10) may be realized.

2.7.3 Poverty and Joy

In *Evangelii Gaudium*, one finds Francis pointing out a prevalent attitude within a technological society that tends to believe, “as if we could only be happy if a thousand conditions were met.”¹¹⁹ Challenges in the contemporary times are, for instance, “the presence of constantly new gadgets, the excitement of travel and an endless array of consumer goods at times leave no room for God’s voice to be heard.”¹²⁰ Thus there is a notion that being materially well-off corresponds with one’s state of happiness and having joy.

One may ask, would an environment of deprivation, then, serve to experience joy? In Catholic parlance, the phrase one encounters is “the preferential option for the poor”.

¹¹⁶ *Evangelii Gaudium*, n.6

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, n.10

¹¹⁸ Stephen Bevans, “Life, Joy, and Love: Together towards Life in Dialogue with *Evangelii Gaudium* and The Cape Town Commitment”, *International Review of Mission* 104/2 (November 2015): 196, accessed 16 May 2019, doi: 10.1111/irev.12082.

¹¹⁹ *Evangelii Gaudium*, n.7

¹²⁰ *Gaudete et Exsultate* n.29

Francis has said he wants “a Church which is poor and for the poor.”¹²¹ According to Francis, his personal experience of joy has its roots in the context of being with the poor. He affirms, “I can say that the most beautiful and natural expressions of joy which I have seen in my life were in poor people who had little to hold on to. I also think of the real joy shown by others who, even amid pressing professional obligations, were able to preserve, in detachment and simplicity, a heart full of faith.”¹²²

The poor, one thus discovers, appreciate things that are truly essential and not based on passing or ephemeral things which may provide some momentary sense of bliss. One may find this closely linked to the virtue of humility which has been explored earlier in the chapter. There is a lot to be gained from their witness of life that could teach one to value what is truly essential and thus experience authentic joy.

2.7.4 Preaching with Joy

In calling forth for a transformation in the way the Good News is proclaimed, one sees Francis stating, “A renewal of preaching can offer believers, as well as the lukewarm and the non-practising, new joy in the faith and fruitfulness in the work of evangelization.”¹²³ A reason most often heard for a Catholic leaving the Church, has been a lack of effective preaching. The reasons for this tend to be that the congregation finds homilies boring, irrelevant or simply failing to capture the attention of the congregation. In this regard, the advice offered by Pope Francis for the renewal in one’s pronouncement of the Good News is worth highlighting:

Whenever we make the effort to return to the source and to recover the original freshness of the Gospel, new avenues arise, new paths of creativity open up, with different forms of expression, more eloquent signs and words with new meaning for today’s world. Every form of authentic evangelization is always “new”.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Pope Francis, Address to Representatives of the Communications Media, Paul VI Audience Hall, 16 March 2013, accessed 28 April 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/march/documents/papa-francesco_20130316_rappresentanti-media.html.

¹²² *Evangelii Gaudium*, n.7

¹²³ *Ibid.*, n.11

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, n.11.

A renewal in preparation and delivering of homilies is encouraged: indeed, Pope Francis devotes a long section to this (paras 135-159) in *Evangelii Gaudium*. One finds here numerous suggestions offered in that regard: using images, keeping the message simple, having a positive tone in the message. This, one believes, will do considerable good to attract people and open them to the joy of encountering the Lord through the effective proclamation on the Good News.

2.7.5 Joy in the Various States of Life

Scriptures remind how good and how pleasant it is when sisters and brothers live in unity (Psalm 133:1). Given the contemporary challenge of many who do not find themselves in a traditionally understood sacramental marriage, many do find themselves excluded from the Church. Pope Francis' view of such situations, one discovers, is to extend an invitation to a life of joyful communion into the life of the Church. This lies in being

more fully integrated into Christian communities in the variety of ways possible, while avoiding any occasion of scandal. The logic of integration is the key to their pastoral care, a care which would allow them not only to realize that they belong to the Church as the body of Christ, but also to know that they can have a joyful and fruitful experience in it.¹²⁵

If, however, one was to be unmarried and choose another path such as the consecrated life, one observes, that it too is indeed a call to a life of joy. One finds this in an address to religious nuns where Pope Francis extends an invitation to be “prophets of joy”, something much needed, according to him for the contemporary times.¹²⁶ While writing about the consecrated life. Francis affirms that there is joy in “the beauty of consecration.”¹²⁷ He goes on to state that though one may not be “called to

¹²⁵ *Amoris Laetitia*, n.299.

¹²⁶ Pope Francis, Address to Participants in The General Chapter of The Sister Disciples of The Divine Master, 22 May 2017, accessed 20 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/may/documents/papa-francesco_20170522_pie-discepole-divin-maestro.html.

¹²⁷ Pope Francis, Letter, *Rejoice! A Letter to Consecrated Men and Women*, 2 February 2014, Accessed 12 May 2019, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccsrlife/documents/rc_con_ccsrlife_doc_20140202_rallegratevi-lettera-consacrati_en.html.

accomplish epic feats or to proclaim high-sounding words”, nonetheless the witness arising from the truth that being loved and of being saved, is of essence to the world lacking in joy.¹²⁸

2.7.6 Encountering Joy through Beauty and Suffering

A famous quote from Dostoyevsky’s novel entitled *The Idiot* is: “beauty will save the world”.¹²⁹ On a similar note, the English poet, John Keats wrote, “A thing of beauty is a joy forever”.¹³⁰

One discovers a close relationship between the aspects of joy and beauty from a letter by Benedict XVI addressed to artists where he stated that:

authentic beauty, [however,] unlocks the yearning of the human heart, the profound desire to know, to love, to go towards the Other, to reach for the Beyond. If we acknowledge that beauty touches us intimately, that it wounds us, that it opens our eyes, then we rediscover the joy of seeing, of being able to grasp the profound meaning of our existence, the Mystery of which we are part; from this Mystery we can draw fullness, happiness, the passion to engage with it every day.¹³¹

One finds that the way of beauty, *via pulchritudinis*, is proposed by Francis as a way of “filling life with new joy” and is an important means in the spreading of the Gospel.¹³² Beauty, along with truth and goodness, has a means of touching the human heart. So too, Francis affirms beauty’s inherent ability of “enabling the truth and goodness of the Risen Christ to radiate within it.”¹³³ One also discovers a close relation between beauty and joy in *Amoris Laetitia* where Francis writes that the “great worth” of beauty “enables us to appreciate the sacredness of a person, without feeling the need to possess it. In a consumerist society, the sense of beauty is

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Goodreads. “Fyodor Dostoyevsky > Quotes > Quotable Quote,” accessed 25 May 2019. <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/23423-beauty-will-save-the-world>.

¹³⁰ Goodreads. “John Keats > Quotes > Quotable Quote,” accessed 27 May 2019. <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/23671-a-thing-of-beauty-is-a-joy-forever>.

¹³¹ Benedict XVI, Meeting with Artists, 21 November 2009, accessed 3 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2009/november/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20091121_artisti.html.

¹³² *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 167.

¹³³ Ibid.

impoverished and so joy fades”.¹³⁴ Much earlier, one discovers Benedict XVI affirming that “beauty is the experimental proof that incarnation is possible. For this reason, all art of the first order is, by its nature, religious”.¹³⁵

The invitation Francis extends is to be bold to use different forms of beauty to transmit the faith.¹³⁶ One may thus infer that the presence of beauty is conducive to experiencing joy which, rightly having its source in God, ought to ultimately lead to him.

With regard to finding joy in the face of sufferings, one finds Pope Francis has something to offer. He does not downplay or ignore the sorrows and sufferings one may face. In fact, one finds him affirming that “not all of Christian life is a party.” In *Gaudete et Exsultate* he states:

Hard times may come, when the cross casts its shadow, yet nothing can destroy the supernatural joy that “adapts and changes, but always endures... .. that joy brings deep security, serene hope and a spiritual fulfilment that the world cannot understand or appreciate.¹³⁷

Thus, according to Francis, “Christian joy is a hopeful joy”, a joy that is purified by trials.¹³⁸ The enduring element of joy is such that it has the capacity to pervade, despite its being perceived as minimal and despite the setbacks of life.

2.8 CONCLUSION

In the light of what has been presented in this chapter, one observes that the papacy of Francis offers a newness, a kind of renewal in living the Gospel through his witness, gestures and style of proclaiming the Gospel. The single proclamation, “Jesus truly lives,”¹³⁹ writes Fr Dennis Billy, offers hope for millions and offers

¹³⁴ *Amoris Laetitia*, n.127

¹³⁵ Benedict XVI, Meeting with Artists, 21 November 2009.

¹³⁶ *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 167.

¹³⁷ *Gaudete et Exsultate*, n.125.

¹³⁸ Francis, Meditation, Domus Sanctae Marthae, 23 May 2014, accessed 15 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2014/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20140523_sadness-joy.html.

¹³⁹ *Evangelii Gaudium*, n.275.

transformation. We are offered joy in this life and in the life to come.¹⁴⁰ Jesus truly lives (*Christus vivit*) is indeed the title of the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation published in April 2019.

We have delved particularly in this chapter on the theme of hope and joy as seen in the writings and speeches of Francis. His manner is conspicuously down-to-earth and straightforward, as it reveals a pastor's heart and 'a shepherd who has the smell of the sheep.'¹⁴¹ Through the many images and metaphors he employs, he attempts to reach out with the Gospel message to as many as he possibly can, and in the most convincing ways.

Hope is essential, for one cannot live without hope which guides one on the earthly pilgrimage and is a source of encouragement to keep going, especially when the going gets tough. But this journey ought not to be dreary but rather joy-filled, Francis affirms. In doing so, one is able to become the "salt of the earth and light to the world" (Mt 5:13,14), thus making a positive Christlike difference to one's family, the Church and society at large.

God's abounding and unfailing mercy is the basis for one to exercise hope and experience joy. This stems from a personal encounter with God and in being open to his continuing presence in one's life. It is then that one is enabled to go out and sow seeds of hope. This hope indeed takes shape as "a hope which liberates us from the forces pushing us to isolation and lack of concern for the lives of others..."¹⁴²

This is a hope leading one to a genuine encounter with others, an aspect Francis considers of crucial importance. This 'culture of encounter' is not a mere abstraction or an ideology but is rooted primarily in the values of the Gospel which one experiences as the Good News. This is "a hope which makes us see, even in the midst

¹⁴⁰ Dennis J. Billy, "Gospel Joy: Pope Francis and the New Evangelization (Edited Version)", accessed 2 March 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DUZNUvbjG6U>.

¹⁴¹ Pope Francis, Homily at Chrism Mass, St Peter's Basilica, 28 March 2013, Accessed 2 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130328_messa-crismale.html.

¹⁴² Pope Francis, Homily, Madison Square Garden, New York, 25 September 2015, accessed 15 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150925_usa-omelia-nyc.html.

of smog.”¹⁴³ How this expresses itself within the challenges one encounters today in different situations, namely the political arena, in the context of the manifold dimensions of life in contemporary society, and in the midst of those who face suffering is explored in the next chapter.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

CHAPTER 3- IMPLICATIONS OF HOPE AND JOY IN PRAXIS

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter dealt with the understanding of the doctrinal and scriptural aspects of the themes of hope and joy. How this translates into the praxis, or the pastoral vision of Pope Francis is the goal of this chapter.

In an address given by Pope Francis barely ten days after his election to the papacy, to the Diplomatic Corps, one gets a clue of what the emphasis of his pontificate was going to be. In that address he stated,

Fighting poverty, both material and spiritual, building peace and constructing bridges: these, as it were, are the reference points for a journey that I want to invite each of the countries here represented to take up. But it is a difficult journey, if we do not learn to grow in love for this world of ours. Here too, it helps me to think of the name of Francis, who teaches us profound respect for the whole of creation and the protection of our environment, which all too often, instead of using for the good, we exploit greedily, to one another's detriment.¹

One can state briefly that the three issues of poverty, peace building and the environment, that Francis has highlighted in the address above, will be explored in the three sections that comprise this chapter. One may do so by taking into consideration the influence of St Francis on Bergoglio.

3.1 ST FRANCIS: A MAN OF POVERTY

St Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) sought to emulate the poor Jesus one discovers in the Gospel. Leonardo Boff writes that Francis of Assisi lived the antithesis of the imperial Church. Living during the era of the papacy of Pope Innocent III (1198-1216), the church was seen as triumphalistic, with the pope having dominion over

¹ Pope Francis Audience with the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to The Holy See, *Sala Regia*, 22 March 2013, accessed 10 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/march/documents/papa-francesco_20130322_corpo-diplomatico.html.

practically all of Europe and even Russia.² In contrast to the Gospel of power, Boff writes that St Francis offered the power of the Gospel: total relinquishment, radical poverty and extreme simplicity. He did not place himself in the clerical or monastic framework, but as a layman, he was guided by the Gospel, lived strictly on the periphery of the cities, where the poor and the lepers lived, and in the heart of nature, lived a cosmic union with all beings. He spoke to the centre from the periphery, asking for conversion. Without explicitly criticizing, he began a great reform, starting from below, but without breaking off with Rome.³

3.1.1 Background

What does gospel poverty entail? of utmost importance for a Christian it is to follow the example of Christ. How does Francis intend to live out this imitation of Christ in a personal and collective manner? One may look at these in the subsections that follow.

- **Jesus: A Model Par Excellence**

Pope Francis could be seen as one who has forged a deep intimacy with Jesus and has been shaped through that relationship. In *Evangelii Gaudium* he writes that one's faith in Christ who was poor and associated himself with the poor and outcast is the basis for seeking the development of the lesser privileged ones of society.⁴ Jesus was born in a manger, in the midst of animals. He was presented in the temple with two turtle doves, the offering made by those who could not afford a lamb; he was raised in a home of ordinary workers and worked with his own hands to earn his bread. He took his mission the preaching of the good news to the poor. He said: "Blessed are you poor, yours is the kingdom of God" (Lk 6:20). Commenting on this beatitude in *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Francis states:

Luke does not speak of poverty "of spirit" but simply of those who are "poor" (cf. Lk 6:20). In this way, he too invites us to live a plain and austere life. He calls us to

² Leonardo Boff, Tr. By Melina Alfaro, "Francis of Assisi and Francis of Rome", 4 April 2013, Accessed on 29 April 2019, <https://leonardoboff.wordpress.com/2013/04/04/francis-of-assisi-and-francis-of-rome/>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 186.

share in the life of those most in need, the life lived by the Apostles, and ultimately to configure ourselves to Jesus who, though rich, “made himself poor” (2 Cor 8:9).⁵

One notes the challenge of the gospel that begs for an emulation of Christ. One is able to do that if the hope-based virtue of humility is being exercised. These are those who put their hope in God. One notices this dimension while he describes the condition of interior poverty:

“Meekness is yet another expression of the interior poverty of those who put their trust in God alone. Indeed, in the Bible the same word – *anawim* – usually refers both to the poor and to the meek.”⁶

While focusing on Christ, the apostles and the gospel commands, Francis puts forth the need to embrace the evangelical counsel of poverty both from within and without. By learning from the poor and their hope in God and the joy that they express, they indicate a path for the rest to focus on things really essential thereby being open to joys of living with less of earthly goods.

- **Personal level**

"Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses."⁷ Thus wrote Pope Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. Pope Francis was known to live a life of austerity while still a Cardinal. Even after he became Argentina's top church leader in 2001, he never lived in the ornate church mansion where Pope John Paul II stayed when visiting the country but preferred a simple bed in a downtown building, heated by a small stove on cold weekends. For years, he took public transportation around the city, and cooked his own meals.⁸ Now as Pope, he continues being an icon of simplicity and humility, eschewing papal limousines and the grand Apostolic Palace, and instead being driven

⁵ *Gaudete et Exsultate*, n. 70.

⁶ *Ibid.*, n.74.

⁷ Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* n.41

⁸ The Associated Press, “Pope Francis known for simplicity, humility”, 13 March 2013, accessed 23 April 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/pope-francis-known-for-simplicity-humility-1.1397002>.

in a Ford Focus and living in the Vatican guesthouse.⁹ For the traditional Holy Thursday washing of the feet, Pope Francis opts to go to a Roman prison to wash the feet of inmates, including Muslims and women, rather than following the tradition of washing the feet of clergy in the Archbasilica of Saint John Lateran or Saint Peter's.

An important lesson in encountering Christ that Francis learnt was with a woman named Marta. This is narrated by Ivereigh in his biography.

One Sunday evening, when she approached Bergoglio and said her family was hungry and cold, he told her to come back the next day to see what he could do. "But father", said Marta, "we're hungry now, and we're cold now." He went to his room, took the blanket off his bed, and found her food. The point Bergoglio had learned was that Christ spoke through the poor and meeting their needs was not something that could be deferred for someone's own convenience.¹⁰

Above is just one illustration from the plentiful evidence of Francis' commitment to the poor. Paul Valley mentions that the title "bishop of the slums", as Francis was once called, has brought about some considerable change at the Vatican. Valley observes Francis' takes sides with the poor, for instance

He ended the practice of the Pope giving special audiences to big donors. The 'idolatry of money' was attacked in speeches, trickle-down economics and global tax evasion and commodity speculation that compromised ordinary people's access to food.¹¹

One thus observes the priority of Francis for the poor not merely in his speeches but the attitude he shows for wealth. One can observe more of this while he explains the beatitudes in the apostolic exhortation, *Gaudete et Exsultate*. Francis writes:

Wealth ensures nothing. Indeed, once we think we are rich, we can become so self-satisfied that we leave no room for God's word, for the love of our brothers and sisters, or for the enjoyment of the most important things in life. In this way, we miss out on the greatest treasure of all. That is why Jesus calls blessed those who are poor

⁹ Paul Valley, "Where Pope Francis Learned Humility", 23 August 2015, accessed 24 April 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/08/pope-francis-cordoba-exile-humble/402032/>

¹⁰ Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer*, 182.

¹¹ Valley, *Pope Francis*, 243.

in spirit, those who have a poor heart, for there the Lord can enter with his perennial newness.¹²

In another address he added that “the devil always enters by the pocket, always... . . . it is good to learn to give thanks for what we have, generously and voluntarily giving up that which is superfluous, so as to be closer to the poor and the weak.”¹³ One thus discovers that here is someone who does indeed walk the talk. There is credibility to the message delivered because of how it is being lived out and put into practice.

- **At the Collective Level: The Church**

On the eve of the Second Vatican Council, St John XXIII called on the faithful to be the “Church of the poor.” The option for the poor is primarily a theological category for the Church, states *Evangelii Gaudium*, rather than a cultural, sociological, political or philosophical one. One discovers that the tradition of the Church gives witness to the primacy of Christian charity to the poor.¹⁴ In calling for a ‘poor church for the poor’, one finds Francis constantly returning to the theme of the poor. One does realize that Jesus’ common theme apart from the kingdom of God was the relationship between poverty and riches as one discovers in the Gospel. “The existential poor and the social poor push the Church beyond herself” states Francis.¹⁵ It began with the coming of the Spirit on Pentecost, when the Church huddled in the Upper Room was thrust out, and for Francis she ought not to go back hiding to the Upper Room but reach out to the peripheries. One notes the centrality that Francis of Assisi gave to the poor. Francis of Assisi did not organize work for the poor, but he lived with the poor and like the poor. One finds that Pope Francis has reiterated that the issue of the poor

¹² *Gaudete et Exsultate*, n.68

¹³ Francis, “To the Community of The Pontifical College of San José in Rome”, 1 April 2017, accessed 30 April 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/april/documents/papa-francesco_20170401_collegio-spagnolo.html.

¹⁴ *Evangelii Gaudium*, n.198

¹⁵ Francis with Antonio Spadaro, *Open to God Open to the World*, (London: Bloomsbury Continuum, 2018), 129.

will not be resolved without the participation of the poor, not by philanthropy but by social justice. The Church is called to be with the poor in their joys and sorrows.

Thus, one observes a greater awareness being carried out with the focus made on the poor Jesus of the Gospel and his poor suffering brothers and sisters. Making an option for the poor does demand a deep change in one's attitudes and priorities. It demands the virtue of humility that one has noted previously in order to realize that everything is a gift from God. If these gifts, particularly riches, are not considered generously in solidarity with those who suffer, they may be a hindrance to one's love for God and one's needy neighbour. The desire for 'a poor church for the poor' that has often been highlighted is indeed one of the chief characteristics of the pastoral mission of Pope Francis.

3.1.2 New Forms of Poverty

Evangelii Gaudium asks for the recognition of new forms of poverty in which Christ continues to suffer:¹⁶ the homeless, the addicted, indigenous people and elderly people who are increasingly isolated. So too women, unborn children, and the environment. The refugees, migrants and victims of human trafficking, are what one needs to be mindful of when one speaks about poverty today. Each of these last three are the subject of our discussion next.

- **Human Trafficking**

The International Labor Organization estimates there are more than 40 million victims of human trafficking around the world. It estimates 81 percent of victims are trapped in forced labour, 25 percent are children and 75 percent are women and girls. It also estimated that the trafficking of human beings for forced labour or sexual exploitation generates \$150 billion a year, making it the third-largest crime industry

¹⁶ *Evangelii Gaudium*, n.210

in the world behind drugs and arms trafficking.¹⁷ Jesuit Father Michael Czerny considers that it is “the most evil and sinful enterprise of deception, entrapment, domination and exploitation.”¹⁸ One observes that Francis openly denounces trafficking as a crime against humanity and as “atrocious scourge” and a wound “in the body of contemporary humanity”. He finds this widespread form of slavery affecting different strata of society - women, children, the disabled and the poor and that it knows no borders as it affects even the developed nations. The solution proposed by him is to create a “culture of encounter” whereby one is led to unexpected wealth and great surprises.¹⁹ He was influential in having the document, “Pastoral Orientations on Human Trafficking” released by the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development. This document draws from the longstanding practical experience of many international organizations working in this area. We shall look closely at some of the issues that arise in this regard when we look next at the section on migrants and refugees as it closely ties up with similar issue – the movement of peoples.

- **The Plight of Migrants & Refugees**

One may consider that our present generation could be termed the age of migration. According to some estimates more than 200 million people in this generation, have had to leave their place of birth, their culture, and their values, because of poverty, injustice, religious intolerance, armed conflicts, natural disasters, and other manifestations of violence.²⁰ A 2015 report by the United Nations put the numbers as 65.3 million for that year.²¹ This is said to be even more than the number displaced

¹⁷ Carol Glatz, “Vatican releases guidelines to help church fight human trafficking”, 17 January 2019, accessed 29 April 2019, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/justice/vatican-releases-guidelines-help-church-fight-human-trafficking>.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Francis, “To Participants in the World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action against Human Trafficking”, 12 February 2018, accessed 29 April 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/february/documents/papa-francesco_20180212_contro-tratta.html.

²⁰ Alette Latorre, “The Movement of Peoples”, accessed April 22, 2019, <https://rscj.org/news/national-migration-week>, 16-18.

²¹ UNHCR, “Global Trends Forced Displacement 2015”, 20 June 2016, accessed 28 April 2019, <https://www.unhcr.org/576408cd7>.

during World War II. However, it is not just sheer numbers but the fact that these are people with real faces, real names and real situations to deal with. To illustrate just a few, one finds:

Nzigira, who witnessed the rape and killing of his wife and children in Rwanda; Raul, who was tortured in Chile; Carlos and his family hiding from paramilitaries in Colombia; the Martinez family running from a burning house in El Salvador; Maria and her small daughter who died in the desert of southern Arizona; Julia, who was finally able to escape from her treatment as a servant (slave) for a family in Wisconsin; the Perez family, divided because of the law in Arizona that forces deportation back to Mexico...²²

From this brief illustration, one may observe the degree to which human dignity has been undermined and that people continue to suffer from basic human rights being violated because of varying circumstances.

3.1.3 The Response of the Church: Pope Francis' Messages for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees

In the Roman Catholic Church, the World Day of Migrants and Refugees is celebrated in January each year, having been instituted in 1914 by Pope Pius X. One observes that the present papacy of Pope Francis has coincided with the largest number of forcibly displaced people ever recorded. He talks of it as being an open wound on the body of contemporary society, a scourge upon the body of Christ and a crime against humanity.²³ One may look briefly in this section on the addresses to highlight some themes made by him during his pontificate.

- **Migration and Poverty**

One finds a close relationship between migration and poverty when one considers the various reasons that give rise to this phenomenon: “fleeing from situations of extreme poverty or persecution in the hope of a better future, or simply to save their own lives,

²² Alette Latorre, “The Movement of Peoples”, accessed April 22, 2019, https://rscj.org/system/files/heart_magazine_spring_2011.pdf, 17.

²³ Pope Francis, “To Participants in The International Conference on Combating Human Trafficking, “Casina Pio IV”, Lecture Hall of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, 10 April 2014, accessed 4 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/april/documents/papa-francesco_20140410_tratta-persone-umane.html.

millions of persons choose to migrate.” In the elements that constitute migratory movements, one does not find it difficult to observe that poverty is present in different forms. The challenges encountered are manifold such as “violence, exploitation, discrimination, marginalization, restrictive approaches to fundamental freedoms, whether of individuals or of groups.”²⁴

What approach shall one take to combat this phenomenon? One begins by first attempting to eliminate prejudices and presuppositions in the approach to migration. Francis writes on a certain negativity that prevails in this regard so that “the arrival of migrants, displaced persons, asylum-seekers and refugees gives rise to suspicion and hostility. There is a fear that society will become less secure, that one’s identity and culture will be lost, that competition for jobs will become stiffer and even that criminal activity will increase.”²⁵

What may constitute a possible solution to migration? Francis suggests that one could do so by leaving behind a throwaway culture – i.e. moving away from attitudes of defensiveness and fear, indifference and marginalization and embracing one of encounter and acceptance.²⁶ One discovers in the use of four key verbs what Francis offers in shaping one’s response to the situation: *to welcome*, *to protect*, *to promote* and *to integrate*.²⁷ These were stated in subsequent messages in 2017 and reaffirmed in 2018.²⁸ Each of these four verbs is important in enabling one to discover what Francis means by them.

²⁴ Francis, Message for The World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2014), 5 August 2013, accessed 26 April 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20130805_world-migrants-day.html.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Pope Francis, To participants in the International Forum on "Migration and Peace", 21 February 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/february/documents/papa-francesco_20170221_forum-migrazioni-pace.html.

²⁸ Pope Francis, Message for the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2018, 14 January 2018, accessed 29 April 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20170815_world-migrants-day-2018.html.

- **Welcoming**

The first aspect is one of *welcoming*. The response of how to deal with the plight of refugees and migrants is by taking on a merciful attitude, one that facilitates a ‘culture of encounter’ and which builds solidarity. Francis highlights these aspects in his 2016 message. Mercy firstly arises from encountering one’s redemption through Christ’s blood. The natural attitude is one of “joyful gratitude” for this encounter and “strengthens solidarity towards others” by eliciting in one responsibility for one’s neighbour, seen as a brother and sister no matter where they happen to live. By eliminating prejudices, Francis adds that in facilitating a “culture of encounter” one not only extends hospitality to the other but is also a beneficiary from doing so.²⁹

The right to live in dignity for each human person is something fundamental and this dignity is what Francis states is being challenged through new forms of slavery imposed by criminal organizations that, for instance, buy and sell men, women and children as forced labourers in construction, agriculture, fishing or in other markets.³⁰ In this context, one notes Francis stressing on the importance of welcoming for, “at the heart of the Gospel of mercy, the encounter and acceptance by others are intertwined with the encounter and acceptance of God himself. Welcoming others means welcoming God in person! Do not let yourselves be robbed of the hope and joy of life born of your experience of God’s mercy, as manifested in the people you meet on your journey!”³¹

The attitude of welcoming is an attitude based in hope. Mary was familiar with God’s word, and she listened to angel Gabriel’s divine message. She was able to greet and welcome life with the joys and challenges that would come across her path. In welcoming Christ’s love for oneself, as Francis had preached to the young people at

²⁹ Francis, Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2016, 17 January 2016, accessed on 3 May 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20150912_world-migrants-day-2016.html.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

the WYD in Rio de Janeiro, one becomes a sign of hope for others too.³² One is reminded of the communal dimension of hope where all need to feel welcomed.

The particular role of the Church is highlighted in the message for 2015: The Church is a mother who promotes a culture of acceptance and solidarity worldwide:

From the beginning, the Church has been a mother with a heart open to the whole world and has been without borders. This mission has continued for two thousand years. But even in the first centuries, the missionary proclamation spoke of the universal motherhood of the Church, which was then developed in the writings of the Fathers and taken up by the Second Vatican Council.³³

Thus, the Christian community nourishes, guides and indicates the way, accompanying all with patience, and drawing close to them through prayer and works of mercy.³⁴ One discovers that the virtue of hope is helpful in exercising one's Christian commitment.

In reflecting on Francis' call to be welcoming to the foreigner, one is reminded of the biblical verse, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt 25:35). Thus, Christ himself is seen as being welcomed through the act of welcoming the stranger. The virtue of magnanimity, considered earlier, as a hope-based virtue is a calling out to "stretch forth the mind to great things." This does entail extending one's horizons to accept the other in spite of a different ethnicity, race, language or skin colour. In exercising this virtue, one encounters Christ in the suffering and has an opportunity to live by the Great Commission on the basis on which one is judged by the Lord.

- **Protecting**

The second element of *protecting* deals with the steps intended to defend the rights and dignity of migrants and refugees: this includes various aspects like safety from

³² General Audience, 4 September 2013, accessed 12 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130904_udienza-generale.html.

³³ Francis, Message for the 101st World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2015), 3 September 2014, accessed 3 May 2019, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20140903_world-migrants-day-2015.html.

³⁴ Ibid.

illegal recruitment practices, having adequate consular assistance, the right to retain one's identity documents and the ability to open a bank account.³⁵ The evil of human trafficking, considered earlier, preys on the vulnerable ones. On another note, the positive dimension put forward by Francis is to be mentioned when he talks about the "potential and skills of migrants" which when recognized could benefit the community they are welcomed into.³⁶

On dealing with child migrants in the 2017 message, Francis highlights the fact that these are the first ones to suffer and to do so alone. The shape of their suffering could be through torture, physical violence and/or moral and psychological aggression, all of which tend to inflict them with life-long scars. He identifies a threefold manner of the defenselessness they face: first, in being children; second, in being foreigners, and third, having no means to protect themselves. Being "physically and psychologically dependent", care ought to be given for their protection.³⁷

The decision for many, particularly adults, to emigrate is because remaining in their homeland is not an option. It may most certainly mean unjust imprisonment, unbelievable torture and often death. It is in these dire circumstances that one may take the difficult decision to leave one's country. To be able to exercise the virtue of fortitude, seen earlier, implies enabling and protecting the vulnerable and nurturing their own hopes for a better future. Because of syndicates of criminals and other vested interests who prey on possible victims, one needs to exercise courage to do the right thing and thus facilitate hope. It is on behalf of these vulnerable ones — the *anawim* of today — that one stands up for, at times bravely, while realizing one's own obligations in caring for those who are precious to the Lord.

- **Promoting**

This aspect of *promoting* implies the efforts to empower such suffering individuals so as to achieve their potential as human beings, in all the dimensions of the human

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Francis, Message of His Holiness Pope Francis For the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2017, 15 January 2017, accessed 5 May 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20160908_world-migrants-day-2017.html.

person. Since according to Francis, “work, by its nature, is meant to unite peoples”, he desires to move towards a more “social and professional inclusion of migrants and refugees.”³⁸ In his 2014 message, Francis affirms the integral promotion of the human person such that “development cannot be reduced to economic growth alone;” for a better world to be realized attention needs to be paid to individuals and their aspirations; it involves acceptance even of those who may not be able to contribute much economically, and thus doing away with a “throwaway culture.”³⁹

Our hearts do desire something “more”. Beyond greater knowledge or possessions, they want to “be” more. Development cannot be reduced to economic growth alone, often attained without a thought for the poor and the vulnerable. A better world will come about only if attention is first paid to individuals; if human promotion is integral, taking account of every dimension of the person, including the spiritual; if no one is neglected, including the poor, the sick, prisoners, the needy and the stranger (cf. Mt 25:31-46); if we can prove capable of leaving behind a throwaway culture and embracing one of encounter and acceptance.⁴⁰

Work is an important factor, states Francis, that bestows dignity on a person and not power, money or culture.⁴¹ One finds him possibly speaking on the importance of work from his own experience of working for three years as a chemical technician. One observes his emphasis on the importance of work as one of three essential elements needed especially for the poor, alongside land and lodging. Many studies from all over the world have shown that migrants do bring in a positive development to the nation they emigrate to. According to some surveys, there seems to be a near-consensus among economists that immigration, whether legal or illegal, makes a positive contribution in the medium and long terms.⁴²

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Francis, Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2014), 5 August 2013, accessed 4 May 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20130805_world-migrants-day.html.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Francis, Meditation at Domus Sanctae Marthae, 1 May 2013, accessed 5 May 2013, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2013/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20130501_slave-labour.html.

⁴² Antoine d’Abbundo. Immigrants a boon for the American economy. 7 February 2017. accessed 30 May 2019, <https://international.la-croix.com/news/immigrants-a-boon-for-the-american-economy/4635>.

The virtue of humility is helpful in this regard where one appreciates not only one's gifts but also that the other brings in many positive aspects derived from one's upbringing and even professional qualification. We had a look at this hope-based virtue in the previous chapter. It is the recognition that the giver of all gifts is God who gives generously to all. One does well to cooperate in helping towards the flourishing of these gifts.

- **Integrating**

Finally, one notices here a need for a culture of meeting that, as Francis states, occurs “by increasing opportunities for intercultural exchange, documenting and disseminating best practices of integration, and developing programmes to prepare local communities for integration processes.” This he reasons out is geared in order to shape society to reflect more the “multi-faceted gifts of God to human beings”⁴³

With regard to child migrants, integration implies the duty of the state to resolve and regularize the situation of these children, fully respecting their dignity and seeking to meet their needs when they are alone, but also the needs of their parents, for the good of the entire family.⁴⁴ There is also the long-term solution that involves trying to deal with the causes which trigger migrations in the countries of origin. There is thus a demand made on the entire international community, one observes, to eliminate the conflicts and violence that force people to flee.⁴⁵

One takes note here too of hope being a communal endeavour that strives to seek the other's well-being. Hence the need to integrate and build bonds of solidarity with those foreigners coming into a new land. There ought to be measures taken for an integration into a new culture while respecting their differences and so doing one's best for a mutually enriching encounter.

⁴³ Pope Francis, 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2018, 14 January 2018, accessed 29 April 2019.

http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papa-francesco_20170815_world-migrants-day-2018.html.

⁴⁴ Francis, Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2017.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

In conclusion, through the reaching out to the poor and especially in today's society the migrants, refugees, protecting those being trafficked, Francis attempts to bring out a merciful face of the Church and thus portray hope. "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt 25:35) is a particular scriptural verse that Francis wants the Church to pay attention to. In welcoming the poor and tending to their needs one facilitates a culture of encounter and is thereby inclusive. Francis refuses "the vision of zero-sum cultural competition and affirms instead that cultural diversity, the many families within the one family of God, is the seedbed of renewal, recreation and new birth."⁴⁶ For Francis, they have much to teach and thus one could hope to learn a lot if one were open and humble enough. In turn one may very well be reminded of another verse, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). Joy, which have seen in the previous chapter, is made possible through an expansion of the heart. In welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating the migrant and the refugee one glimpses a blueprint for joy that is there to be realized.

3.2 ST FRANCIS: A MAN OF PEACE

The life of Saint Francis may serve as a model for solving conflicts in a nonviolent way and for improving understanding between Christians and Muslims. Francis of Assisi who lived during the time of the Crusades, had come to distrust violence and war. In the context of Christian crusaders engaged in bloody conflict with the Muslim forces in 1219 he sought to solve the conflict in a non-violent manner. In order to do so, he travelled to Damietta, Egypt, and was successful in getting an audience with Sultan Malek-el-Kamel, the Sultan of Egypt. Though Francis tried to persuade the Sultan of the Good News of Jesus' saving love for all, the Sultan was not drawn away from his own faith and convictions. Yet, he was impressed with Francis' enthusiasm

⁴⁶ Leo J. O'Donovan, "Here's Why Every Child at the Border Belongs to all of Us." *America* 219/14 (Dec 24, 2018): 1, accessed 12 May 2019, <https://search-proquest-com.ejournals.um.edu.mt/docview/2159651312?accountid=27934>.

and courage giving him a listening ear, extending hospitality to him and finally ensuring that Francis was given safe passage back to the Christian camp.⁴⁷

St Francis of Assisi preached peace and peacefulness, and one would observe that even the animals listened to the words he spoke. His religious order drew a large following made up of beggar-monks whose simple, peaceful existence was a challenge to the dominant powers of both the state and the clergy.⁴⁸ It may not be farfetched if one were to catch glimpses of this saint in Pope Francis' own life in the manner of his reaching out in respectful dialogue with our brothers and sisters of different religions and cultures.

3.2.1 Principles that guide towards peace

In a chapter titled “The Common Good and Peace in Society” from *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis set out his four principles of peace “out of the conviction that their application can be a genuine path to peace within each nation and in the entire world”.⁴⁹ They are: *time is greater than space; unity prevails over conflict; realities are more important than ideas; the whole is greater than the part*. These four criteria are from a chapter of an uncompleted doctoral thesis by fifty-year-old Bergoglio about the Italian-German theologian Romano Guardini, written in the few months he spent in Frankfurt, Germany in 1986. Guardini is in fact cited in the exhortation and we have considered his influence on Francis in the first chapter. Let us look at each of them briefly.

- **Time is greater than Space**

There exists a tension between “fullness and limitation.” There is a tension between hoping for continued improvement along the future horizon i.e. time, and the tendency to hold onto already established privileges, powers, or

⁴⁷ Jack Wintz, “Friar Jack on Christian/Muslim Dialogue,” accessed 20 April 2019, <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/friar-jack-on-christianmuslim-dialogue/>.

⁴⁸ Hans-Ulrich Stoldt, “The Life of Pope Francis' Namesake”, 15 March 2013, accessed 12 April 2019, <https://www.spiegel.de/international/zeitgeist/a-profile-of-the-saint-who-inspired-pope-francis-a-889156.html>.

⁴⁹ *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 221.

institutional responses in the present moment i.e. space. In spelling out this axiom, Francis writes that one should prefer “processes” over “spaces,” since it is “time” that governs and illumines “spaces.”⁵⁰ One observes it is to act by initiating new processes with a patient eye toward the future, in accordance with the objective criteria for achieving true human flourishing.⁵¹

- **Unity prevails over conflict**

Amidst conflict, Francis writes that one can lose one’s sense of the profound unity of reality.⁵² A conflict may be handled, first, by simply ignoring the problem; second, if one is imprisoned by it; and a third and suggested way, is to face it head on, resolve it and to make it a link in the chain of a new process.⁵³ Building communion amid disagreement can be made possible, asserts Francis, only by being willing to go “beyond the surface of the conflict” and looking at others in “their deepest dignity”. It becomes possible to resolve things at a higher plane and achieve “a diversified and life-giving unity”⁵⁴

- **Realities are greater than Ideas**

One may see in this principle, for instance, tension between the ideas of politicians and social theorists for change and the realities to be changed. Ideas are at the service of communication, understanding, and praxis.⁵⁵ When ideas do not correspond to the true nature of reality, they cannot inspire effective action. The disconnection between words and things leads to “formal nominalism” and “rhetoric,” generating a political

⁵⁰ *Evangelii Gaudium* n. 223

⁵¹ Barrett Turner, “How Francis is Making Catholic Social Doctrine into Catholic Social Praxis,” 4 September 2015, accessed 15 May 2019, <https://politicaltheology.com/how-francis-is-making-catholic-social-doctrine-into-catholic-social-praxis-barrett-turner/>.

⁵² *Evangelii Gaudium* n.226

⁵³ *Ibid.*, n.227

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, n.228

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, n.232.

discourse that fails to inspire people. Realities that are inspired by reason is what drives people to act.⁵⁶

- **The Whole is greater than the part**

In this axiom one considers that one “pay attention to the global” dimension, but at the same time, “the local” needs to be looked at, “which keeps our feet on the ground.” Two extremes that one ought to avoid are on one hand that people “get caught up in an abstract, globalized universe,” and on the other hand, “they turn into a museum of local folklore, a world apart, doomed to doing the same things over and over, and incapable of being challenged by novelty or appreciating the beauty which God bestows beyond their borders.”⁵⁷

A model that Francis proposes in understanding this principle is not of a sphere but a polyhedron, which reflects the convergence of all its parts, each of which preserves its distinctiveness. Thus, it is the sum total of persons within a society, each maintaining their own individuality, while at the pursuit of the common good, which truly makes a place for everyone.⁵⁸

To conclude, these four principles, influenced greatly by Romano Guardini, are key in understanding the way Francis seeks to promote working towards peace be it in the State, society or amongst religions. One may see these principles govern oneself in the peace-building process. For example, in the principle of unity prevailing over conflicts, differences need not have to divide but rather have the possibility to be assimilated in seeking a consensus. These principles may then be considered as a tool for moving forward in an encounter. This may evoke the helpful imagery of “hope as a sail”, considered earlier, which continues to drive one in genuine efforts at establishing peace.

⁵⁶ Barrett Turner, “How Francis is Making Catholic Social Doctrine into Catholic Social Praxis.”

⁵⁷ *Evangelii Gaudium* n.234.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, n.236.

3.2.2 Social Dialogue

In the pursuit of the common good and the full development of the human person, one observes that Francis puts forward areas where the Church can offer the light of faith to the State, society (culture and science) and to peoples of other faiths.

Reuel Howe in his classic work, *The Miracle of Dialogue* writes:

“Every man is a potential adversary, even those whom we love. Only through dialogue are we saved from this enmity toward one another. Dialogue is to love what blood is to the body. When the flow of blood stops, the body dies. When dialogue stops, love dies, and resentment and hate are born. But dialogue can restore a dead relationship. Indeed, this is the miracle of dialogue: it can bring relationship into being, and it can bring into being once again a relationship that has died.”⁵⁹

Howe’s words show the importance of dialogue. Hence one may see that dialogue is a privileged means of encounter in contemporary society, and Francis sees that it is an opportune time in working towards “building consensus and agreement while seeking the goal of a just, responsive and inclusive society.” Francis notes dialogue as the privileged means of this encounter, which is not restricted only to a few selected persons and so every person may be considered a protagonist in this regard.⁶⁰

One may note the importance that Francis gives to placing *dialogue as a means to attain peace*. When responding to the question of dialogue with terror groups like ISIS, the pontiff responded on the need to keep an open door. He said, “I never count anything as lost. Never. Never close the door. It's difficult, you could say almost impossible, but the door is always open.”⁶¹ In his pastoral visit to Bari in July 2018, one finds him discouraging violence in the example of Jesus who is “the Prince of

⁵⁹ Reuel L. Howe, *The Miracle of Dialogue*, [Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1963], 3.

⁶⁰ *Evangelii Gaudium* 239.

⁶¹ Stoyan Zaimov, “Pope Francis says Door of Dialogue with ISIS should never close; warns fighting terrorism leads to deaths of innocents”, in *Christian Post*, 26 November 2014, accessed 24 April 2019, www.christianpost.com/news/pope-francis-says-door-of-dialogue-with-isis-should-never-close-warnsfighting-terrorism-leads-to-deaths-of-innocents-130277/.

Peace (cf. Is 9:5). Jesus [who] does not draw a sword; instead, he asks his disciples to put it back in its sheath (cf. Jn 18:11).”⁶²

One finds Francis being realistic with the challenges involved in working for peace. This does require perseverance like he states:

It too must be cultivated in the parched soil of conflict and discord, because today, in spite of everything, there is no real alternative to peacemaking. Truces maintained by walls and displays of power will not lead to peace, but only the concrete desire to listen and to engage in dialogue. We commit ourselves to walking, praying and working together, in the hope that the art of encounter will prevail over strategies of conflict. In the hope that the display of threatening signs of power will yield to the power of signs: men and women of good will of different beliefs, unafraid of dialogue, open to the ideas of others and concerned for their good. Only in this way, by ensuring that no one lacks bread and work, dignity and hope, will the cries of war turn into songs of peace.⁶³

Thus, a culture of encounter, a theme constantly recurring in Francis’ homilies, speeches and messages is the means by which differences are overridden in a positive manner. Challenges may be present, but one may be reminded of another image explored earlier i.e. “hope as a woman in labour.” One may infer through this image that hindrances may be seen positively as challenges to be worked at and overcome through endurance and persisting with the principles, we have considered earlier. The test for genuine peace may be realized in the experience of true joy, a fruit of the Holy Spirit. It comes about because of the beatitude, “blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” (Mt 5:9)

- **The Courage to Dialogue**

There needs to be courage involved in undertaking a dialogue, one observes, which is vital in peacebuilding, as we find Francis affirming in a speech:

⁶² Pope Francis, At the Conclusion of The Dialogue, Basilica of Saint Nicholas (Bari), 7 July 2018, accessed 16 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/july/documents/papa-francesco_20180707_visita-bari-conclusionone.html.

⁶³ Ibid.

The courage of dialogue. This courage, this dialogue gives us hope. It has nothing to do with optimism; it's entirely different. Hope! In the world, in society, there is little peace also because dialogue is missing... ... Dialogue can overcome war. Dialogue can bring people of different generations who often ignore one another to live together; it makes citizens of different ethnic backgrounds and of different beliefs coexist. Dialogue is the way of peace... ...For this reason, it is vital that it grow and expand between people of every condition and belief, like a net of peace that protects the world and especially protects the weakest members.⁶⁴

One may note from the above that the courage to engage in dialogue is a hope-filled endeavour. It is fundamental to peace and exists at different levels in a society: between nations, between the old and young, between various ethnic groups, between religions etc.

Dialogue also enables one to grow into a mature human being and so is essential to one's self-development. In an address given to school students in Tokyo, Japan we find Francis saying that, "Dialogue is very important for our own maturity, because in confronting another person, confronting other cultures, and also confronting other religions in the right way, we grow; we develop and mature."⁶⁵

Francis states that dialogue requires a trusting and friendly environment:

"Dialogue is born from an attitude of respect for the other person, from a conviction that the other person has something good to say... ... To dialogue entails a cordial reception, not a prior condemnation. In order to dialogue, it is necessary to know how to lower the defenses, open the doors of the house, and offer human warmth."⁶⁶

The aspect of humility, which disposes one not to make judgement about the other but show an openness, makes the experience of dialogue welcoming and fruitful. This

⁶⁴ Francis, *Address to participants in the international meeting for peace sponsored by the community of "Sant' Egidio*, 30 September 2013, accessed 12 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/september/documents/papa-francesco_20130930_incontro-pace-s-egidio.html.

⁶⁵ Pope Francis, *To Students and Teachers from the Seibu Gakuen Bunri junior high school of Saitama, Tokyo (Japan)*, 21 August 2013, Accessed 2 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/august/documents/papa-francesco_20130821_collegio-saitama-giappone.html.

⁶⁶ Jose Mario Bergoglio – Abraham Skorka, *On Heaven and Earth*, Alejandro Bermudez and Howard Goodman Tr., {New York: Image 2013}, xiv.

stems from the dignity of persons who are worthy to be respected in the dialogical process. Thus, the process of dialoguing is instrumental in the building of peace.

- **The Attribute of a peace maker**

During the meeting on peace in September 2013 the message Pope Francis delivered distinguished a genuine peace maker from an intermediary:

to cooperate in building peace not as intermediaries but as authentic mediators. Intermediaries seek to give everyone a discount ultimately in order to gain something for themselves. However, the mediator is one who retains nothing for himself, but rather spends himself generously until he is consumed, knowing that the only gain is peace. Each one of us is called to be an artisan of peace, by uniting and not dividing, by extinguishing hatred and not holding on to it, by opening paths to dialogue and not by constructing new walls!⁶⁷

One notes the disposition called forth from a peacemaker, one of magnanimity, i.e. in desiring to seek the best outcome and also of humility that seeks nothing for oneself, these help in contributing towards peace.

3.2.3 The Church's Response: Pope Francis' World Day of Peace Messages

On the occasion of the Annual World Day of Peace, Pope Francis delivers a message. We shall look at some key themes from these addresses to know Francis' thoughts.

- **Role of Politics in Peacebuilding**

“Good politics is at the service of peace” was the theme of the Francis' *52nd World Day of Peace Message*. It is that which respects and promotes fundamental human rights, which are at the same time mutual obligations, enabling a bond of trust and gratitude to be forged between present and future generations. Francis' message is

⁶⁷ Francis, *Address to participants in the international meeting for peace sponsored by the community of "Sant' Egidio"*, 30 September 2013, accessed 12 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/september/documents/papa-francesco_20130930_incontro-pace-s-egidio.html.

that peace is “the fruit of a great political project grounded in the mutual responsibility and interdependence of human beings.”⁶⁸

According to Francis, bringing peace is the central mission of Christ’s disciples. At a homily in 2013, Francis mentioned the need to be involved in politics.

“Politics, according to the Social Doctrine of the Church, is one of the highest forms of charity, because it serves the common good... ...A good Catholic meddles in politics, offering the best of himself, so that those who govern can govern.”⁶⁹

Francis shows his high regard for politics when he states, “Politics, though often denigrated, remains a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good.”⁷⁰ As with the element of hope, working for peace entails also a communal dimension that seeks the good of the polis, the city.

- **Political Virtues and Vices**

There are both the positive and negative elements that arise in the field of politics. One may consider some ‘political vices’, i.e. corruption in its varied forms: the misappropriation of public resources, the exploitation of individuals, the denial of rights, the flouting of community rules, dishonest gain, the justification of power by force or the arbitrary appeal to *raison d'état* and the refusal to relinquish power. One can add xenophobia, racism, lack of concern for the natural environment, the plundering of natural resources for the sake of quick profit and contempt for those forced into exile.

On the contrary, on the positive side, one finds that in citing from a poem composed by Vietnamese Cardinal François-Xavier Nguyễn Văn Thuận, Pope Francis proposed the virtues that a politician ought to possess i.e. one with a lofty sense and deep understanding of his role, who personally exemplifies credibility, who works for the

⁶⁸ Francis, Message for 52nd World Day of Peace, 1 January 2019, accessed 4 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20181208_messaggio-52giornatamondiale-pace2019.html.

⁶⁹ “Pope calls faithful to pray, participate actively in politics”, *Catholic News Agency*, 16 September 2013, accessed 11 May 2019, <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-calls-faithful-to-pray-participate-actively-in-politics>.

⁷⁰ *Evangelii Gaudium*, n.205.

common good and not his or her own interest, who remains consistent, who works for unity, who works to accomplish radical change, who is capable of listening, who is without fear.⁷¹ One may not fail to notice very similar aspects here to what is entailed in a person who is filled with hope. Keeping close to God, one desires in making a positive contribution to society.

- **Indifference/Violence in contrast to Brotherliness/Fraternity**

There are some threats to the building of a peaceful world. In the *49th World Day of Peace* Message, Francis focuses on overcoming indifference, namely what Francis terms the “globalization of indifference.” The threat of indifference occurs at different levels. Indifference to God makes one “prone to relativism” as Benedict XVI had pointed out; man makes himself the norm for things. Indifference to neighbour is shown by “disinterest and a lack of engagement, which only help to prolong situations of injustice and grave social imbalance, which in turn risks moving towards acts of violence and insecurity.”⁷²

In the *50th World Day of Peace* Message that centered on non-violence as a means of peace, Francis admits that it is not easy knowing if the world is presently more or less violent than in the past, or to know whether modern means of communications and greater mobility have made us more aware of violence, or, on the other hand, increasingly inured to it.⁷³

To counter violence with more violence, one discovers, only leads at best to forced migrations and enormous suffering, because vast amounts of resources are diverted to military ends and away from the everyday needs of the people who require them. One sees that if one’s fundamental needs such as the right to food, water, health care

⁷¹ Francis, *Message for 52nd World Day of Peace*, 1 January 2019, accessed 4 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20181208_messaggio-52giornatamondiale-pace2019.html.

⁷² Pope Francis, *Message for 49th World Day of Peace 1 January 2016*, 8 December 2015, accessed 4 May 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20151208_messaggio-xlix-giornata-mondiale-pace-2016.html.

⁷³ Francis, *Message for Fiftieth World Day of Peace 1 January 2017*, 8 December 2016, 03 May 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20161208_messaggio-l-giornata-mondiale-pace-2017.html.

or employment are denied, they are tempted to obtain them by force as *Evangelii Gaudium* (n. 59) had mentioned. Francis illustrates through the parable of the Good Samaritan (cf. Lk 10:29-37) the need “to stop and to help alleviate the sufferings of this world and the pain of our brothers and sisters, using whatever means are at hand, beginning with our own time, however busy we may be.”⁷⁴

There also exists the scourge of slavery in its different forms, Francis states in his message for the 48th *World Day of Peace*. Because of the scale of the issue one sees the need to have a mobilization comparable in size to that of the phenomenon itself. The challenge of a “globalization of indifference” does not prove helpful in this regard.

To combat the vice of indifference or violence and the scourge of slavery, as one has just seen, the idea of fraternity or brotherliness proposed by Francis is an important element. One finds this in the 47th *World Day of Peace* message. The basis of fraternity, Francis explains, is found in God’s fatherhood, in the specific and extraordinarily concrete personal love of God for each man and woman (cf. Mt 6:25-30) which generates fraternity. It is the welcoming love of God, Francis states, that becomes the most formidable means of transforming our lives and relationships with others, opening us to solidarity and to genuine sharing.⁷⁵ The regeneration of human fraternity is “*in and by Jesus Christ through his death and resurrection.*”

People have descended from common parents, with Adam and Eve who were made in the image and likeness of God. The vocation of living as brothers is being thwarted in their offspring, Cain and Abel. In colluding with sin and killing his brother, Cain betrays that calling, which in turn has continued down the ages and today, as Francis writes, is “witnessed by our daily acts of selfishness, which are at the root of so many wars and so much injustice: many men and women die at the hands of their brothers

⁷⁴ Francis, *Message for XLIX World Day of Peace 1 January 2016*, 8 December 2015, Accessed on 4 May 2019, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20151208_messaggio-xlix-giornata-mondiale-pace-2016.html.

⁷⁵ Pope Francis, 48th World Day of Peace, 1 January 2014, accessed 30 April 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20131208_messaggio-xlvi-giornata-mondiale-pace-2014.html.

and sisters who are incapable of seeing themselves as such, that is, as beings made for reciprocity, for communion and self-giving.”⁷⁶

- **Non-Violence as the Path to Peace**

Truth and nonviolence are as old as the hills, wrote Mahatma Gandhi, as he strove to put these principles in the freedom struggle for India. He was greatly influenced by Christ’s teaching, especially the beatitudes and Christ’s own example of non-violence. While reflecting on the demands of non-violence, Francis offers the following points:

Firstly, Jesus is the one who marked out the path of nonviolence. He walked that path to the very end, to the cross, whereby he became our peace and put an end to hostility. Thus, Jesus is the model par excellence for all who look for a model.

Secondly, the family is considered by Francis to be the indispensable crucible in which the family members learn to communicate and to show generous concern for one another. When frictions and conflicts arise, they ought to be resolved not by force but by dialogue, respect, concern for the good of the other, mercy and forgiveness. From within families, the joy of love spills out into the world and radiates to the whole of society. Here one notes the indispensable need for a community to nurture non-violence just as with the virtue of hope.

Thirdly, it is by doing small acts of kindness as one discovers in the writings of St Therese of Lisieux. These little ways of loving were not to miss out on a kind word, a smile or any small gesture which sowed peace and friendship. An integral ecology is made up of simple daily gestures that break away from the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness. “Little drops of water make a mighty ocean.” In humbly doing little acts well, one is on the path of building peace.

To conclude this sub-section, one may have noted that there are challenges but for a person of hope and joy, one is not so much deterred by the evils that seem at times insurmountable. One sees them as challenges there to be overcome. In this regard, as

⁷⁶ Ibid.

has been just considered, the centrality of a relationship with God is firstly vital. “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart...” (Mt 11:29), is the demand placed on a follower of Christ that requires a dose of humility. Secondly, there is the communal dimension where one learns to build peace, just as where hope is nurtured. Thirdly, just as one can be a sower of hope, likewise one can be sower of peace through the little acts that one does. What are these acts? One may explore this through some examples of Pope Francis in the next sub-section.

3.2.4 Practical Gestures of Peace

One witnesses Francis’ influence across the world in building bridges. One instance is when he facilitated a breakthrough in Cuban-American relations in 2014. Both Barack Obama and Raul Castro attribute the rapid progress toward normalization of diplomatic relations between the two nations to the intervention of Pope Francis, whose knowledge of Latin American political affairs appears to have made a tangible difference.⁷⁷

Yet another gesture was in inviting the President of the State of Israel, Shimon Peres and the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, again in 2014 for a meeting of prayer for peace in the Holy Land. One finds here a reminder of common heritage shared between them through Abraham whose children they were, and hence they ought to live as brothers and work at peacebuilding. He stated this:

Peacemaking calls for courage, much more so than warfare. It calls for the courage to say yes to encounter and no to conflict: yes, to dialogue and no to violence; yes, to negotiations and no to hostilities; yes, to respect for agreements and no to acts of provocation; yes, to sincerity and no to duplicity. All of this takes courage, it takes strength and tenacity.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Thomas Massaro, “The First Jesuit Pope: The Contribution of His Jesuit Charism to his Political Views” in *Pope Francis as a Global Actor: Where Politics and Theology Meet*, ed. Alynna J. Lyon et al. (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 51.

⁷⁸ Pope Francis, *Invocation for Peace*, Vatican Gardens, 8 June 2014, accessed 1 June 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/june/documents/papa-francesco_20140608_invocazione-pace.html.

Though one may notice obstacles in peacebuilding, Francis gives hope to the peace process in the Holy Land by taking recourse to negotiations, respecting agreements, being sincere, affirming dialogue – all of which are elements of a culture of encounter.

A more recent symbolic gesture was had on April 11, 2019. On this day, Pope Francis kissed the feet of rival South Sudan leaders. He first kissed the feet of President Salva Kiir Mayardit and then moved on to Vice Presidents-designate Riek Machar and Rebecca Nyandeng de Mabior who were in the Vatican for an unprecedented two-day spiritual retreat. Pope Francis asked them as a brother to “stay in peace.” He went to add:

I’m asking you with my heart: let us go forward. ... Go ahead, go forward, and resolve the problems. You have begun a process. May it end well. There will be struggles, disagreements, amongst you. But let this remain inside the office. But in front of the people, hold hands, united, so as simple citizens you will become fathers of the nation.” imploring them to maintain the "fragile" peace that exists between them.⁷⁹

This gesture, if nothing else can, ought to convince even the hardest critic that the pursuit of peace is at the heart of the mission of Pope Francis.

In conclusion, one finds that Pope Francis seeks that all people work for peace. Having outlined some principles at the start, encouraging a culture of encounter and speaking on numerous occasions on peace notwithstanding his gestures towards the same, he is indeed by example putting into practice the beatitude: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” This is an apt description for this vicar of Christ.

3.3 ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI: A LOVER OF CREATION

We shall now delve into the third aspect of this chapter which is to discuss the environment or ecology. St John Paul II proclaimed St Francis of Assisi as the patron of ecology in 1979. He did this in order to offer “an example of genuine and deep

⁷⁹ Aleteia, “Pope Francis stuns rival South Sudan leaders by kissing their feet in plea for peace”, 11 April 2019, accessed 9 May 2019, <https://aleteia.org/2019/04/11/pope-francis-stuns-rival-south-sudan-leaders-by-kissing-their-feet-in-plea-for-peace/>.

respect for the integrity of creation. As a friend of the poor who was loved by God's creatures, Saint Francis invited all of creation — animals, plants, natural forces, even Brother Sun and Sister Moon — to give honour and praise to the Lord.”⁸⁰ In that same year, in *Redemptor Hominis* (4 March 1979) his first encyclical, John Paul II addressed the issue of the abuse of the created world. Here he writes that man lives in fear of the things that he produces, fear that the power given to man to subdue the earth can turn against himself.⁸¹ He goes on to state:

We seem to be increasingly aware of the fact that the exploitation of the earth, the planet on which we are living, demands rational and honest planning. At the same time, exploitation of the earth not only for industrial but also for military purposes and the uncontrolled development of technology outside the framework of a long-range authentically humanistic plan often bring with them a threat to man's natural environment, alienate him in his relations with nature and remove him from nature. Man often seems to see no other meaning in his natural environment than what serves for immediate use and consumption. Yet it was the Creator's will that man should communicate with nature as an intelligent and noble "master" and "guardian", and not as a heedless "exploiter" and "destroyer".⁸²

One does see not only the truth of the planet being exploited but also the emphasis made by John Paul II on understanding one's place in the order of creation. Later, Benedict XVI in *Caritas in Veritate* highlighted that the greatest challenge facing the economy is to achieve the most efficient use, and not abuse, of natural resources.⁸³ He extends an invitation for one's personal reflection by adding that, “the way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats itself, and vice versa. This invites contemporary society to a serious review of its life-style, which, in many

⁸⁰ Pope John Paul II, Message for World Day of Peace, 1 January 1990, accessed 31 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19891208_xxiii-world-day-for-peace.html.

⁸¹ John Paul II, Encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis.html, 15.

⁸² *Ibid*, 15.

⁸³ Benedict XVI, Encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html, n. 50.

parts of the world, is prone to hedonism and consumerism, regardless of their harmful consequences.”⁸⁴

3.3.1 A Background to Pope Francis’ Option in Favour of Creation

One finds in the encyclical *Laudato Si’* that different saints accompany us on this journey. St Benedict, St Teresa de Lisieux and Blessed Charles de Foucauld are mentioned in the encyclical. But more than them it is St Francis of Assisi who is cited several times, as “the example par excellence of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology lived out joyfully and authentically.”⁸⁵ He is the model of “the inseparable bond between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace.”⁸⁶ Hailing the life of St Francis of Assisi, the Pope writes, “He was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself.”⁸⁷

One discovers, as Zhang writes, that Pope Francis takes the two keys of ‘restoring’ and ‘repairing’ the church from the conversion experience of St Francis and applies them to this encyclical on the environment.⁸⁸ One notes that it is the ecological sensitivity of St. Francis of Assisi that gives thrust to *Laudato Si’*.⁸⁹ Thus, by taking St Francis as a model, the pope invites all Christians to watch over and protect the fragile world we live in and all its peoples.⁹⁰

Laudato Si’ had seen the collaboration of many people that included scientists and theologians. It has been noted that Francis set the guidelines, made a few corrections and prepared the final edition. Francis stresses the fact that the encyclical is a ‘social encyclical’ and not merely a ‘green encyclical’.⁹¹ Starting with the reality of the moment, which is ecological, it takes into consideration the consequences on the poorest and those who have been discarded. Thus, one discovers that it attempts to

⁸⁴ Ibid, 51.

⁸⁵ Pope Francis, Encyclical, *Laudato Si’* n.10

⁸⁶ Ibid., n.10.

⁸⁷ Ibid., n.10.

⁸⁸ Xue Jiao Zhang, "How St. Francis Influenced Pope Francis' *Laudato Si'*", *CrossCurrents* 66/1 (2016): 43, accessed 23 May 2019, <https://doi-org.ejournals.um.edu.mt/10.1111/cros.12170>.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 45.

⁹⁰ *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 216.

⁹¹ Spadaro, *Open to God: Open to the World*, 104.

confront the culture of discarding people and sees the social impact that environmental events can have. While previous popes have attempted to raise environmental concerns before, one discovers that Francis has elevated the importance of ecological ethics by integrating ecology into the broader tradition of Catholic social teaching.⁹²

In his message on *World Environment Day* 2013, one finds him take the term “cultivating and caring” that is found in the book of Genesis. Drawing from his predecessors, Francis argues that this term is not merely an instruction given by God at the beginning of creation but is given to the contemporary man and woman too. However, he warns that the danger of possessing, dominating, manipulating and exploiting seem more the order of the day.⁹³ One of the consequences of this that Francis highlights is on the reality of “the desertification of the soil [seen] almost as a physical ailment, and the extinction of a species as a painful disfigurement.”⁹⁴

Thus, one may ask if there is something that can be done or if the situation faced is beyond redemption. As one immerses oneself into the encyclical, one’s awareness is heightened on the present situation. What do the elements of hope and joy have to offer in this regard? A hopeful person sees light at the end of the tunnel. In humility (as an aspect of hope), by accepting and acknowledging the present situation, one can then work at remedying the situation as best as one can. Though there may be those who are either ignorant or in denial about the state of affairs that concern the environment, yet one observes there are many others who have serious concerns about the drastic changes occurring to our planet. They have started taking initiatives to do something to care for our common home in the hope that not all is lost.

A Chinese proverb stating, “a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step,” may be worth quoting here. This would imply taking on “agile feet” which one saw

⁹² Michael Taylor Ross, “Pope Francis and a New Dialogue”, *Peace Magazine* 31/4 (Oct-Dec 2015): 24. <http://search.ebscohost.com.ejournals.um.edu.mt/login.aspx?direct=true&db=a9h&AN=110075316&site=ehost-live>.

⁹³ Francis, *General Audience*, 5 June 2013, accessed 25 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/audiences/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130605_udienza-generale.html.

⁹⁴ Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, n.215.

earlier and responding in a hopeful manner. One is also reminded of a quote attributed to Edmund Burke that, “the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.” One may now begin to look at the contemporary challenges the world is facing.

Painful Awareness: The Cry of the Earth

Through the encyclical *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis hopes to “enter into dialogue with all people about our common home.”⁹⁵ He starts the encyclical by listing out many issues that brings forth a painful awareness of the situation one is faced with. One may see each one of these briefly.

- **Pollution** - The earth is beginning to look, according to Francis, more like an “immense pile of filth.”⁹⁶ With tons of waste generated by homes and businesses, there has not been an adequate capacity to absorb and reuse waste and the by-products especially by the industrial system.⁹⁷ No serious consideration has been given to limiting the use of non-renewable resources.
- **Water** - “Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right,” asserts Francis. Yet with many poor people not having access to it implies that they are denied the right to a life consistent with their inalienable dignity.⁹⁸
- **Climate Change** - The climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all.⁹⁹ However, the greatest impact is had on the poorest who are impacted by this change, for instance, the need to migrate due to growing poverty from environmental degradation experienced through the depletion of natural reserves and ecosystemic services like agriculture, fishing and forestry. They have no legal protection and are not considered as refuges even though they are forced to leave their homes for the sake of their livelihood.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ *Laudato Si'*, n.3.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, n.21.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, n.22.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, n.30.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, n.23.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, n.25.

- **Loss of biodiversity** - Francis notes that an annual occurrence is the disappearance of thousands of plant and animal species which one would never know about, nor one's children ever see, because they have been lost forever.¹⁰¹ Francis observes that though some of the factors of environmental impact of projects are taken into consideration i.e. their effects on soil, water and air, other factors such as loss of species or of animal and plant groups are not given much consideration at all. There are also unseen species, that people are oblivious to, that play a critical role in maintaining the equilibrium of a place.¹⁰²

By taking an honest look at the world, Francis writes:

the degree of human intervention, often in the service of business interests and consumerism, is actually making our earth less rich and beautiful, ever more limited and grey, even as technological advances and consumer goods continue to abound limitlessly. We seem to think that we can substitute an irreplaceable and irretrievable beauty with something which we have created ourselves.¹⁰³

One notes human intervention has not necessarily been conducive to one's consideration of the environment.

- **Ecological debt** – Francis highlights the term 'ecological debt' that is said to exist between the global north and south.¹⁰⁴ This is a debt that richer countries owe poorer countries because of the huge trade imbalances and a disproportionate use of natural resources by wealthier countries over a period of time.

Thus, from the above points one may infer, as Francis states, that “a certain way of understanding human life and activity has gone awry, to the serious detriment of the world around us.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Ibid., n. 33.

¹⁰² Ibid., n.34,35.

¹⁰³ Ibid., n.34.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., n.51.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., n.101.

3.3.2 Transformational Awareness: Identifying the Causes

An adage one may have heard is that awareness brings healing. If one had identified painfully what is happening, who or what is the source? One finds it is human beings who are culpable for the present environmental crises that our world faces.

- **Modern Anthropomorphism**

One observes that in identifying the causes, Pope Francis first mentions “modern anthropomorphism;” this is a worldview coming down from the Enlightenment, according to Anthony Annett, having two pillars. One pillar is an approach that features a turning away from community and the common good to the importance given to the sovereign individual and the other pillar is using science to gain knowledge and take control over the natural world.¹⁰⁶ Some terms one associates with ‘modern anthropomorphism’ are: *instant gratification, rampant individualism, narrow self-interest, short-term financial reward*. Thus, though the gaining of scientific knowledge and putting it to use for the betterment of human lives is commendable, there is a danger. This lies in the fact that “technological development has not been accompanied by a development in human responsibility, values and conscience,” states Francis.¹⁰⁷

- **Technocratic Paradigm**

Secondly, one has what Francis terms the “technocratic paradigm.”¹⁰⁸ This is a one-sided and hence a curtailed view of reality; in being severed from ethics, dangerous use of technology grants one unlimited power to do as one wishes.¹⁰⁹ This attitude regards creation as an external object to be manipulated, mastered and controlled with no concern for its inherent value or limits. One observes a purely utilitarian approach

¹⁰⁶ Anthony Annett, “The Economic Vision of Pope Francis” in Vincent Miller ed. *The Theological and Ecological Vision of Laudato Si’: Everything is Connected* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017),162.

¹⁰⁷ *Laudato Si’*, n.106.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, n.101.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, n.136.

of intervening in nature when considered from the economic standpoint.¹¹⁰ Thus, it is an approach of having efficiency and productivity entirely geared to one's own individual benefit.¹¹¹ There seems then the underlying reality that everything and everybody is considered as means to one's ends. Francis states:

When human beings place themselves at the centre, they give absolute priority to immediate convenience and all else becomes relative. Hence, we should not be surprised to find, in conjunction with the omnipresent technocratic paradigm and the cult of unlimited human power, the rise of a relativism which sees everything as irrelevant unless it serves one's own immediate interests.¹¹²

One also notes a close relation with the "throwaway culture," a term that Francis mentions often in *Laudato Si'* and also in *Evangelii Gaudium*. A further degradation of human beings may be observed when the members of the exploited or the oppressed class are now considered as outcasts and leftovers.¹¹³ This attitude implies the sense that there are human persons who are dispensable, an attitude that disregards the inherent human dignity that one possesses.

3.3.3 Having a Transformed Awareness

A key aspect of the encyclical is the aspect of 'integral ecology' that Francis puts forward. With the usage of words such as *connection*, *interrelation*, *unity*, *relationship* and *harmony* dozens of times throughout the encyclical, the idea is promoted. One finds that the fact of interrelatedness is not just of the planet and the living species in it but also that the genetic code of human beings is shared by many others.¹¹⁴ As Francis states:

"It cannot be emphasized enough how everything is interconnected. Time and space are not independent of one another, and not even atoms or subatomic particles can be considered in isolation. Just as the different aspects of the planet -- physical, chemical and biological -- are interrelated, so too living species are part of a network which we will never fully explore and understand."¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ Anthony Annett, 163.

¹¹¹ *Laudato Si'* n.159.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, n.122.

¹¹³ *Evangelii Gaudium*, n.53.

¹¹⁴ *Laudato Si'* n.138.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 138.

Integral ecology is thus a belief that everything in the world is interconnected and so inspires one to see and seek to understand these interconnections.¹¹⁶ It constitutes looking at what is required for “the life and survival of society” and having a “broader vision of reality” which comprises social, cultural and environmental aspects.¹¹⁷ These are key in facing the challenges as Francis outlines in the encyclical. The interrelatedness which one may be unaware of, can be understood when one, for instance, considers ecosystems and how they “interact in dispersing carbon dioxide, purifying water, controlling illness and epidemics, forming soil, breaking down waste.”¹¹⁸ These are things which we as human beings overlook or simply do not know about. An important dimension then in this transformational awareness is for the realization that “we live and act on the basis of a reality that precedes our existence and our abilities.”¹¹⁹ Hence the consideration of the “regenerative ability” while talking about sustainability of various ecosystems is crucial and vital to one’s own wellbeing.¹²⁰

At another level, social institutions also have a bearing on the environment. These institutions exist at different levels, for instance, family, national and international levels and these exist to develop human relationships.¹²¹ When the effectiveness of these institutions suffers the people there are affected. Even laws may remain “a dead letter” with failure in their implementation. A simple illustration that Francis offers is that of the prevalence of drug usage in affluent societies and its demand which creates problems in the poorer regions that produce those drugs, namely, destroying lives and deteriorating the environment.¹²²

¹¹⁶ Vincent Miller, “Integral Ecology: Francis’s spiritual and moral vision of interconnectedness” in *The Theological and Ecological Vision of Laudato Si’: Everything is Connected*, ed. Vincent Miller, (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 18.

¹¹⁷ *Laudato Si’*, n.138.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, n. 140.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, n.140.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, n.140.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, n.142.

¹²² *Ibid.*, n.142.

Cultural ecology involves treating cultural treasures as something not merely inherited from the past but as “a living, dynamic and participatory reality” which needs consideration when one deals with human beings and the environment.¹²³

- **Loving Awareness: A Positive Response to the Crisis**

How does one respond to these challenges? A couple of things one may infer are: first, a *metanoia*, or “ecological conversion” is needed; i.e. a profound conversion in our thought and affections, as Francis reminds us that certain mindsets may not contribute to a healthy behaviour. Thus there needs to be, one discovers, a level of moral honesty to see the sources of spiritual emptiness that encourage a consumerist behaviour and also undermine one’s capacity to care for the common good.”¹²⁴ Second, is a positive note where Francis invites all to a “loving awareness” that we are not disconnected from the rest of creatures but joined in a ‘splendid and universal communion’¹²⁵ How this may be done is through embracing a lifestyle that is “prophetic and contemplative.”¹²⁶ This is a commitment to a contemplative vision of life, as Douglas Christie puts it, which means to “open oneself to an abiding commitment to see and respond to every living creature with care and attention.”¹²⁷ One may take St Francis’ example of humility which the encyclical proposes, where he praises God along with “Brother ant and sister fire” as an invitation to see others not merely as creatures but as brothers and sisters.¹²⁸ Two practical dimensions one may see taking shape are described hereunder.

- **Slowness**

In contrast to the continued acceleration of changes affecting humanity and the planet and a large-scale “rapidification” one discovers Francis’ invitation to slow down. The

¹²³ Ibid., n.143.

¹²⁴ Douglas E. Christie, “Becoming Painfully Aware” in *The Theological and Ecological Vision of Laudato Si’: Everything is Connected*, ed. Vincent Miller, (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), 121.

¹²⁵ Francis, *Laudato Si’* n. 220

¹²⁶ Ibid., n. 222.

¹²⁷ Douglas E. Christie, “Becoming Painfully Aware”, 124.

¹²⁸ Vincent Miller, “Integral Ecology: Francis’s spiritual and moral vision of interconnectedness” in *The Theological and Ecological Vision of Laudato Si’: Everything is Connected*, ed. Vincent Miller, (London: Bloomsbury, 2017),16.

reasoning behind this lies in the fact that “the speed with which human activity has developed contrasts with the naturally slow pace of biological evolution.”¹²⁹ Further on, one notices that one needs to “slow down and look at reality in a different way” in order that one may “recover the values and the great goals swept away by our unrestrained delusions of grandeur.”¹³⁰ In the rat race of life, the importance of slowing down does help one to prioritize what is essential and what may be superfluous.

- **Being serenely present**

A contemplative stance is one that is respectful. Francis, one sees, states it well in outlining the need to be present to things around oneself;

To be serenely present to each reality, however small it may be, opens us to much greater horizons of understanding and personal fulfilment. Christian spirituality proposes a growth marked by moderation and the capacity to be happy with little. It is a return to that simplicity which allows us to stop and appreciate the small things, to be grateful for the opportunities which life affords us, to be spiritually detached from what we possess, and not to succumb to sadness for what we lack.¹³¹

The attitude of “less is more” may be countercultural but Francis notes that this is not a life lived with lesser intensity but becoming familiar with enjoying the simplicity of life and finding “a satisfaction in fraternal encounters, in service, in developing their gifts, in music and art, in contact with nature, in prayer.”¹³²

¹²⁹ *Laudato Si'*, 18.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, n.114.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, n. 222.

¹³² *Laudato Si'* 223.

- **The Impact of Laudato Si'**

One can see that through *Laudato Si'*, as Tilche and Nociti claim, Francis has “shown leadership, and the ability to draw a new and very powerful narrative. He has affirmed the beauty of the challenge in front of us, which gives humanity a unique occasion of showing what it is capable of doing.”¹³³ According to Cardinal Gualtiero Bassetti of Perugia-Città della Pieve, this encyclical is comparable to Pope Leo XIII’s groundbreaking social encyclical *Rerum Novarum*.¹³⁴

But it is not just what one finds written in the encyclical but the practical steps one could observe to implement what the encyclical suggests. Francis placed environmental concern on the Catholic calendar by designating the 1st of September as the annual *World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation*, announcing this on 6th August 2015. One sees this as a major global ecumenical stewardship initiative that began in 1989 under the leadership of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I.

The Pope considers this as one way offered to “individual believers and communities, a fitting opportunity to reaffirm their personal vocation to be stewards of creation, to thank God for the wonderful handiwork which he has entrusted to our care, and to implore his help for the protection of creation as well as his pardon for the sins committed against the world in which we live.”¹³⁵

Inspired by the encyclical many nations have made positive changes to their lifestyle or raised awareness on the issue of the environment. One finds that many nations especially in Africa are trying to move away from fossil fuels and forests as energy sources and adopt solar technology. The Church in the Philippines organized rallies,

¹³³ Andrea Tilche and Antonello Nociti, “Laudato Si’: The Beauty of Pope Francis’ vision”, *S.A.P.I.EN.* 5 8/1 (2015), accessed 13 April 2017, URL: <http://sapiens.revues.org/1704>.

¹³⁴ Catholic World News, Italian cardinal: Laudato Si’ comparable in importance to Rerum Novarum, 21 August 2015, Accessed 12 May 2019, <https://www.catholicculture.org/news/headlines/index.cfm?storyid=25896>.

¹³⁵ Pope Francis, Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis For the Establishment of the “World Day of Prayer for The Care of Creation”, 6 August 2015, accessed 4 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2015/documents/papa-francesco_20150806_lettera-giornata-cura-creato.html.

petition drives and prayer services around the themes of the encyclical. The indigenous people of Puerto Princesa Vicariate in the southern Philippines, inspired by *Laudato Si'*, planted some 2000 new trees on their land. Some concrete steps in the United States range from the archdiocese in Chicago, where there was a push for energy efficiency in its buildings, to San Diego, which encouraged all parishes to install solar-power systems. Closer home, the Irish bishops had announced a decision to divest fossil fuels. These are only a few of the many initiatives that have been spurred on through the inspiration of Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*. The document itself is hopeful that with God we can bring about a change in our attitudes and work at making this home of ours more beautiful, more habitable.

3.4 THE PROPHETIC GESTURES OF POPE FRANCIS

An image or gesture speaks a lot and can be more instructive. A good adage is that faith is more easily caught than taught. How then is one to interpret various visits and actions of Pope Francis? One needs to consider at least a few of them before one may analyze their significance.

3.4.1 Solidarity with Migrants and Refugees

a. Solidarity with the suffering (Lampedusa), 8 July 2103

Lampedusa was the destination of the Pope on his first pastoral visit outside Rome since his election in March 2013. It is a place about 80 miles (120 km) from Tunisia and is one of the nearest gateways to Europe for Africans fleeing poverty and conflict. Thousands of migrants have made the dangerous crossing in recent years, usually packed into rickety wooden boats exposed to the elements. This visit for Francis was “like a painful thorn in my heart”, he said during the penitential liturgy he celebrated in Lampedusa. His visit there was a sign of his closeness.¹³⁶ Bishop Robert W. McElroy reflecting on Francis' visit to Lampedusa writes:

Pope Francis attested poignantly to the reality and the impersonality of structural sin when he visited Lampedusa, where hundreds of undocumented immigrants died in a

¹³⁶ Francis, Homily during visit to Lampedusa, 8 July 2013, accessed 26 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130708_omelia-lampedusa.html.

shipwreck while seeking a new life in Italy. “Who is responsible for the blood of these brothers and sisters of ours?” Francis asked. “Nobody! That is our answer. It isn’t me; I don’t have anything to do with it; it must be someone else, but certainly not me. Yet God is asking each of us: ‘Where is the blood of your brother that cries out to me?’”¹³⁷

One finds Francis highlighting the fact that a ‘globalization of indifference’ is what plagues humanity today. This is manifested, according to him, in being robbed of the ability to weep and to experience compassion and a loss of a sense of responsibility for one’s brothers and sisters; it means being hypocritical like the priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan. During the homily delivered there, one finds him addressing this indifference by challenging people’s consciences. He preached, “we have become used to the suffering of others: it doesn’t affect me; it doesn’t concern me; it’s none of my business!”¹³⁸

b. Lesbos (16 April 2016)

Lesbos has been a refugee and migrant influx that’s seen over a million people cross to Greece in 2015 and about 150,000 in early 2016. Over 300 had died during 2016 while attempting to make the crossing.¹³⁹ Amidst the rise of xenophobic political discourse across Europe, the Pope’s April 2016 visit to the Mòria refugee camp on the Greek island of Lesbos received widespread media coverage. With Europe set to face one of its most serious humanitarian crises since the end of the Second World War, Francis commented on the suffering connected to migration. He made a heartfelt plea for responsibility and solidarity in the face of this tragic situation. His goal in visiting Lesbos was to “call the attention of the world to this grave humanitarian crisis and to plead for its resolution.”¹⁴⁰

The message he wished to impart was to encourage the people to hope:

¹³⁷ Robert W. McElroy, “Pope Francis makes addressing poverty essential”, 8 October 2013, accessed 18 April 2019. <https://www.americamagazine.org/church-poor>.

¹³⁸ Francis, Homily during Visit to Lampedusa, 8 July 2013.

¹³⁹ Patrick Nicholson, “‘You Are Not Alone’: Pope Francis In Lesbos”, 17 April 2016, accessed 25 May 2019, <https://www.caritas.org/2016/04/not-alone-pope-francis-lesbos/>.

¹⁴⁰ Pope Francis, Visit to Refugees, Mòria Refugee Camp (Lesvos), 16 April 2016, accessed 29 April 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/april/documents/papa-francesco_20160416_lesvos-rifugiati.html.

Do not lose hope! The greatest gift we can offer one another is love: a merciful look, a readiness to listen and understand, a word of encouragement, a prayer. May you share this gift with one another. We Christians love to tell the story of the Good Samaritan, a foreigner who saw a man in need and immediately stopped to help. For us, it is a story about God's mercy which is meant for everyone, for God is the All-Merciful. It is also a summons to show that same mercy to those in need. May all our brothers and sisters on this continent, like the Good Samaritan, come to your aid in the spirit of fraternity, solidarity and respect for human dignity that has distinguished its long history.¹⁴¹

The impact of Francis' visit was notable especially when one finds a testimony such as, "the way he walked among the refugees in the detention centre, the way he spoke to them, he made us so happy," is what a Kurdish refugee from Syria had to say.¹⁴² "The pope's visit is a symbol of hope and solidarity for the refugees. It's a sign that the world has not forgotten them, and help is a possibility," said Tonia Patrikiadou, Caritas Hellas Field Manager for a Caritas-run hotel on Lesbos, in anticipation of Francis' visit.¹⁴³

A joint declaration between the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, the Archbishop of Athens and all Greece, and Pope Francis decreed that among other things they sought to work for promoting unity among all Christians and also urged an end to war and violence in the Middle East, asking religious communities to enhance efforts to support refugees and for countries to extend temporary asylum.¹⁴⁴

c. US-Mexico Border (17 February 2016)

Pope Francis concluded a February 2016 visit to Mexico with Mass in Ciudad Juárez, celebrated 300 feet from the US-Mexico border. It is there as in other border areas

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Patrick Nicholson, "You Are Not Alone": Pope Francis In Lesbos', 17 April 2016, <https://www.caritas.org/2016/04/not-alone-pope-francis-lesbos/>.

¹⁴³ Caritas, "Pope Brings Hope to Refugees on Lesbos", 12 April 2016, accessed 29 April 2019, <https://www.caritas.org/2016/04/pope-brings-hope-to-refugees-on-lesbos/>.

¹⁴⁴ Joint Declaration of His Holiness Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, of His beatitude Ieronymos, Archbishop of Athens and all Greece and of his Holiness Pope Francis, Mòria Refugee Camp, Lesvos, 6 April 2016, accessed 16 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2016/april/documents/papa-francesco_20160416_lesvos-dichiarazione-congiunta.html.

that thousands of immigrants from Central America and other countries, not just Mexico, sought to pass over to the other side. At a memorial marked by a cross for migrants who have died along the border, Pope Francis stopped to pray, survey the border, and offer a papal blessing. The efforts made by people who were forced to emigrate in challenging circumstances was not lost on the pope when he stated:

One can hardly deny that the humanitarian crisis which in recent years has meant migration for thousands of people, whether by train or highway or on foot, crossing hundreds of kilometers through mountains, deserts and inhospitable zones. The human tragedy that is forced migration is a global phenomenon today...¹⁴⁵

In highlighting the human face of suffering and the ordeals they faced, Francis preached that instead of the crises being measured in terms of statistics, these required to be seen from the context of suffering brothers and sisters. The suffering that stemmed from poverty, violence, the radicalization of the young who suffer from injustice, the problem of drugs and the fact of vulnerable women's lives that have been robbed of them.¹⁴⁶

A plea for a conversion and a transformation of attitudes is what one discovers at the homily delivered there.

Let us together ask our God for the gift of conversion, the gift of tears, let us ask him to give us open hearts like the Ninevites, open to his call heard in the suffering faces of countless men and women. No more death! No more exploitation! There is always time to change, always a way out and always an opportunity, there is always the time to implore the mercy of God.¹⁴⁷

One notes the hopeful message given here due to the experience of God's mercy. In disposing oneself to that mercy, conversion is possible. The image of the "helmet of hope", considered previously as one of Francis' favourite images is what may be

¹⁴⁵ Pope Francis, Homily, Ciudad Juárez Fair Grounds (Mexico), 17 February 2016, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/homilies/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20160217_omelia-messico-ciudad-jaurez.html.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

glimpsed here. The certainty of a merciful God ever ready to bestow grace if only one should open one's heart is a message that does not belie hope.

3.4.2 Solidarity with the Sufferings of Workers

The second city that Francis visited was Cagliari, Sardinia on 22 September 2013. He addressed the sufferings undergone by the workers on the island of Sardinia because of lack of jobs. The suffering felt here, was identified by Francis to be the resultant loss of dignity due to the shortage of work options. "Where there is no work there is no dignity," Francis is found saying. He identifies the cause of such a situation with the "result of a global decision, of an economic system ... centered on an idol called 'money.'"¹⁴⁸ The importance of work was brought forth by Francis as he impressed on his hearers the message that, "Work means dignity, work means taking food home, work means loving!"¹⁴⁹

3.4.3 Solidarity with those suffering from Civil War

The lack of love and the sincere resolve to work in dialoguing for peace is the cause of numerous wars. This does create a situation where the fundamental human dignity is not cared for and there is only a diminished and limited way for a person to develop his/her potential.

(a) Visit to Central African Republic (29 - 30 November 2015)

The conflict in Central African Republic is generally seen as a sectarian war between the Christian majority and Muslim minority. Thousands of people have been killed, about a million people displaced and property looted and destroyed. Alleged human rights violations have included extrajudicial killings, disappearances, torture and endemic rape and sexual violence. Pope Francis took one of the biggest security risks of his papacy to visit a mosque under siege from armed Christian militias in Bangui,

¹⁴⁸ Francis, Meeting with Workers, Cagliari, 22 September 2013, Accessed 15 April 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/september/documents/papa-francesco_20130922_lavoratori-cagliari.html.

¹⁴⁹ Francis, Address, Meeting with Workers, Cagliari.

the capital of Central African Republic, delivering a message of peace and reconciliation in a show of solidarity.¹⁵⁰

In highlighting to the authorities and the diplomatic corps, the important aspects of unity, dignity and labour as values to be upheld, he also met with the youth and encouraged them to pray and work for peace,

Peace is not a document which gets signed and then filed away. Peace is built day by day! And peace is crafted; it is the work of our hands; it is built up by the way we live our lives... ..How can I be a peacemaker?" First: never hate anyone. If someone wrongs you, seek to forgive. No hatred! Much forgiveness!... .. And if hatred does not dwell in your heart, if you forgive, then you will be a winner. Because you will win the hardest battle in life; you will win in love. And from love comes peace.¹⁵¹

Unexpectedly opening the Holy Door of Mercy in Bangui a few days before the formal start of the Jubilee of Mercy, was a prophetic gesture. President Touadéra on a visit the following year to the Vatican acknowledged the courage shown by the Pope to visit his country during a difficult time. He stated that “the Pope gave us hope for peace. The significant and historical gesture of opening the Holy Door of Mercy in Bangui is something that we will never forget. He not only officially opened the Holy Door of Mercy; he also opened, as it were, the door to a new era in our country.”¹⁵²

(b) Visit to Myanmar and Bangladesh (26 November – 2 December 2017)

¹⁵⁰ Harriet Sherwood, “Pope Francis visits besieged mosque in Central African Republic”, 30 November 2015, accessed on 2 May 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/30/pope-francis-mosque-central-african-republic>.

¹⁵¹ Pope Francis, “Administration of The Sacrament of Reconciliation and Beginning of The Vigil of Prayer with Young People”, Cathedral Square, Bangui (Central African Republic), 29 November 2015, accessed on 2 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/november/documents/papa-francesco_20151129_repubblica-centrafricana-vegilia-preghiera.html.

¹⁵² Vatican News, Central African Republic’s Khartoum Agreement: Optimism and challenges, 13 February 2019, accessed 15 May 2019, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/africa/news/2019-02/car-s-khartoum-agreement-optimism-and-challenges.html>.

The Rohingya are considered one of the most persecuted minorities in the world today. More than one million people from the mainly Muslim minority group lived in Myanmar at the start of 2017, with the majority in Rakhine State.¹⁵³ Since 2012, Myanmar's armed forces began to force Rohingya into refugee camps, both in Rakhine state and across the border into Bangladesh. The armed force has had accusations of murder, rape, torture and forced displacement that have been made against the population. Things had worsened considerably to many calling it a case of “ethnic cleansing” of the Rohingya.

Pope Francis met a group of Rohingya refugees during his visit to Bangladesh, after he had finished with his visit to Myanmar. He acknowledged their worth not just from a Judeo-Christian understanding of the human person but also acknowledging their dignity from their own tradition as carrying within themselves the “salt of God,” and validating their suffering by stating that “the presence of God, today, is also called ‘Rohingya.’”¹⁵⁴ In weeping while addressing them and recognizing that they continue to suffer, he asked for their pardon,

“In the name of everyone, of those who persecute you, of those who have wronged you, above all for the indifference of the world, I ask your forgiveness... .. So many of you have told me about the Bangladesh’s big heart that has welcomed you. Now I appeal to your big heart, that it can grant us the forgiveness we seek.”¹⁵⁵

In this prophetic gesture one may observe a shepherd who is able to empathize with the sufferings of the people; through this act of solidarity and while asking for pardon he shows God’s presence in the midst of his suffering people. Though not much may have been said or done, this act gives the hope that not all is forgotten and that they are not alone in their anguish.

¹⁵³ Sky UK, “Explained: The Rohingya refugee crisis”, 15 November 2017, accessed May 30, 2019, <https://news.sky.com/feature/rohingya-crisis-11121896>.

¹⁵⁴ Pope Francis, Address, Ecumenical and Interreligious Meeting for Peace, 1 December 2017, accessed 30 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2017/december/documents/papa-francesco_20171201_viaggioapostolico-bangladesh-pace.html.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

3.4.4 Solidarity with those on the Existential Peripheries

One may consider that Pope Francis is a “Pope of the peripheries”.¹⁵⁶ At the 2013 Conclave, he stated, “The Church is called to come out of herself and to go to the peripheries, not only geographically, but also the existential peripheries: the mystery of sin, of pain, of injustice, of ignorance and indifference to religion, of intellectual currents, and of all misery.” These peripheries are seemingly growing in the world today and constitute a new mission territory. One may take a brief look into this pastoral praxis of Pope Francis.

a) Mercy Fridays

During the Jubilee year of Mercy (8 December 2015 - 20 November 2016), Pope Francis made it a point to practise the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. He did this monthly on a Friday afternoon except on two occasions. Since the locations were never announced beforehand, the recipients of his visits were joyfully surprised.

Some of these visits included the following: a stop at a retirement home, a hospice for people in a vegetative state, a rehabilitation center for men and women; at another time he visited Syrian refugee families from Lesbos that he had brought with him when he returned to Rome from Greece; spending time with residents living with mental disability at a L’Arche home; a centre for priests in need of psychological and emotional help; visiting seven former priests who had left their pastoral ministry and were living with their families; to a community for women rescued from the slavery of prostitution.¹⁵⁷

One may not be in a position to fathom at the joy these unexpected visits from the Holy Father would have brought to these individuals, though the images one has from

¹⁵⁶ José H. Gomez, “Lessons from The Peripheries: The Joy of The Gospel and Our Continental Mission”, 3 July 2017, accessed 2 June 2019, <http://www.archbishopgomez.org/article/lessons-from-the-peripheries-the-joy-of-the-gospel-and-our-continental-mission-853>.

¹⁵⁷ Cindy Wooden, “Mercy Fridays give pope a year of stories, tears, hugs”, 11 November 2016, accessed 15 May 2015, <https://www.catholicnews.com/services/englishnews/2016/mercy-fridays-give-pope-a-year-of-stories-tears-hugs.cfm>.

them, are striking. Those who for one reason or another may have found themselves in various challenging situations would have had hope instilled that they have dignity and that they are not forgotten. While exercising humility reaching out to the so-called existential peripheries, one notices Francis becoming a “seed of hope” for the vulnerable and the marginalized. A message of hope is conveyed by his very gesture of visiting them and through the “culture of encounter”, being able to radiate joy. These are prophetic gestures that one finds. They ought to be emulated so that the Church makes visible the merciful face of Christ today.

Francis has reiterated on different occasions that mercy is a way of life to be lived out not only during the Jubilee Year of Mercy, but also for the rest of one’s lives. The true door of mercy, he said at the conclusion of the Holy Year, is the heart of Christ which always remains wide open.”¹⁵⁸ One may observe in this Vicar of Christ how he intends to follow his master in being the Good Samaritan to those that society may put aside for various reasons.

b) World Meeting of Popular Movements

The World Meeting of Popular Movements is an initiative of Pope Francis whose purpose is to create an encounter between Church leadership and grassroots organizations working to address the “economy of exclusion and inequality” that *Evangelii Gaudium* refers to.¹⁵⁹ It does so by working for structural changes that promote social, economic and racial justice. Popular movements are grassroots organizations and social movements established around the world by people whose inalienable rights to decent work, decent housing, and fertile land and food are undermined, threatened or denied outright. These movements primarily represent three increasingly excluded social sectors: first, workers who are at risk or lack job security; second, landless farmers, family farmers, indigenous people and those at risk of being driven off the land by large agribusiness corporations and violence; and

¹⁵⁸ Emilie Callan, *Mercy Fridays: Past, Present and Future*, 21 November 2016, Accessed 13 May 2019, <https://saltandlighttv.org/blogfeed/getpost.php?id=72880>.

¹⁵⁹ *Evangelii Gaudium* n.53,54.

third, the marginalized and forgotten, including persons who are homeless and persons living in communities without adequate infrastructure.¹⁶⁰

One may see the Pope's formative influences of his being with the people. It is only thus that he understands the needs of his flock. One may be short-sighted if one should not be able to see here a "shepherd with the smell of the sheep". In taking some concrete steps to alleviate some causes of poverty one finds him exercising the virtue of hope and thus bringing joy to the people he encounters.

3.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

So far one has considered the three facets of what one may consider as the three priorities in Francis' pontificate, namely, the poor, peacebuilding and the environment and especially its effects on the poor. These would be pressing issues of our contemporary times and Pope Francis as a global leader exercising moral authority has a good deal to offer not only to the Church but also to the world. His is a "culture of encounter" that tries to bridge differences and seeks to dialogue with one and all.

Concerning the issue of poverty, Scannone encapsulates well the various challenges that Pope Francis puts forth in *Evangelii Gaudium*.¹⁶¹ These include criticisms leveled against aspects such as "an economy [that] kills,"¹⁶² the "fetishism of money,"¹⁶³ "a socioeconomic system..... unjust at its root."¹⁶⁴ What is also criticized are the "ideologies which defend the absolute autonomy of the marketplace and [of] financial speculation."¹⁶⁵ Francis claims that "God, in Christ, redeems not only the individual person, but also the social relations existing between men."¹⁶⁶ Hence Christians have to fight though without violence but with historical efficacy,

¹⁶⁰ World Meeting of Popular Movements, accessed 15 May 2019, <http://popularmovements.org/about/>.

¹⁶¹ Juan Carlos Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People", *Theological Studies* 2016, Vol. 77(1): 133.

¹⁶² *Evangelii Gaudium*, n.53.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, n.55.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*, n.59.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, n.56,202.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, n.178.

for “the inclusion of the poor in society”¹⁶⁷ and against “an economy of exclusion and inequality”¹⁶⁸ and “evil crystallized in unjust social structures.”¹⁶⁹

One of the worst discriminations the poor suffer from is the lack of spiritual care.¹⁷⁰ There is a need for God that needs to be catered for through offering them God’s friendship, celebration of sacraments and thereby helping the poor to grow and mature in the faith. What Francis calls forth is for a preferential and privileged religious care for the poor.

On the positive side, Francis talks of wisdom found in poor neighbourhoods as lessons one could learn from. This is a type of wisdom witnessed through the values showcased in the poor: solidarity, giving one’s life for others, preferring birth to death, providing Christian burial to one’s dead; finding a place for the sick in one’s home, sharing bread with the hungry, showing patience and strength when faced with great adversity. Francis teaches that these are some positive traits that can offer an authentic vision to the contemporary times.¹⁷¹

Even the ecological crisis is something that the poor are affected by more than anyone else. Hence Francis is keen to point out that *Laudato Si’* is primarily a social encyclical. One finds that caring for the earth is not a novel idea but is as ancient as Genesis and is transformative as witnessed in St. Francis’ vision.

As a Pope, one finds Francis takes his role as pontifex or bridge-builder with great seriousness. In the many initiatives he has sought by visiting troubled parts of the world like Central African Republic or inviting leaders from conflict-ridden countries of West Asia and South Sudan for a time of prayer and dialogue to the Vatican, he has proved himself to be a radical prophet proclaiming love, joy, hope and harmony. These may be seemingly small gestures in the scheme of things but nonetheless these

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, n.185.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, n.53.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, n. 59.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, n. 200.

¹⁷¹ Pope Francis, Visit to Kangemi Slum, Nairobi (Kenya), 27 November 2015, accessed 13 May 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/november/documents/papa-francesco_20151127_kenya-kangemi.html.

are the processes one finds him giving importance to. It is hoped that these revolutionary decisions may reap lasting fruits.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

From the movie *Shawshank Redemption*, one discovers those words of the lead character, Andy Dufresne in a letter addressed to an older prison inmate, Red that “hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things and no good thing ever dies.”¹ The Second Vatican Council document, *Gaudium et Spes* stated that “the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well.”² One notes the importance given to the theme of hope, when not too long after being elected to the papacy, Pope Francis while meeting with the bishops of the Latin American Bishops Conference, stated that the pastoral work of the bishop is “above all instilling hope: so that light will shine in people’s hearts.”³ One thus observes a wide-ranging reform brought about by Pope Francis. We have been able to appreciate the dimensions of hope and joy in Francis’ pastoral vision.

As one brings this dissertation to a close, it is with satisfaction that the themes of hope and joy one has garnered from the many discourses of Pope Francis have been brought to the fore. We began, in the first chapter, by looking at those influences that were instrumental in shaping Pope Francis. One considered different sources: his family, his work sphere, his Jesuit formation, the Argentine political situation of his time, the writings of many intellectuals who have formed him. One finds that he has had varied influences, for instance, one observes the influence of Romano Guardini in the apostolic exhortations, *Evangelii Gaudium* and also in *Laudato Si’*.

In the second chapter, the key chapter for this dissertation we closely inspected the subject matter of hope and joy. One has studied particularly the catechesis on hope

¹ “Hope is a Good Thing. – The Shawshank Redemption”, accessed on 2 June 2019, <https://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/hope-good-thing-the-shawshank-redemption.html>.

² *Gaudium et Spes* n.1

³ Pope Francis, Address to the leadership of the Episcopal Conferences of Latin America during the General Coordination Meeting, 28 July 2013, Accessed 2 June 2019, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/july/documents/papa-francesco_20130728_gmg-celam-rio.html.

that he gave between late 2016 and late 2017, besides other addresses. The various virtues such as magnanimity, humility and fortitude that constitute hope were treated. An effort was made to grasp the imagery that Pope Francis has made use of in his preaching and teaching about what genuine hope consists of. These included the anchor, sail and a pregnant woman.

In all these one notes the drive to stimulate *hope* in the people one is called to shepherd; that which is a gift from God is also a responsibility to be nurtured. We also saw efforts made to grow in these virtues namely through the help of the sacramental life of the Church. The Church's liturgical celebrations in the special seasons of Lent, Easter or Christmas are a cause to celebrate and also to elicit hope.

Joy may be seen as stemming from one's relationship with God and is that element to which Pope Francis denotes much time and attention to. In *Evangelii Gaudium*, one sees Pope Francis extending an invitation for joy as follows:

“This is the joy which we experience daily, amid the little things of life, as a response to the loving invitation of God our Father: “My child, treat yourself well, according to your means... Do not deprive yourself of the day's enjoyment” (Sir 14:11, 14). What tender paternal love echoes in these words! The Gospel, radiant with the glory of Christ's cross, constantly invites us to rejoice.”⁴

As the Pope continues to reflect on the Gospels and looks at different individuals who encounter this joy, he asks his listeners to reflect on why that joy should not be there for the rest of the people. The call one finds Pope Francis issuing is to be missionary disciples of that joy. “Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel” (1 Cor 9:16), wrote Paul who wanted to share this abundance of God's goodness. Pope Francis states that the Gospel joy that enlivens a community of disciples is a missionary joy.⁵

I would like to underscore what has just been said through the testimony of a lady in her early thirties that the author has personally known. I let her describe her story below:

⁴ *Evangelii Gaudium*, n.4.

⁵ *Ibid.*, n.21

When I came to undergo the *School of Mission*, I felt like a fish out of water. I was so hard hearted. I could not stand the name Jesus. I could not stand it when people made random comments like, ‘Praise the Lord’, or ‘Thank you Jesus’. I couldn’t even bear to see the priests in the monastery where we stayed at... ..But there was one thing I noticed that the participants and the staff who lived at the monastery had that I didn’t. They had *joy* - joy like no other. I wanted that joy with all my heart. I knew nothing from this world could give me that joy. I wanted it so badly that I was willing to do anything for it.

By the third day I couldn’t handle it. I went to the chapel and sat there for over three hours. I said, ‘Lord, I want that joy that the people who live here have. I want that joy and will do anything to get it. Give me that joy Jesus. I want it and I’m not moving from here until I receive it... ..I repeated my prayer, ‘Lord, please give me that joy your people have.’ I found myself begging for that joy once again. I apologized for having gone away from God for so long and I asked Him to accept me back. Soon after I felt the Heavenly Father run to me and give me a big hug and felt Him telling me in my heart, “Welcome back daughter”. I knew then that my heavenly Father had accepted me back without punishing me for going so far away from Him. I felt like the prodigal son in the parable of the prodigal son.

I felt a tremendous peace and joy in my heart. I felt a lot lighter. I knew right away my heart of stone was changed into a heart of flesh. Since that day I’ve been walking forward with Jesus. I have not looked back. Life has not been the same since that day. I feel so free and so full of joy. Although I still struggle with many areas of my life, God has given me the grace to work on those struggles. I now see Jesus in my everyday life. I look at things with a lot more hope and I am now more opened to the will of God.⁶

One may note in this testimony all that one has found Pope Francis alluding to. This young lady did mature to serve as a lay missionary in consciously attempting to live her life as a missionary disciple sharing God’s love.

Joy is something that endures despite the challenges life throws at anyone. Jesus’ words are encouraging and direct: “So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.” (Jn 16:22). It invites one for a deeper trust in God amidst the challenges on one’s path.

⁶ From an email sent to the author in July 2013.

If one may observe more emphasis is given to the theme of hope in comparison to joy, the author finds that biblical hope is fundamental to experiencing joy and is in fact a cause for it. Thus, hope and joy arise from a relationship with God. They are an important dimension of the “culture of encounter,” a call to solidarity with the suffering ones of the world and to be open to encountering them. The various distresses arise from what people face due to the many challenging contexts of the day. We are referring to issues such as hostility or a lack of peace among nations or different ethnic/religious groups within a nation, rise in poverty levels giving rise to the situation of refugees and migrants and the scourge of human trafficking, the deplorable state of the environment from a lack of good stewardship and how that affects especially the vulnerable poor especially in today’s context. It is in these contexts that a missionary disciple is called to share joy and hope by facilitating a culture of encounter which does go against the globalization of indifference. We saw in each of these cases how hope and joy may be offered in showing that a Christian option is possible, and that one does not need to give way to a sterile pessimism.

Pope Francis while being in contact with the Gospel is a prophet for our times today, by not merely proclaiming through words but by living out personally the radicality of the message he preaches. There are many who find this an attractive and inviting proposition and a good number of lapsed Catholics are returning to the faith. But it is not just to the religious sphere that his influence is directed but it goes further afield. The President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, who is not a Roman Catholic, had the following to say about Pope Francis’ leadership:

I have embraced the vision of the Church proposed by the Holy Father. A Church as - in your own words - a field hospital, rather than a tollhouse. I deeply believe that today, in these uncertain times of great changes and dramatic challenges, all the believers and the non-believers need a Church which is inclusive, rather than exclusive. A Church which relinquishes lavishness in order to support the poor, and which is radical in love, leaving judgment to God. A Church which trusts humans

and their freedom, rather than the omnipotence and omniscience of institutions; a Church which brings hope - not condemnation - to broken lives.⁷

The far-reaching vision of the first Pope from the global South is leading the Church with fresh vigour and in a Gospel-driven manner. If any reform entails going back to the basics, then in Pope Francis one observes a desire to bring to the fore the conclusions of Vatican Council II in the renewal of the contemporary Church. Offering hope and joy to her many children would definitely be one aspect not unlike what the Gospels have to offer. “For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope” (Rom 15:4).

⁷ European Council, Speech by President Donald Tusk at the award ceremony of the International Charlemagne Prize to Pope Francis, 6 May 2016, Accessed 24 May 2019, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/05/06/tusk-speech-pope/>.

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