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Vulnerability and Hierarchicalism

Though this is a paper on the vulnerability and the abuse of power, I have structured it according to the four weeks of the *Spiritual Exercises*. The first half of the paper is strong; it is the first week, sin. The second week, which is on vulnerability, has at its heart the life of Jesus. Toward the end of the paper we consider the passion of Jesus. Finally, we are left with the fourth week, to live out what we have seen and heard.

The first wave of the sexual abuse crisis broke in 1985. In May, Fr Thomas Doyle, Fr Michael Peterson and Ray Mouton presented a 92-page document to a committee of the U.S. Bishops' Conference, warning them to handle pending cases well, defend victims, and be transparent with authorities and the public. In June, the *National Catholic Reporter* published a story based on Jason Berry's reporting of the case of Fr Gilbert Gauthe of Lafayette, La., who ultimately served 10 years of a 20-year sentence for molesting children. The lengthy story and accompanying editorial was the first national story concerning sexual abuse in the Catholic Church in the United States.

Between 1985 and 2002 when the second wave occurred, the bishops of the United States knew what very few other people knew, the horror and the extent of the crisis. There were eruptions across the country, however. For instance, in 1992, there were three isolated reports. The diocese of Dallas paid \$31 million to 11 victims who accused Fr Rudolph Kos of molesting altar boys from 1981 to

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1992. In Boston, Fr. James Porter admitted to abusing more than 100 boys and girls in several parishes; he was sentenced to 18-20 years in a maximum-security prison and died in 2005. Finally, a Hartford newspaper reported that former students had accused Fr Marcial Maciel Degollado, Mexican-born founder of the Legion of Christ, of sexually abusing them.

In January 2002, a Boston judge compelled Cardinal Bernard Law to handover over 10,000 pages of archdiocesan records that the *Boston Globe* began to report on. Thus, the second wave commenced then. Now the public learned what the bishops had covered up from 1985 to 2002.¹

From my vantage point, let me tell you how the second wave affected me. In 1991 I moved from Fordham University in the Bronx to begin teaching at Weston Jesuit School of Theology in Cambridge MA, where I taught students preparing for ordained and lay ministry. In 2002, the second wave began with the story of Fr John J. Geoghan who molested 130 children. I remember to this day reading *The Boston Globe* on January 6, 2002, as it reported about the many women who had complained to the Boston Chancery about the priest. One woman stood out, a devout lay woman, Margaret Gallant, who had repeatedly written to the Boston chancery about Fr Geoghan because she knew he had already molested 7 of her nephews. Here is an excerpt:

The files ... contain a poignant — and prophetic — August 1982 letter to Law's predecessor, the late Cardinal Humberto Medeiros, from the aunt of Geoghan's seven Jamaica Plain victims, expressing incredulity that the Church to which she was devoted would give Geoghan another chance at St Brendan's after what he had done to her family. "Regardless of what he, or the doctor who treated him, say, I do not believe he is cured; his actions strongly suggest that he is not, and there is no guarantee that persons with these obsessions are ever cured," Margaret Gallant said in her plea to Medeiros. "It embarrasses me that the Church is so negligent," Gallant wrote. Archdiocesan records obtained by the *Globe* make it clear why Gallant wrote her irate letter two years after the abuse: Geoghan had reappeared in the Jamaica Plain, and been seen with a young boy. The records note that the next month, "Another letter from Mrs Gallant. "Why is nothing being done?"²

¹ "Timeline of a Crisis," *National Catholic Reporter* July 6, 2015 <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/timeline-crisis>

² Michael Rezendes, "Church Allowed Abuse by Priest for Years," January 6, 2002, *Boston Globe*. This article narrates the numerous attempts by women to get the clerical authorities to stop giving the infamous Fr Geoghan access to boys.

All through the year we would learn of one more horrendous account of abuse, coupled with an even more disturbing account of episcopal cover-up. The case of Geoghan catalyzed an investigation and Geoghan himself was sentenced in February 2002 to 10 years in prison for molesting a 10-year-old boy.³ Then, on August 23, 2003, Geoghan was strangled and stomped to death by a fellow inmate in a maximum-security prison.⁴ These, and hundreds of other narratives, were regular stories from 2002-2003 in Boston alone. By the end of 2002, Cardinal Bernard Law had so betrayed children, the people of the Church of Boston, and his priests, that 58 priests, myself included, publicly wrote a statement calling for his resignation. The Cardinal resigned shortly afterwards and moved to Rome where he was made archpriest of the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore.

This account in 2002 would play out later around the world: a person trying to stop a particular priest from serially abusing children would inform hierarchy who, in most instances, actually decided to ignore the complaints. In more recent times we have heard not only of children of all ages as objects of sexual abuse, but also of vulnerable adults, whether people with intellectual disabilities, or employees or subordinate religious, or seminarians. These newer categories are emerging as decidedly more significant than we previously recognized and highlight further the problem of predation throughout the world Church, a problem erupting as we learn frequently of more stories from India and Africa of nuns being assaulted by bishops, or of seminarians being assaulted by Cardinal McCarrick or others like him.

I think, however, that any account about the abuse scandal cannot start anywhere but, as I have done, with the victims. I think that that is where any account of trying to respond to the crisis must begin. We did not protect the vulnerable. The vulnerable in our care were assaulted and harmed irreparably. They were children. The scandal is not simply that priests assaulted children: it was/is that many priests and their bishops simply were more concerned about the image of the Church than they were with these vulnerable children or their parents and family members who, in their vulnerability, came to us.

The first concern is to see with more clarity and confidence that there are, and need to be, directives in every diocese and throughout the world Church for protecting children and overseeing any claim of sexual assault. As one coming from Boston, where Cardinal Sean O'Malley has dedicated his life to responding to the crisis since arriving in Boston in 2003 and then becoming first chair of

³ <http://archive.boston.com/globe/spotlight/abuse/geoghan/>

⁴ <http://edition.cnn.com/2003/US/08/23/geoghan/index.html>

the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors in 2014, I find in him, despite mistakes, a true model bishop for our time.⁵ In no less measure, Archbishop Scicluna's outstanding record of responding to the crisis has also shown us how a bishop pursues truth and justice, restoring the faith and instilling confidence. It is a great honor for me, a theologian, to present this paper as a response to his request for it. Like others, we look to see the procedures that the Vatican will develop in the aftermath of the February 2019 meeting to address negligence, procedures that will couple well those of the *motu proprio*, "As a loving Mother."⁶ They will be appreciated or critiqued by all vigilant church members for their effectiveness because as we now know, the whole world is watching.

As those procedures take effect I want to note that in the aftermath of the second wave of the abuse scandal, that is, the one that began in 2002, the concept of clericalism immediately arose as a helpful concept. Clericalism is that culture which created the climate where Catholic men and women of conscience were routinely unable to be heard or understood, but where the self-preserving power of clerics was given sanction. In 2002 in a brilliant essay for *America magazine* entitled, "Farewell to the Club: On the Demise of Clerical Culture," Fr Michael Papesh named, described, and exposed the pervading, but hidden culture among the clergy.⁷

This word "culture" is used quite often and in a recent article reflecting on clerical culture, another priest, the Canadian moral theologian, Mark Slatter explained what a culture is:

A culture is a network of personal meaning and valuing. Clerical culture hinges on leaders attracting similarly disposed persons through the laws of social attraction, evoked in different ways since Plato as the principle of 'like seeks after like.' The psychology engenders webs of kinship among priests, bishops and similarly disposed lay groups, bishops and cardinals, wealthy lay Catholics and think tanks. They always find each other through family resemblance, whatever that happens to be.⁸

⁵ On Cardinal Sean O'Malley, see Emma Green, "Why Does the Catholic Church Keep Failing on Sexual Abuse?" *The Atlantic February* 14, 2019. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2019/02/sean-omalley-pope-francis-catholic-church-sex-abuse/582658/>

⁶ https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco_lettera-ap_20160604_come-una-madre-amorevole.html

⁷ Michael L. Papesh, "Farewell to the Club: On the Demise of Clerical Culture," *America* (May 13, 2002). <https://www.americamagazine.org/issue/372/article/farewell-club>

⁸ Mark Slatter, "Clerical Crisis: Flock and Pasture Can't Tell Shepherd Who He Is," *National Catholic Reporter* (March 11, 2019). <https://www.ncronline.org/news/accountability/clerical-identity-crisis-flock-and-pasture-cant-tell-shepherd-who-he>

Today clerical culture is routinely identified. Pope Francis has used clericalism as a contrast device distinguishing the servant leadership of the priest from a clericalism that seeks its own goods. In his address at the opening of the recent Synod, Pope Francis commented on the deep problem of clericalism.

It is therefore necessary, on the one hand, to decisively overcome the scourge of clericalism... Clericalism arises from an elitist and exclusivist vision of vocation, that interprets the ministry received as a power to be exercised rather than as a free and generous service to be given. This leads us to believe that we belong to a group that has all the answers and no longer needs to listen or learn anything, or that pretends to listen. Clericalism is a perversion and is the root of many evils in the Church: we must humbly ask forgiveness for this and above all create the conditions so that it is not repeated. We must, on the other hand, cure the virus of self-sufficiency and of hasty conclusions reached by many young people.⁹

Recently two American lay theologians teaching in seminaries, C. Colt Anderson and Christopher M. Bellitto, have proposed a helpful list of reforms for shifting the formation of men away from a clerical culture to one for a culture of servant priests.¹⁰ In the interest of time, let me name each of their proposals.

1. Until diaconal ordination, seminarians should dress as and be treated as they are, lay men.
2. Seminarians' classes of theology should be held with other lay and religious men and women.
3. The professional opinions of religious sisters and lay professors, professionals, and supervisors must be taken into real account when deliberating on whether a seminarian will proceed in formation and to ordination. These deliberative processes cannot be singularly in the hands of the clergy.
4. A seminary's board of trustees must have lay members who, again, have deliberative and not simply consultative votes.

⁹ *Address by his Holiness Pope Francis at the Opening of the Synod of Bishops on Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment* (October 3, 2018). http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/october/documents/papa-francesco_20181003_apertura-sinodo.html

¹⁰ C. Colt Anderson and Christopher M. Bellitto, "The Reform Seminaries Need," *Commonweal* (April 8, 2019). <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/scarlet-fever> See also Boston College Seminar on Priesthood and Religious Ministry for the Contemporary Church, "To Serve the People of God: Renewing the Conversation on Priesthood and Religious Formation," *Origins* 48. 31 (December 27, 2018) 484-493. <https://www.bc.edu/content/dam/bc1/schools/stm/continuing%20education/encore/pdf/To%20Serve%20the%20People%20of%20God.pdf>

5. We need to end the practice of moving unfit men from seminary to seminary until they find one that will testify that they are worthy of ordination.

We are now in the midst of a third wave of the crisis, one that began in 2018 and this wave brings a rather different focus of concern. Rather than naming predatory priests, these scandals focus mostly on the episcopacy. Witness Cardinal George Pell, Cardinal Ted McCarrick, Cardinal Philippe Barbarin, Cardinal Donald Wuerl, Archbishop Robert Finn, the Chilean Bishops, Indian Bishop Franco Mulakkal (accused of raping Indian religious women), etc. I think it would be a mistake to identify their actions as stemming from the ubiquitous “clericalism.” For this reason, I have identified the exclusive power culture of the episcopacy as “hierarchicalism.”

I came up with this distinction between clericalism and hierarchicalism¹¹ when I found in Slatter’s essay this comment: “Hierarchical culture is the gold carrot for those predisposed to its allurements.” Slatter is right to give that culture particular attention. That culture of the hierarchy is even more problematic and unknown than clerical culture. Just as clericalism is different from a culture that promotes servant priests, similarly hierarchicalism is different from the culture that promotes servant bishops.

What most priests and bishops know well is that the formative pathways for future bishops are generally speaking different from those for average priests. Early on, future bishops do not do most of their theology studies in their local or regional seminaries. Rather, they are sent to Rome for theology and examined in Rome in a variety of ways and there, in their national colleges, they are offered hierarchal “allurements” that most priests do not receive: dinner with visiting bishops, meetings with other bishops, the possibility of being appointed the bishop’s contact in Rome, receiving the bishop’s confidences, being welcomed back whenever returning home. There is a “grooming”¹² that happens that is radically different from anything that happens to other seminarians. They are being selected for another club.

Hierarchicalism is *that* culture then precisely emerging at the centre of the more recent sexual abuse scandal. Just as clericalism emerged as a source for the

¹¹ See Tom Roberts on my use of hierarchicalism, “A Mensch, a Church in Recovery, and Hierarchical Culture Examined,” *National Catholic Reporter* (March 26, 2019). <https://www.ncronline.org/news/accountability/ncr-connections/mensch-church-recovery-and-hierarchical-culture-examined>

¹² See Emily Reimer-Barry, “Does Catechism Class Groom Young People for Sexual Abuse?” *The First* (April 1, 2019). <http://www.catholicethics.com/forum-submissions/does-catechism-class-groom-young-people-for-sexual-abuse>

scandals from 2002, hierarchicalism emerges today. But we would be wrong to think that hierarchicalism is giving us only the third wave. The scandal of the third wave finally exposes the real source of this crisis: Hierarchicalism in all its brutality and profound lack of accountability. We now see how the hierarchical culture has exercised its power and networking capabilities in the cover-up of their own actions. What we are only beginning to see is that hierarchicalism and its lack of accountability and ability to act with impunity will be harder to dismantle than clericalism and in fact will guarantee the survival of clericalism, for the former is the father and promoter of the second.

We need then to distinguish the two, not because clericalism is not problematic, it is, but because we have to better understand the problems of the culture more isolated and protected than the clergy's and certainly more complex, insidious, and driven than we know or acknowledge. We have to look at how we place young men on different preparatory trajectories away from their own dioceses and into Rome where all men ambitious for episcopacy live.

Still, in light of the third wave, I think our mindfulness of this episcopal culture, what I am calling "hierarchicalism," that is not ordered to service ministry is already having an impact. Let me offer this consideration, as being someone from Boston. While Pope John Paul II and Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger gave Cardinal Law the appointment of archpriest of the Basilica of St Mary Major's in Rome in 2004, as a true indication of the face of hierarchicalism, even after his own priests publicly called for his resignation, one could never imagine such a consolation prize being awarded in 2019 to any bishop, archbishop or cardinal for similar negligence, lies, cover-up, and gross abuse of power.

As an alternative to these two cultures, that dominate not only its own member's lives but also the life of the Church, I would like to propose another culture, a culture of vulnerability. I think in order to get to a servant priesthood or to a servant episcopacy we must pass through and live out a culture of vulnerability. There is a profound graceful irony in this: for it is precisely vulnerability that our clerics and hierarchs ignored throughout this scandal.

Still, throughout theology, philosophy, and ethics today, the concept of vulnerability is receiving a level of attention internationally that is, I think, very helpful as we consider the life of the Church as we respond to the scandal. But first, to convey vulnerability, let me tell you a story.

In the twenty-first chapter of T. H. White's wonderful *The Once and Future King*,¹³ we read a memorable account of creation that captures human

¹³ T. H. White, *The Once and Future King* (New York: Ace Books, 1987).

vulnerability beautifully. God gathers all the embryos of each and every species of animal life and offers each embryo a wish for something extra. The giraffe embryo gets a long neck for tree food, the porcupine asks for quills for protection, and so it goes for the entire animal kingdom. The last embryo is the human who when asked by God what he wants, responds, "I think that You made me in the shape which I now have for reasons best known to Yourselves, and that it would be rude to change.... I will stay a defenceless embryo all my life." God is delighted and lets the human embryo have no particular protection, to be the most vulnerable of all newborns and says, "As for you, Man... You will look like an embryo till they bury you."

White's vision of the human embryo as the bearer of human vulnerability is remarkable, for behind this decision is the assumption that we are made in God's image and that if we are vulnerable, so is God. And so White concludes his account with God disclosing to the human, "Adam," "Eternally undeveloped, you will always remain potential in Our image, able to see some of Our sorrows and to feel some of Our joys. We are partly sorry for you, Adam, but partly hopeful."

In 2005 Irish moral theologian, Enda McDonagh, introduced us to the theology of vulnerability in a book called *Vulnerable to the Holy: In Faith, Morality and Art*.¹⁴ McDonagh begins his treatment on vulnerability not with the human, but with God. God reveals to us God's self as vulnerable by the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, his life in Nazareth, and by his death on Golgotha. Thus, sounding like White, McDonagh writes that to be made in God's image is to be made vulnerable.

Thinking first of God as vulnerable is a remarkably important theological foundation for in *becoming vulnerable to the Holy*, we become prompted to look for the vulnerability of God in the Scriptures. And here I would suggest we look at two of the most famous parables, the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan. To appreciate the first, I would like to further develop the idea of vulnerability and then make a distinction between precarity and vulnerability.¹⁵

On vulnerability, the American Philosopher Judith Butler has developed an entire ethics, reflecting on the prior work by Emmanuel Levinas and Hannah

¹⁴ Enda McDonagh, *Vulnerable to the Holy: In Faith, Morality and Art* (Dublin: Columba Press, 2005).

¹⁵ See for instance, Judith Butler, "Precarious Life, Vulnerability, and the Ethics of Cohabitation," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26/2 (2012): 134-151; See on a different platform, Clara Han, "Precarity, Precariousness, and Vulnerability," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 47 (October 2018): 331-343. I want to thank James Hanvey for introducing me to the importance of this distinction.

Arendt. In her own developed work, she writes, “ethical obligation not only depends upon our vulnerability to the claims of others but establishes us as creatures who are fundamentally defined by that ethical relation.”¹⁶ That is, vulnerability is what establishes us as creatures before God and one another. Butler adds:

This ethical relation is not a virtue that I have or exercise; it is prior to any individual sense of self. *It is not as discrete individuals that we honor this ethical relation. I am already bound to you, and this is what it means to be the self I am, receptive to you in ways that I cannot fully predict or control.*¹⁷

Vulnerability is our nature. She writes:

You call upon me, and I answer. But if I answer, it was only because I was already answerable; that is, this susceptibility and vulnerability constitutes me at the most fundamental level and is there, we might say, prior to any deliberate decision to answer the call. In other words, one has to be already capable of receiving the call before actually answering it. In this sense, ethical responsibility presupposes ethical responsiveness.¹⁸

To put it another way, “the *ought* is made capable by the *is*.” Approaches to vulnerability emerged in literature, theology, and philosophy, but also in psychology. Years ago, in 1988, in reflecting on gender and domination, the psychoanalyst and feminist theorist, Jessica Benjamin reflected on infancy and mutual recognition among infants. Mutual recognition is that central experience of infants among infants. Benjamin writes, “Mutual recognition is the most vulnerable point in the process of differentiation.” She adds, “In mutual recognition, the subject accepts the premise that others are separate but nonetheless share like feelings and intentions.”¹⁹ In this work Benjamin sought to explore ways of restoring mutual recognition as a defining key for understanding right relationship between the genders. In particular she was concerned with gender and the problem of why men turn to domination. She found, that males, as children, are taught to abandon their own vulnerability and to develop instead a need to dominate. The process to develop domination is a two-fold alienation. First, the male becomes alienated from his original vulnerable self. Second, he looks to dominate others, often women. In a more recent work in 2017, she turns again to mutual recognition and

¹⁶ Butler, 141.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 141-2. Emphasis mine

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 142.

¹⁹ Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination* (New York: Pantheon, 1988) 53.

among other matters finds the language of vulnerability key for recuperating and restoring the experience of mutual recognition.²⁰

These two scholars help us to appreciate more the reconciling and humanizing traits of vulnerability, helping us to see it, not as a liability, but as something which establishes for us as human beings the possibility to be relational and therefore moral.

Too many people think of vulnerability as a liability because they confuse it with precarity. Butler notes that “Precarity exposes our sociality, the fragile and necessary dimensions of our interdependency.”²¹ Therefore, we must be careful to recognize the difference between vulnerability and precarity. Certainly, in being vulnerable, we have the capacity to encounter and respond to another whose vulnerability is precarious, as in the Prodigal Son parable where the son’s own precarity exposes him to “the fragile and necessary dimensions of our interdependency.” In that parable, while the beginning of the story focuses on the younger brother’s precarity, the centre of the parable focuses on the vulnerable one, who is the Father who recognizes his son in the distance, embraces him, re-incorporates him, and works to restore all that was unstable, threatened, exposed, and jeopardized. The same Father remains vulnerable to his older son who does not really suffer from precarity but from resentment.²² The stability in the story is the vulnerable Father, as the precarious son returns and the resentful one leaves; the centrality of the story is the enduringly vigilant, attentive, and responsive Father who is so because he is vulnerable.

Vulnerability plays itself out even more so in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10: 29-37). It is important for us to remember why Jesus tells this parable. He has just given the commandment to love one another. In response, one of the Scribes asked Jesus, “Who is my neighbor?” A close reading of the story reveals that Jesus is offering a very surprising answer to the question. At the beginning of the story we are thinking that the answer to the question “who

²⁰ Jessica Benjamin, *Beyond Doer and Doing to* (New York: Routledge, 2017). See also her interview on *Psychology’s Feminist Voices Oral History Project* (July 7, 2006). <https://www.feministvoices.com/assets/Feminist-Presence/Benjamin/JessicaBenjaminOralHistoryTranscript.pdf>

²¹ Butler, 148. See also her, *Precarious Life: The Power of Mourning and Violence* (Brooklyn: Verso, 2004). On Vulnerability see *Vulnerability in Resistance*, ed. Judith Butler, Zeynep Gambetti, and Leiticia Sabsay (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016). Also, see *Vulnerability: New Essays on Ethics and Feminist Philosophy*, ed. Catriona Mackenzie, Wendy Rogers, and Susan Dodds (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

²² See James Alison, *Faith Beyond Resentment* (New York: Crossroads, 2001). Alison suggests that the two brothers are but two sides of the same reality: a person who knows he needs to be forgiven and who thinks he does not. See pp. 17-20.

is my neighbour?” is the man lying wounded on the road, that is, the precarious one. But by the end of the story we are no longer looking for the neighbour as the precarious one but at the vulnerable one who is acting. The Scribe rightly answers that the neighbour is the one who shows mercy.

Like the surprise ending, many of us forget that this parable was never primarily a moral one. Throughout the tradition many preachers and theologians saw in the story of the Good Samaritan the narrative (in miniature) of our redemption by Christ. Starting with Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-ca.215), then Origen (ca. 184-ca.254), Ambrose (339-397) and finally, Augustine (354-430), the Good Samaritan parable is the merciful narrative of our redemption. Later on, from the Venerable Bede (673–735) to Martin Luther (1483-1546), preachers and theologians have appropriated and modified the narrative.

The basic allegorical expression of the parable was this: the man who lies on the road is Adam, wounded (by sin), suffering outside the gates of Eden. The priest and the Levite, (the law and the prophets), are unable to do anything for Adam; they are not vulnerable to him. Along comes the Good Samaritan (Christ), a foreigner, one not from here, who vulnerably tends to Adam's wounds, takes him to the inn (the Church), gives a down payment of two denarii (the two commandments of love), leaves him in the inn (the Church) and promises to return for him (the second coming) when he will pay in full for the redemption and take him with him into his kingdom. The parable then is first and foremost *not* a moral story about how we should treat others, but rather the central story of our own redemption, that is, what Christ has done for us. We are called, if you will, to a mutual recognition, of seeing in Christ the one who became vulnerable for us so that we might be saved.

Like the parable of the Prodigal Son, the parable of the Good Samaritan is about the scandal of our redemption, not how bad we are, but how vulnerable God in Jesus Christ is. In realizing how vulnerable God is, we recognize our own capacity for vulnerability, and therein discover the capacity and the call to go and do likewise.

But let us now make a final return to theological ethics as we move to our conclusion. A great deal of ethics has lately focused on vulnerability. The French moralist Vincent LeClerq, who is also a doctor specializing in AIDS, wrote his first book about those who volunteer to work with patients suffering from AIDS. He developed an ethics of vulnerability for such doctors entitled *Blessed Are the Vulnerable: Reaching Out to Those with AIDS*.²³

²³ Vincent LeClerq, *Blessed Are the Vulnerable: Reaching Out to Those with AIDS* (Worcester, MA: Twenty-Third Publications, 2010)

This past year, Catholic Theological Ethics in the World Church held its third international conference in Sarajevo with 500 theological ethicists from 80 countries. Linda Hogan, of Trinity College Dublin and an original chair of CTEWC gave the final plenary proposing an ethics of vulnerability for a divided world.²⁴ Following a host of moral theologians and philosophers, like Levinas, Arendt, McDonagh, Butler, LeClerq, but also Isabella Guenzini²⁵ and Roger Burggraeve,²⁶ she describes “vulnerability as a way of being, as the ground of our relationality, and as mode of social engagement.”

She finds promise in vulnerability and asks, “Can this existential experience of vulnerability be deployed in the service of a politics that unites rather than divides? This depends on whether this recognition of vulnerability can generate a new kind of conversation: about how we act in the world; about our ethical obligations towards each other; about how to oppose the conditions under which some lives are more vulnerable than others.”

She concludes: “Mutual dependence, shared vulnerability, these are elements of human experience that have rarely featured in the ways in which politics is constructed or ethical theories are framed. Indeed, much of our politics and ethics seems to be intent on foreclosing this recognition. And yet shared vulnerability and mutual dependence may be precisely the qualities that have a resonance with the individuals and communities world-wide who are struggling to find the grounds for the hope of shared future in a world divided.”

Let me close, as Hogan did, by making a proposal for vulnerability.

Why could not we develop an ecclesiology based on the risk-taking vulnerability of God? Right now, as we muddle through trying to rebuild our Church, should we not look precisely at vulnerability, a reality that we overlooked as our bishops turned deaf ears to vulnerable parents, about vulnerable children and vulnerable adults who were horrendously violated? Has it not been precisely vulnerability that we evidenced no concern or defence of? Could not a lesson from these twenty years of reckoning yield an alertness, a vigilance, a resonance to vulnerability? Is it not time for us to embrace it?

²⁴ Linda Hogan, “Vulnerability: An Ethic for a Divided World,” *Building Bridges in Sarajevo: The Plenary Papers of Sarajevo 2018*, ed. James Keenan, Kristin Heyer and Andrea Vicini, co-edited with L. Hogan (Marynoll: Orbis books, forthcoming, 2019).

²⁵ Isabella Guenzini, *Tenerenza. La rivoluzione del potere gentile* (Milan: Editore Ponte alle Grazie, 2017).

²⁶ Roger Burggraeve, “Violence and the Vulnerable Face of the Other: The Vision of Emmanuel Levinas on Moral Evil and Our Responsibility,” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 30/1 (1999): 29-45.

And what would it look like? Remember how Benjamin specifically found in vulnerability the opposite and corrective of domination²⁷ and does not that juxtaposition invoke in us the very stance of our Lord, who stood before those who accused and judged and murdered him. Think here too how Our Lord, on the night before he was betrayed, relinquished his garments and washed the feet of his disciples, conveying the very vulnerability that he displayed in his passion and death. Do we not see in our Church that we could follow in his steps as a servant leader who opts for vulnerability instead of domination, or clericalism or hierarchicalism?

But what would the formation of our clergy and episcopacy look like if its emphasis was not on dominance but on vulnerability? How would we be with the laity and in particular with women? Would we, in our vulnerability, be able to be who we are, as we are, attentive though to those whose vulnerability has been long overlooked or whose precarity is now most at risk?

Let me make two concrete suggestions that I cannot develop here. First, bishops and the rest of us must make bishops accountable. Archbishop Scicluna helped me to understand that accountability keeps leaders vulnerable but impunity destroys vulnerability. From 1985 until 2018, we have seen bishops who have been bound by hierarchicalism rely on impunity to avoid any accountability. That impunity is at the root of the comfortable space called hierarchicalism. It must be rooted out. I will develop this argument in a later paper.

Second, if I had further space to develop this ethics of vulnerability, I would obviously begin with mercy, the first virtuous expression of divine vulnerability, as we saw above. The mercy of the Samaritan (which is here akin to hospitality) is different, however, from the reconciling mercy of the Father who forgives and restores the prodigal while trying to cultivate and reconcile the older son. These different expressions of mercy highlight the inevitable need that mercy has for prudence, the virtue that offers us the concrete guidelines for the right realization of virtue. Without prudence, we could never rightly express mercy. Mercy is always coupled with justice. Most of justice is not tempered by mercy, but rather moved by mercy: mercy prompts justice to realize what is due to those on the margins, to those who have not yet received justice, as in bringing justice to the widow, the orphan, and the poor. Finally, we are called to a fidelity or a solidarity

²⁷ Lisa Sowle Cahill highlights this dominance in male clerical violence over against human vulnerability in her essay, "Power, Sex and Violence: Where Do Catholics Go from Here?" This essay was delivered on 30 January 2019 at Dequesne University. It was sponsored by the Department of Theology and McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts of the same University.

with those whom we serve by mercy, prudence, and justice, so that we, in our vulnerability, remain faithful to them in theirs. However, I shall be developing this on a later paper on human dignity, vulnerability and virtue ethics.

I think that after these twenty years, we priests and bishops have really, and rightly, taken a beating: everyone has a programme, a judgment, a claim, a strategy for us; but I think behind each offering, each proposal, each critique, there is a hope that our defensiveness and that our guard come down and we become what we really are: vulnerable, “as a way of being, as the ground of our relationality, and as mode of social engagement.” If we gave it a chance, if we let the vulnerability of our God enter into our seminaries and into our chanceries, maybe we could put away some of those allurements that we already know are as banal as they are compromising. If we learn the lessons of vulnerability and mutual recognition, we might be able to discern with the rest of the Church that is waiting for us, *already in their vulnerability*, how precisely we should reform our seminaries, our chanceries and of course, the Vatican, but it will be by vulnerability and not by the smoke and mirrors of hierarchical domination that has already taken the life out of so many.

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Forming Priests for Collaboration and Co-Responsibility with Lay Ministers

Written in light of the new *Ratio Fundamentalis* (2017) on priestly formation, this article focuses on preparing future priests to work in a ministerial context in which collaboration with lay people is both inevitable and desirable. It seeks to bring clarity to their working relationship by first assessing the current state of the theory and practice of collaborative ministry in the Church. It then details five key theological dispositions that, if cultivated in seminarians, can contribute to fostering harmony and collegiality among ordained and lay pastoral ministers.

Collaborative Ministry Fifty Years after Vatican II

The fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council inspired research projects that evaluated Vatican II's legacy and its continuing reception. As a result, we have a new appreciation of what Karl Rahner said several decades ago: that we are still at the "beginning of the beginning" in terms of receiving the Council's teaching.¹

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¹ Massimo Faggioli, "Response to Cardinal Lehmann Lecture," in *Vaticanum 21: Die bleibenden Aufgaben des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils im 21. Jahrhundert*, ed. Christoph Böttigheimer and René Dausner (2016), 637.

Vatican II remains the most important recent normative event guiding ecclesial renewal and ecclesiastical reform.² Yet, there is widespread agreement that the Council left much unfinished business, to some extent inevitably so. This unfinished business includes a coherent theology of ministry adequate to the task of underpinning and guiding ecclesial ministry in the current millennium. As Richard Gaillardetz states, “(The Council) was not able to articulate a complete, internally coherent ecclesiology” and the reality is that what is referred to as lay ministry “has leapt ahead of theological reflection, raising a host of questions regarding the definition of lay ministry, its scope and limits, and its relationship to ordained ministry and to the activities in which all the Christian faithful exercise their baptismal call.”³

While the role of the episcopate received considerable attention, the ministry of the ordained priest, or presbyter (the term deliberately chosen over “priest” by the Council), did not. As a result, Walter Kasper reiterated that “in the last few decades, the priestly ministry in virtually all the Western European churches has been in a crisis.” Kasper blames a “superficial and one-sided reception of the ecclesiology of the Second Vatican Council, which laid emphasis on the ‘people of God’ and *communio*, and the associated doctrine of the common priesthood of all the baptized,” for the current crisis because it called into question how the *proprium* and *specificum* of priestly ministry are to be defined.⁴

Kenan Osborne, however, holds that the seeds of confusion lay in the Council itself rather than in a subsequent one-sided reception of it. Once the Council Fathers used the term “priesthood of all believers” to refer to “the common matrix of gospel discipleship,” a move Osborne welcomes as a recovery from the tradition, “a major questioning of self-identity swept over many parts of the Roman Catholic Church both as regards one who is only baptized and receives the eucharist, as opposed to the identity of one who is ordained.” As he sees it, the issue is that the Council recognized that the *tria munera* of teacher/preacher, sanctifier (priest) and leader (king) are “given to all” by the sacraments of initiation. “If all disciples in virtue of their baptism-confirmation-eucharist

² Christoph Theobald, “Rezeption und Zukunftspotentiale des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils,” in *Vaticanum 21: Die bleibenden Aufgaben des Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzils im 21. Jahrhundert*, ed. Christoph Böttigheimer and René Dausner (2016), 48.

³ Richard Gaillardetz, “The Ecclesiological Foundations of Modern Catholic Social Teaching,” in *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations*, ed. Kenneth Himes (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2017), 26.

⁴ Walter Kasper, *Leadership in the Church: How Traditional Roles Can Serve the Christian Community Today* (New York: Herder, 2003), 45f.

are priests, then why do we have ordained priests and what is their specific identity?”⁵ The issue was not satisfactorily resolved by the Council or, to date, by the many post-conciliar magisterial texts relating to priesthood and ministry.⁶

Recognizing and Resolving Identity Issues

A fragmented postmodern cultural context has only served to accentuate problems regarding the role of identity, both in terms of personal role identity and in terms of the role identity of society in general.⁷ Despite post-conciliar attempts to clarify priestly identity by the magisterium, as well as various studies by theologians,⁸ formation directors report that identity issues continue to pose a major challenge for seminarians.⁹ We know that the same is true for lay ministers, even though their experience of ministry is not as well-researched. This is despite documents emerging from episcopal conferences, including *The Sign we Give* and *Co-workers in the Vineyard of the Lord* (see below), which legitimize the policy and practice of collaborative ministry. Indeed, the unsatisfactory and ambiguous nature of the nomenclature “lay ministry” is indicative of an enduring theological incoherence.

As I write, I have a request on my desk from a diocese to design and offer an accredited programme for “two new volunteer lay ministries, that of Catechist/Faith development worker and Pastoral Care worker.” The reality is that while there will be cultural variations across different continents with regard to how lay ministry is structured and developed, lay ministry is here to stay. It follows that men in priestly formation, newly ordained priests and those assuming duties as

⁵ Kenan Osborne, *Ministry: Lay Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 536.

⁶ In addition to texts referenced below see also the 1997 inter-dicasterial “Instruction on certain questions regarding the collaboration of the non-ordained faithful in the sacred ministry of the priest.” http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/laity/documents/rc_con_interdic_doc_15081997_en.html. Accessed 13.06.19.

⁷ Eamonn Conway, “‘With Reverence and Love’: Being a Priest in a Detraditionalised Cultural Context,” in *50th International Eucharist Congress: Proceedings of the International Symposium of Theology* (Dublin: Veritas, 2013), 393-394.

⁸ Jan Kerkhofs, *Europe without Priests?* (London: SCM Press, 1995); Gisbert Greshake, *Priestersein in dieser Zeit* (Freiburg: Herder, 2000); Paul Zulehner and Anna Hennesperger, “*Sie gehen und warden nicht matt*” (*Jes 40,31*) *Priester in heutiger Kultur* (Ostfildern: Schwabenverlag, 2001).

⁹ Ronald Rolheiser, “Towards a Spirituality of Ecclesial Leadership,” in *Seminary Formation, Recent History, Current Circumstances, Directions*, ed. Katarina Schuth (Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2016), 122-123.

pastors, need to be equipped not only to live with this reality, but become leaders in regard to it and welcome it as a gift and a resource. Moreover, they need to come to recognize, as part of their own distinctive ministry, the structuring and ordering of the gifts of the baptized faithful for the service of God's reign.¹⁰ Such a disposition on their part will not develop simply by osmosis, especially if there is ambiguity and confusion in regard to how they understand their own ministry.

Ministry is about bringing people to a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. It follows that emphasis must be on "being" as much as on "doing," on presence more than on productivity, on relationality rather than on a thoughtless activism.¹¹ However, in an effort to address identity issues there can be an unhelpful tendency, especially in a cultural context in which the technocratic paradigm¹², of which Pope Francis speaks, is prevalent, to retreat into an instrumentalist and merely functional understanding of ministry. By this I mean to define identity primarily in terms of what some people are permitted to "do" in the Church and what others are not.

The continuing unfolding of a more coherent theology of ministry will require a deepening, rather than a weakening, of our understanding of all ministry as essentially sacramental, founded in baptism, and representative in nature. At a time when there can often be a "feeble grasp of the sacramental reality"¹³ we also need to safeguard and deepen our understanding of priesthood as a unique and essential participation and rendering present of Christ's leadership of his Church.

Key Questions to Consider

We need to take great care, therefore, with regards to how we prepare priests for the reality that they will find themselves working alongside lay ministers. We need to consider the following: What clarity can we bring to their working relationship? What is technically "ministry" and what is simply the exercise of the lay apostolate?¹⁴ How is the shortage of priests, particularly in Churches in the West, "muddying the waters" in terms of the appropriate exercise of ministerial charisms by lay ministers, and indeed also by permanent deacons? In what instances are lay ministers exercising charisms that are properly theirs

¹⁰ Kasper, *Leadership in the Church*, 56.

¹¹ Eamonn Conway, "Ministry," in *The Routledge Companion to the Christian Church*, ed. Gerard Mannion and Lewis S. Mudge (New York & London: Routledge, 2008), 552.

¹² Pope Francis. 2015. *Laudato Si*, nn 106ff.

¹³ P. Wallace Platt, "Sacerdotal Poesis: Beauty and the Priest," *Louvain Studies*, 30 (Spring-Summer 2005): 110.

¹⁴ Conway, "Ministry," 550f.

as baptized faithful with specific gifts? Alternatively, in what instances are lay ministers compensating for the shortage of clergy and thus fulfilling roles that belong to the ordained and that, properly speaking, require the sacrament of ordination?

Put another way, in what instances could we and should we dispense with lay ministers if we had enough clergy and in what instances do we consider their service indispensable, regardless of the number of clergy? For example, recently a leading curial official stated that people living the sacrament of marriage are best placed to prepare others for that sacrament.¹⁵ Does this mean that preparing people for the sacrament of marriage is essentially a lay ministry requiring the sacrament of marriage in addition to the sacraments of initiation? If so, should we institute a special ministry for this purpose?

There are other issues. Given that only men can be validly ordained as priests and deacons, is there a danger that we compensate by “using” lay ministries to ensure the role of women in ecclesial leadership when, in fact, lay men may well be capable of and called to exercise the same charisms but are less welcome because of their gender?

Another key question is why local churches have seldom availed of the provision for the establishment of stable lay ministries in the Church.¹⁶ Why the reluctance and what has it to reveal regarding both our professed and operative theologies of ministry?

Practical Concerns

In addition to these theoretical considerations it is also important to take account of practical concerns being voiced by lay ministers. Among these they report the following:

- While many clergy are welcoming and supportive, others are experienced as “gate-keepers,” as lacking energy, as being apathetic and blocking; as anti-formation and anti-intellectual. This is particularly serious given that priests have an important enabling role to play in calling forth lay charisms and in providing formation for lay people.

¹⁵ Kevin Farrell, “Priests do not have experience to prepare people for marriage, says Vatican Cardinal.” <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/religion-and-beliefs/priests-do-not-have-experience-to-prepare-people-for-marriage-says-vatican-cardinal-1.3552508>. Accessed 30.07.18.

¹⁶ Pope Paul VI. 1972. *Ministeria quaedam*. http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/la/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu-proprio_19720815_ministeria-quaedam.html. Accessed 30 July 2018.

- That lay people themselves can be hesitant about recognizing and accepting the role of lay people in ministry. This raises the issue of how well God's people are being formed to receive the diversity of charisms available for the building up of God's reign and that there is an important catechetical task to be undertaken in this regard.
- That there is an ongoing failure to shift from a maintenance-oriented Church to a mission-oriented Church. This could be because clergy who would wish to be more engaged in mission are bogged down by an increasing burden of maintenance and administrative tasks with fewer priests available to share it. It could also be that to move from maintenance to mission requires stepping beyond familiar comfort zones into new and unexplored ministerial contexts. Pope Francis' charter for the renewal of the Church hinges on this shift from maintenance to mission.¹⁷ Significantly, in terms of our consideration of lay ministry, Bishop Bestion of Tulle recently expressed concern that lay people who put their gifts at the disposal of the Church are being drawn away from the frontline of the Church's mission and instead find themselves invested in ensuring the survival of inherited ecclesiastical structures that can no longer serve its mission.¹⁸
- That there is a failure, as many lay ministers see it, to "cash-in" sufficiently on the "Francis effect," a hesitation to "seize the moment" that the mission and ministry of Pope Francis is offering to retrieve the joy of the Gospel; to embrace the invitation to the Church to become a field-hospital characterized by mercy, proximity, nearness and genuine pastoral accompaniment.

The concerns of priests with regards to collaborative ministry need also to be acknowledged. These include the challenges of leading teams when they have often been formed essentially to be "solo" operators; the financial burden that can fall upon priests to fund lay employees in parishes; the inequality of pay and working conditions between ordained and lay; the additional burden associated with administering legal contracts, and so on.

¹⁷ Pope Francis. 2013. *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 34. http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html. Accessed 31.05.19.

¹⁸ Francis Bestion, "Se dirige-t-on vers l'ordination d'hommes mariés? Interview avec Clémence Houdaille," in *La Croix*, 09.03.2017. See <https://www.la-croix.com/Se-dirige-vers-lordination-dhommes-maries-2017-03-09-1200830644>. Accessed 20.07.18.

There can be a human price to pay as well as an unfortunate counter-witness to the Gospel when ministers are unable to collaborate well together. Conversely, new energy and focus is brought to the service of God's Kingdom when we get this right. None of the issues mentioned here should hinder the service of God's people in the most generous and professional manner possible making full use of the many gifts being given by the Holy Spirit for renewing the Church.

Formation for Collaboration: Five Key Theological Dispositions

Following Vatican II, Karl Rahner argued that the programme of studies for pastoral ministers, whether ordained or lay, needed to be distinguished from those designed primarily for academic theologians.¹⁹ Both programmes, however, should retain their full academic rigor. He also argued that pastoral (practical) theology should not be seen as a theological "add-on" at the end of academic studies but as *the* discipline the central concern of which is the Church's self-actualization, with the added responsibility of orientating other theological disciplines to this task. As such, therefore, pastoral theology has a right to make demands upon theology as a whole, especially when it comes to the formation of ministers.²⁰ What follows is intended as a step in orientating core theological considerations to ministerial formation in a collaborative context.

1. Baptism as Foundational for all Ministry

Formation for priesthood must enable candidates to appreciate fully baptismal grace and baptismal faith as foundational for all ministries. As *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, baptism institutes the priesthood of the faithful; ordained priesthood is at the service of the priesthood of the faithful.

While the common priesthood of the faithful is exercised by the unfolding of baptismal grace – a life of faith, hope, and charity, a life according to the Spirit – the ministerial priesthood is at the service of the common priesthood. It is directed at the unfolding of the baptismal grace of all Christians. The ministerial priesthood is a means by which Christ unceasingly builds up and leads his Church.²¹

¹⁹ Karl Rahner, "Reflections on the Contemporary Intellectual Formation of Future Priests," in *Theological Investigations* (London: DLT, 1969), 6:124.

²⁰ Karl Rahner, "Practical Theology within the Totality of Theological Disciplines," in *Theological Investigations* (London: DLT, 1969), 9: 102, 106.

²¹ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994), nn. 1546-1547.

The *Ratio Fundamentalis*²² also states that: “The unity and dignity of the baptismal vocation precede any differentiation in ministry” and “the ministerial priesthood is understood... as a service to the glory of God and to the brothers and sisters in their baptismal priesthood.”

Future priests need to be aware of two key points. The first is that clergy are not a second people apart from the People of God. Baptism remains foundational for priesthood even after ordination.²³ The second is that lay people do not receive their ministerial callings from priests but from Christ through the Holy Spirit. Unity, equality and good working relationships are built upon embedding these principles into priestly formation from the outset.

Priests have, however, responsibility for ensuring that those called by the Holy Spirit to diverse ministries are properly formed and to create the structures enabling them to serve.²⁴ At the same time this should not create the misleading perception of a “provided for” laity and a “providing” clergy.²⁵ Lay ministers can greatly enable and enrich the ministry of priests and priests need to be open to this.²⁶ In addition, the foundational nature of our common baptism means that we share a common spirituality that can and should be nourished in common.

2. The Church as Communion; Awakening Co-Responsibility

Another theological disposition to be fostered in priestly formation is the understanding of Church as a community of disciples and as a communion of communities. This concept of Church has found a deep resonance in the past three decades and those not at home with this ecclesial self-understanding will find ministry difficult. The following aspects of Church as communion can helpfully be highlighted in priestly formation: that the priest is uniquely tasked with serving as a visible agent of communion; that communion should characterize all ecclesial relationships; that the basis for such relations is the mystery of Trinitarian communion; that this understanding challenges individualism as well as dynamics of dominance in ministerial settings.

²² “The Gift of the Priestly Vocation,” *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis* (London: CTS, 2017), n.31.

²³ Eamonn Fitzgibbon, “Ordained Ministry – A View from ‘Below,’” in *Priesthood Today: Ministry in a Changing Church*, ed. Eamonn Conway (Dublin: Veritas, 2013), 266-268.

²⁴ Kasper, *Leadership in the Church*, 56.

²⁵ Maureen Kelly, “The Demands of Collaborative Ministry,” in *Priesthood Today: Ministry in a Changing Church*, ed. Eamonn Conway (Dublin: Veritas, 2013), 29.

²⁶ *Christifideles Laici, On the Vocation and the Mission of the Lay Faithful in the World*, n.61. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jpii_exh_30121988_christifideles-laici.html Accessed 30.07.18

Seminarians should be familiar with *Christifideles Laici* with its emphasis on the Church as mystery, communion and mission as well as *Pastores dabo vobis*²⁷ which speaks of the priest awakening and facilitating co-responsibility among the faithful for the Church's mission of salvation. Acceptance of co-responsibility for mission is considered essential to the proper structuring of lay ministry and Pope Benedict XVI specifically spoke of this in an important address he gave to the diocese of Rome in 2009. In this address he said that there is a change of mentality underway whereby consideration of the laity as collaborators with the clergy is giving way to recognition that they are really co-responsible for the Church's being and action. *The Sign We Give: Report on Collaborative Ministry by the Roman Catholic Bishops of England and Wales*²⁸ and the USCCB 2005 statement, *Co-workers in the vineyard of the Lord*, are also important texts to be studied in this context.

It is important to note four challenges to a spirit of communion and co-responsibility in ministry. These are: a distorted understanding of power and authority; how the distinctiveness of various ministries is articulated; clericalism; a desire for a false and unattainable uniformity. We will look at each of these in turn.

a. Power and authority

We need to reconsider what a genuinely Christian understanding of power and authority is, and how this can become more fully operative in the life of the Church, in particular among all those who minister. As Howard Yoder says, "the cross and not the sword, suffering and not brute power, determines the meaning of history."²⁹ The power of ordination is an enabling power, a power authenticated in a life of service, of self-emptying and self-giving, underpinned by a spirituality of kenosis. We need to ensure an attitude among ministers of "truly equal but different."

Ordained priesthood mirrors, enables and calls forth the common priesthood of all the faithful. There is a mutual dependency here and any power inequality is out of place. In order to remain focused on the New Testament portrayal of

²⁷ *Pastores dabo vobis, On the Formation of Priests in the Circumstances of the Present Day*, nn. 12, 16, 74. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_25031992_pastores-dabo-vobis.html Accessed 30.07.18.

²⁸ *The Sign We Give: Report on Collaborative Ministry by the Roman Catholic Bishops of England and Wales*, 1995. [http://www.cbcew.org.uk/CBCEW-Home/Publications/The-Sign-We-Give-1995/\(language\)/eng-GB](http://www.cbcew.org.uk/CBCEW-Home/Publications/The-Sign-We-Give-1995/(language)/eng-GB). Accessed 31.05.19.

²⁹ Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 232.

how Jesus exercised power and authority, José Ignacio González Faus speaks of ministers acting *in persona Jesu* rather than *in persona Christi*. He also makes the point that if the Church relationship between priest and community is authoritarian and dominating, the Church is likely to come across as authoritarian and with an inclination towards dominance in its relationship with civil society as well.³⁰

Writing in *Geist und Leben* during the 1970s and 1980s Peter Hünemann showed how priesthood understood as *representatio Christi* and as *representatio Ecclesiae* gives rise to different understandings of power and authority in the Church. A secular understanding of power tends towards power in opposition, power “over against” competing interests. Priesthood understood as *representatio Christi*, which emphasizes the priest as representing Christ to the community, if not balanced by recognition of the presence and power of Christ manifest in *koinonia*, can deteriorate into a secular-type exercise of power. In Hünemann’s view we need to hold together both the *potestas* of sacramental ordination, and the energetic power that flows from vibrant Christian communities of faithful disciples.³¹

New Testament Studies for ministerial candidates should therefore include consideration of the exercise of power and authority by Jesus, his disciples and the early Church, and in particular use of the concepts of *exousia* (ἐξουσία) and *dynamis* (δύναμις).³²

Power imbalances can be built into the language we use in regard to ministry. We need to move beyond the use of terms such as lay/cleric and ordained/non-ordained. Binaries tend by their nature to create an unhelpful dynamic of competitiveness. Ecclesiastical titles and forms of address also reinforce power differentials. We also need to attend to the importance of formal commissioning of ministries and also to justice issues in regard to working conditions. These practical issues witness to the kind of *koinonia* the Church community claims to be.

³⁰ José Ignacio González Faus, *Builders of Community: Rethinking Ecclesial Ministry* (Miami: Convivium Press, 2012).

³¹ Peter Hünemann, “Kirche und Amt-Marginalien zum Amts-verständnis.” *Geist und Leben* 48 (1975), 285-299; “Mit dem Volk Gottes unterwegs: Eine geistliche Besinnung zur Theologie und Praxis des kirchlichen Amtes.” *Geist und Leben* 54 (1981): 178-187.

³² *Exousia* refers to power in the sense of the right or authority to perform actions that bring about God’s reign whereas *dynamis* can be understood as the inherent capacity to perform such actions.

b. The issue of distinctiveness of ordained and lay ministries.

We have already alluded to Vatican II's unfinished project in terms of providing a coherent and comprehensive theology of ordained priesthood that recognizes fully and serves the common priesthood of all the faithful. The emphasis must be on demonstrating the complementarity of various ministries that cannot be in competition with one another as they serve the one Lord.³³

A theology of ministry must also articulate what is distinctive of *both* ordained *and* lay ministries. We have already mentioned a number of distinctive features of priestly ministry: its rootedness in the sacrament of orders, its role in enabling and calling forth lay charisms, the priest as a visible agent of communion. Pope Francis is as concerned about the distinct competence and autonomy of the lay faithful's contribution to the Kingdom of God as much as he is concerned about that of the ordained. In a recent Letter to the Pontifical Commission for Latin America he says, It does us good to remember that the Church is not an elite of priests, of consecrated men, of bishops, but that everyone forms the faithful Holy People of God. ... The faithful Holy People of God is anointed with the grace of the Holy Spirit, and thus, as we reflect, think, evaluate, discern, we must be very attentive to this anointing.³⁴

In *Evangelii Gaudium* Pope Francis calls for three things: greater formation of lay people for their distinctive mission, greater scope for them to exercise this mission, and a review, to be conducted by pastors and theologians, of how lay people, and he specifically speaks of women, are to be appropriately integrated into decision-making processes in the Church's life.

c. Clericalism

Another potential threat to communion and co-responsibility in ministry is clericalism. The US Conference of Major Superiors of Men commissioned a detailed report on clericalism as far back as 1983. They described it as "the conscious or unconscious concern to promote the particular interests of the clergy and to protect the privileges and power that have traditionally been conceded to those in the clerical state." Their report highlights the fact that clericalism becomes manifest in the behavior of individuals but that it also can be evident in church structures and reinforced by church procedures and processes. Clericalism is at work when we encounter "an authoritarian style of ministerial

³³ See 1 Cor 10:17.

³⁴ Pope Francis, "Letter to the Pontifical Commission for Latin America", 19 March 2016. https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2016/documents/papa-francesco_20160319_pont-comm-america-latina.html. Accessed 25.07.18.

leadership, a rigidly hierarchical worldview, and a virtual identification of the holiness and grace of the church with the clerical state and, thereby, with the cleric himself.”

The report goes on to say that “lay people, religious men and women are all liable to the pitfalls of clericalism in certain situations. Generally speaking - exclusive, elitist or dominating behavior can be engaged in by any person or group within the Church. Such behavior is properly termed ‘clericalism’ when it rests on a claim to special religious expertise or ecclesial authority based on role or status in the church.”

Pope Francis has spoken about clericalism in his annual Addresses to the Roman Curia as well as his weekly catecheses and most authoritatively in *Evangelii Gaudium* n.102. It is clear that he considers it the core internal challenge to the mission of the Church because it impedes lay people from appropriating fully their ecclesial identity and from fulfilling their distinctive missionary responsibilities in the social, political and economic sectors of society. He has also noted how not just priests but also lay people themselves can be complicit in clericalism. Speaking to the Catholic media organization *Corallo* he described clericalism as a “two-way” or “double” sin. Priests like the temptation of clericalising the laity and the laity welcome it because it is “more convenient” and gives them a certain status.³⁵

There is a value to a healthy fraternity forming among priests and similarly to a good rapport developing lay pastoral ministers. In fact, it is natural. This does not necessarily lead to clericalism. What is needed is honesty, transparency and openness about roles and responsibilities, about how decisions are taken, and the avoidance of “circles within circles” among those working together. Most importantly, those collaborating need to pray together and to remain grounded in a self-emptying spirituality of service.

d. Unity, not uniformity

Finally, in terms of potential threats to building communion and co-responsibility we need to avoid requiring or expecting uniformity of vision or of approach. Priests and lay people need to be formed in such a way that they are comfortable with a diversity of approaches to building up the kingdom of God. Unity is a value to protect, but not uniformity.

³⁵ Eamonn Conway, “A Church beyond Clericalism,” in *Towards Just Gender Relations: Rethinking the Role of Women in Church and Society*, ed. Gunter Prüller-Jagenteufel and Rita Perintfalvi (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2018).

Pope Francis' opponents have done the Church a favor in helping us to realize that we can have unity in diversity and that we can disagree even on some very fundamental matters and still be a Church that is one, holy, Catholic and apostolic. Karl Rahner noted that the decline of a homogeneous Christian society would inevitably lead to a plurality of Christian forms.³⁶ He saw this as positive in that it reminds us that all structural forms in the Church are provisional from an eschatological perspective. This point is also made in *Lumen Gentium*, n. 48: "...the pilgrim Church in her sacraments and institutions, which pertain to this present time, has the appearance of this world which is passing."

The enemy is not diversity as such but polarization. Polarization is caused not by the existence of diverse views but by those who hold them thinking ill of one another and to pray and work together; in essence adopting a form of sectarianism that is anything but Catholic. In terms of the future of priesthood and ministry, therefore, priestly candidates need to learn to negotiate a plurality of forms and perspectives while avoiding division and polarization.

3. Recognizing and Fostering the Universal Call to Holiness

A third theological disposition to foster in candidates for the priesthood is Vatican II's emphasis on the universal call to holiness. This has brought the Church to a new understanding of the relationship between laity, religious, priests and bishops, of the importance of equality in these relationships, and that the path to holiness lies in interrelatedness and mutual support. The centrality of the universal call to holiness has been beautifully articulated in Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exultate* and needs no further development here. A study of this document and its roots in Conciliar teaching needs to underpin both the academic and personal spiritual formation of all ministerial candidates, ordained and lay.

4. The Relationship between Church and World

The theological disposition with which priests approach the secular world will influence how they see lay collaborators. The Jesuit Michael Paul Gallagher, reflecting the spirituality of St Ignatius of Loyola, as well as that of Pope Francis, always stressed that grace is at work everywhere and in everyone. Jesuit theologian,

³⁶ Karl Rahner, *The Shape of the Church to Come* (London: SPCK, 1974).

Jim Corkery urges ministers to approach the world more as “detectives of grace” rather than of sin.³⁷ Writing in *Evangelii Gaudium* Pope Francis also reminds us:

God’s word is unpredictable in its power. The Gospel speaks of a seed, which, once sown, grows by itself, even as the farmer sleeps (Mk 4:26-29). The Church has to accept this unruly freedom of the word, which accomplishes what it wills in ways that surpass our calculations and ways of thinking.³⁸

A disposition along these lines can lead to an appropriately docile approach to ministry, giving due respect to the role of the Holy Spirit in directing the work of building God’s Kingdom. It also disposes ministers to approach the world in an “invitatory mood” with the intention of “seeking allies in the service of justice, truth and love.”³⁹ A greater richness is now manifesting itself in ordained ministry with candidates having education and careers in secular professions behind them before entering the seminary. Similarly, lay ministers can bring a richness and diversity of human experience, of marriage and of family life that helps to bridge the sacred and the secular.

5. The Pneumatological Dimension

Finally, we need a richer understanding and acceptance of the pneumatological dimension of the Church, and this is key to sustaining and renewing both priesthood and ministry. George Tavad recognizes the need for this when he writes:

The action of the Spirit and the believers’ forward-looking anticipation of divine gifts to be received in the future have taken second place, being subordinated to the church’s memory of Christ and to its preservation of the deposit of faith.... a domination of ministerium by magisterium.⁴⁰

Careful discernment is needed, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to determine what true fidelity to structures and practices of ministry means. We need to distinguish fidelity to the Church’s mission from fidelity to particular forms that once served that mission but may no longer be able to do so in a new missionary context.

³⁷ James Corkery, “Detectives of Grace in the Adventures of Scholarship,” in *Cultivating Sacramental Imagination and Actions in College Classrooms*, ed. Karen E. Eifler and Thomas M. Landy (Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2014), 18f.

³⁸ *Evangelii Gaudium*, n. 22,

³⁹ Dermot McCarthy, “The Priesthood and Contemporary Society,” in *Priesthood Today: Ministry in a Changing Church*, ed. Eamonn Conway (Dublin: Veritas, 2013), 51-52.

⁴⁰ George Tavad, *The Church, Community of Salvation: An Ecumenical Ecclesiology* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 52.

Conclusion

In light of all that has been said here it is evident that priests cannot be formed for collaboration with lay people merely by way of an “add-on” to their academic studies. Steps must be taken to foster communion and co-responsibility between priests and lay ministers from the outset of formation.

While providing seminarians with a distinctive spirituality, one that will sustain them in their priestly ministry, and with a clear understanding and appreciation of their own vocation, it seems difficult to justify separate theological formation programmes for seminarians and lay people. In fact, separate formation programmes are a missed opportunity for active learning that can only be mutually enriching, cultivating respect for the variety of gifts being given for the building up of God’s Kingdom from the beginning. Future priests and lay ministers need to be provided with such a rich and maturing classroom experience along with shared experiential learning in parish communities throughout their formation. Thought also needs to be given to such formation continuing after ordination and commissioning.

We can expect that the topic of ministry will eventually be addressed through the process of synodality, which, under Pope Francis, has become the key vehicle for dealing with the unfinished business of the Second Vatican Council. In the meantime, good practice in our seminaries, centers of formation and parish communities will continue to be vital and will, in turn, contribute to greater clarity in our theology of collaborative ministry.

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“Let us Keep the Feast:” Some Perspectives on the Form and Symbolism of the Eucharistic Bread in the Early and Medieval West

The Early Form of the Eucharistic Bread

To begin with, we should clarify the form of the Eucharistic bread before the Western resumption of unleavened bread (*azymes*). The use of *artos* instead of *azyma* in the four New Testament accounts of the Last Supper probably tells us that the type of bread used was not considered sufficiently important to merit specification, although Andrew McGowan believes that such a use “might reflect the assimilation of the institution narratives to meal practices of a more everyday nature... or may conversely be a remnant of a non-paschal tradition embedded in the Gospel accounts”¹ – even though any such tradition, if it existed, would have been superseded well before the end of the first Christian century. Thus, leavened bread was considered acceptable for Eucharistic use. For example, in a work sometimes attributed to Ambrose but perhaps from the early fifth century we have the statement *meus panis est usitatus* (“my bread is the usual sort”),² while the consecrated *fermentum* particle about which Innocent I wrote to Decentius,

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¹ Andrew McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 94.

² *De Sacramentis*, 4, 4, in Jacques-Paul Migne ed. *Patrologia Latina* (hereafter *PL*), 16, 439.

Bishop of Gubbio in 416 must have been leavened in virtue of its name.³ Almost two centuries later, Gregory the Great has it written of him how he saw a woman grin at receiving the bread of her own offering at communion.⁴ As to the bread's appearance, Theodor Klauser notes that "perhaps it was shaped like a small wreath,"⁵ while, more specifically, J. A. Jungmann refers to two Ravenna Eucharistic mosaics in which "the bread appears in the form of a chaplet or crown, that is, twisted like a braid and then wound into a circlet about four inches across."⁶ He identifies this with the *corona* used from at least the third century (presumably referring to the entry for Pope Zephyrinus in the *Liber Pontificalis*)⁷ and later mentioned by Gregory. Jungmann also argues that "sometimes the centre hole of the crown was filled in, and so the bread had the form of a disk."⁸ This conforms to *Ordo Romanus IV*, written about 770-790,⁹ which states that "the pontiff [bishop] breaks one of the breads which he is offering for himself and leaves its crown (*et dimittit coronam ipsius*) on the altar."¹⁰ As late as 1089, another author, either Bernard of Constance or his more famous pupil Bernold

³ Innocent I, *Epistola ad Decentium Eugubinum* 5, PL, 20, 556-557, also 56, 516-517, also 130, 696; Martin Connell, *Church and Worship in Fifth-Century Rome: The Letter of Innocent I to Decentius of Gubbio* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 2002), 39-40. For more recent research and opinions, see John Baldovin, "The Fermentum at Rome in the Fifth Century: A Reconsideration," *Worship* 79 (2005): 38-53; Lizette Larson-Miller, "The Liturgical Inheritance of the Late Empire in the Middle Ages," in *A Companion to the Eucharist in the Middle Ages*, ed. Ian Levy et al. (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012), 57; Bryan Spinks, *Do This in Remembrance of Me: The Eucharist from the Early Church to the Present Day* (London: SCM, 2013), 203; also Mary Leith and Allyson Sheckler, "Relics? What Relics?," in *Religious Competition in the Greco-Roman World*, ed. Nathaniel DesRosiers and Lily Vuong (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016), 207.

⁴ Paul the Deacon, *Vita Sancti Gregorii*, 23, PL, 75, 52-53. For this story as retold by Jacopo De Fazio ("Jacobus de Voragine," 1230-1298), see Daniel Bornstein, "Relics, Ascetics, Living Saints," in *Medieval Christianity*, ed. Daniel Bornstein (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 92; Kathryn Rudy, *Rubrics, Images and Indulgences in late Medieval Netherlandish Manuscripts* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 101.

⁵ Theodor Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2nd ed. 1979), 67.

⁶ Josef Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, ed. Charles Riepe (London: Burns & Oates, 1959), 330.

⁷ *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Louis Duchesne (Paris: Thorin, 1886), 1, 139.

⁸ Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 330.

⁹ Cyrille Vogel, *Medieval Liturgy: An Introduction to the Sources* (Washington DC: The Pastoral Press, 1986), 152; Barry Craig, *Fractio Panis: A History of the Breaking of Bread in the Roman Rite* (Rome, Studia Anselmiana 151: Pont. Ateneo Sant'Anselmo, 2011), 147.

¹⁰ *Ordo Romanus* xc 57, in *Les Ordines Romani du Haut Moyen Age*, ed. Michel Andrieu (Louvain: Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense Administration, 1971), 2:164.

of Constance, in a work now seemingly lost but paraphrased in the sixteenth century by Georgius Cassander, uses the phrase “the form of a crown,” but this time it refers to a surely unleavened roll, made from “a handful of fine flour.”¹¹

Jungmann also argues that the most usual type of bread may have been circular with a cross cut into it to facilitate breaking, since such a pattern was known in the ancient world for secular use.¹² Alternatively, the loaf may have been marked with a circle for the crown and then several lines for breaking the rest of it. This would accord better with *Ordo IV*'s “crown”; and, while such a view is not provable, there should be recorded both that little hollow loaves of such a kind are still baked for secular use in Rome today and that such popular customs are often very old. So we can see that the bread was, at least generally, leavened. Archdale King observes that “the references cited in favour of *azymes* in the early Church are quite inconclusive, and they are for the most part either apocryphal or symbolical.”¹³ One instance of the apocryphal is the quotation ascribed to Gregory the Great by Aquinas in *Summa Theologiae* III, 74, 4. “For, Gregory says: ‘The Roman Church offers unleavened bread, because our Lord took flesh without union of sexes: but the Greek Churches offer leavened bread, because the Word of the Father was clothed with flesh; as leaven is mixed with the flour.’”¹⁴

As this belongs to no surviving work of Gregory, there seems to be an error of attribution on Aquinas’ part;¹⁵ the quotation comes, in fact, from the *Tractatus contra Errores Graecorum* of 1250 or 1252, by an author identified by Migne as Pantaleon, deacon of Constantinople during Western rule there; he seems to have been a Dominican.¹⁶ To explain and assess King’s observation in the setting of the Roman West, we will move on to look at the symbolism of *azymes*, with special reference to their adoption.

The Symbolic Adoption of Unleavened Bread

In a Passover context, unleavened bread is mentioned in Exodus both as to be eaten at the Passover meal (12: 8) and as food for the people during the week after it (12: 18-20). The *azymes* of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (which

¹¹ Gerald Ellard, “Bread in the Form of a Penny,” *Theological Studies* 4/3 (1943): 343.

¹² Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 330.

¹³ Archdale King, *Liturgy of the Roman Church* (London: Longmans, 1957), 169-170.

¹⁴ Translation accessed December 20, 2018, www.newadvent.org/summa/4074.htm

¹⁵ Reginald Maxwell Woolley, *The Bread of the Eucharist* (London: Mowbray, 1913), 14.

¹⁶ Jacques-Paul Migne ed. *Patrologia Graeca* (hereafter PG), 140, 524. See also Roger Pearse, accessed December 20, 2018, www.roger-pearse.com/weblog/2015-10-24

originally started on the day following the Passover) were baked with the first wheat of the new harvest and so were made before the new leaven, made with old dough kept from before the feast and fermented, was ready. Philo thus saw this feast as commemorating the world's creation in its former purity.¹⁷ And, for Paul, the leaven's absence became a symbol of "sincerity and truth": "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor 5:7b-8).

Justin, addressing the Jews in the mid second century, both sees the specifically fine flour of a particular Jewish offering as a "type" of the Eucharistic bread¹⁸ and takes up the Pauline symbolism of leaven as denoting "malice and wickedness," but applies it specifically to the old leaven and therefore without Paul's festal image: "What the *azymes* signify is that you should no longer do the old works of the evil leaven. But... God commanded you to knead a new leaven, after the seven days of the unleavened bread, which signifies the practice of new works."¹⁹

Hippolytus, writing in the early third century and, it seems, primarily addressing the Roman church, develops this by seeing the new leaven as symbolizing Christ's redemption of humankind: "Let the Jews, then, eat the *azymes* for seven days, let them strive on during the seven ages of the world. But as for us, Christ, our Pasch, is sacrificed, and we have received a new paste from his holy mixing."²⁰

Although the antithesis between "*azymes*" and "new paste" implies that Hippolytus saw the latter as leavened, not unleavened as for Paul in 1 Cor 5:7, we can see that early Christianity adapted the symbolism of the purified creation, together with the liberation idea associated with the Passover, to refer to our regeneration in Christ. However, because Paul's symbolic condemnation of leaven is total (unlike Justin's), we can see how unleavened bread, rather than new-leavened bread, was taken up in the Middle Ages to symbolize the new dispensation.

¹⁷ Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus* 2, 159-161 (Loeb Classical Library, 320, Philo, Vol. 7; Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1937, reprinted 1998), 404-405.

¹⁸ Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 41:1, in *Prayers of the Eucharist: Early and Reformed*, ed. Ronald Jasper and Geoffrey Cuming (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 3rd ed. 1990), 27; see also Eugene LaVerdiere, *The Eucharist in the New Testament and the Early Church* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1996), 180-183.

¹⁹ Quoted and trans. in Jean Daniélou, *The Bible and the Liturgy* (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1979 ed.), 174.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

The noted liturgical scholar Fernand Cabrol, Abbot of Farnborough (1855 – 1937) has taken the view that unleavened bread came in during the sixth or seventh century. This early date seems largely attributable to the testimony of Bede (c. 673 – 735).²¹ However, the value of that testimony is more probably as an illustration of the development of the symbolic understanding that gave rise to *azymes*' adoption. In one place, Bede sees the week of unleavened bread as a “type” of Christian living on earth:

When, indeed, the lamb had been sacrificed one day at eventide, there followed seven days of *azymes* in succession. So too – Christ Jesus having suffered in the flesh once for us in the fullness of time – he has given instructions to us to live lives throughout all the time of this age, which is envisaged by the seven days, with the *azymes* of sincerity and truth.²²

A little later, Bede examines the relation between the old and new dispensations in greater detail as regards Christ's redemptive work. Here Christ is seen, not only as the sacrifice of the new covenant, but also as typified by the *azymes* themselves:

(Christ) does not cease to observe the sacraments of the law... until... eating the Passover for which he had longed with his disciples; so also at last, in the shining morning, he offers the very comely mysteries of his body and blood, consecrated on the altar of the cross, to the faithful to be initiated, as it were the *azymes* of the earth of the new promise.²³

Further on, Bede takes up the Pauline symbolism of Christ, the head, and the Church, his body (Rom 12: 4-5; 1 Cor 12: 27-28; Eph 1: 22-23, 5: 39-30; Col 1:18,24). Here again, we should not necessarily infer a reference to the use of unleavened bread, since we are not told what the grain was mixed with:

And neither is it permitted of anyone to offer only water or only wine, as neither wheat-grain only without its being mixed and made into bread: lest, of course, such an offering might signify – as it were – the head being severed from the members.²⁴

Despite Cabrol's view, unleavened bread is more likely to have begun to be adopted in the West in the eighth century and to have gained considerable

²¹ Fernand Cabrol, “Azymes,” in *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, Part 2, 3258, see also King, *Liturgy of the Roman Church*, 1:171.

²² Bede, *In Lucae Evangelium Expositio* 22, PL, 92, 593.

²³ *Ibid.*, 595.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 597.

acceptance in the ninth,²⁵ when canonical legislation for its use began to be passed,²⁶ though its complete adoption took a long time. Woolley's view, that, when unleavened bread was first adopted in the West, it looked more, as it were, rough and ready (possibly more like Jewish Passover breads) than the smooth white breads of later times, is probably correct: such products as the latter must have taken some time to develop.²⁷ The first certain information we have is from Alcuin (c. 735 – 804) and Hrabanus Maurus (c. 780 – 856). Alcuin, writing in 798, states: "Thus too the bread, which is consecrated as Christ's body, must be entirely fine, without the leaven of other permeation"²⁸ and again: "The bread which is consecrated as Christ's body is made from water and flour."²⁹ However, it is clear from the passage as a whole that the use of leavened bread was still wide in the West at this time.³⁰ Hrabanus explains the importance of unleavened bread (i) by appeal to Christ's usage at the Last Supper and (ii) by taking up both the typology of the Old Testament cereal-offerings and the Pauline symbolism. Concerning (ii): despite Klauser, who imputes the primary cause of the reversion to azymes to the Old Testament,³¹ the greater justification seems to be Paul's view of leaven:

Wherefore, moreover, it befits the bread of the sacrifice to be without leaven... "every oblation which is offered to the Lord, let it be without leaven..." [Lev 2:11] So we believe, too, that that bread which the Lord first made through consecration into the mystery of his body in the mystic supper was unleavened, especially when at Passover time it was not allowed for anyone to eat leaven... What that leaven signifies... St Paul shows...: "Christ our Pasch has been sacrificed, therefore let us keep the feast" [1 Cor 5:7b-8].³²

One reference in Hrabanus' contemporary Paschasius Radbertus (785 – 865), written in 844, has been quoted as a witness to the use of unleavened bread.

²⁵ King, *Liturgy of the Roman Church*, 169; Clifford Howell, "The Communion Rite – The Deterioration of the Signs," *Liturgy* 2/6 (1978): 240; Colin Buchanan, *The End of the Offertory – An Anglican Study* (Bramcote: Grove Liturgical Study No. 14, 1978), 16.

²⁶ Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 331.

²⁷ Woolley, *The Bread of the Eucharist*, 15.

²⁸ Alcuin, *Epistola* 90 (*Ad Fratres Lugdunenses*), PL, 100, 289.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Woolley, *The Bread of the Eucharist*, 19.

³¹ Klauser, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy*, 110.

³² Hrabanus Maurus, *De Institutione Clericorum* 1, 21, in *De Divinis Catholicae Ecclesiae Officiis et Mysteriis*, ed. Melchior Hittorp (Paris: Cum Privilegio Regis, 1610, facsimile republished Farnborough: Gregg International, 1970), hereafter Hittorp, 561-562.

While it is unclear whether the passage in question bears witness to the use of *azymes*' use or else is meant to be symbolic, the passage remains noteworthy:

For this is the true and new paste of sincerity and truth so that we may be unleavened bread without the leaven of malice and wickedness... truly we are now members through Christ's new paste, nothing except for the body... Therefore this paste makes one Body from many grains, may it be a body of sincerity and truth, truly we are *azymes*, that is, without the leaven of malice and wickedness.³³

A further interesting development is that, elsewhere, Paschasius puts the Eucharistic sacrament, and therefore the Eucharistic bread, in an eschatological context, perhaps inspired by the Roman Canon (now Eucharistic Prayer I), in which “the eschatological dimension is articulated by uniting the Roman Church with the saints and martyrs and the heavenly worship at the altar in heaven.”³⁴ He writes: “We only feed upon and drink the sacrament of the body and blood so that nourished from it we may be made one in Christ, that being invigorated by tasting him we may be prepared for things immortal and eternal.”³⁵

Since Alcuin and Hrabanus both came from north of the Alps, it is, as King writes, “possible that *azymes* were yet another Gallican infiltration into the Roman liturgy.”³⁶ According to the distinguished Jesuit scholar Jacques Sirmond (1559 – 1651), leavened bread – so to speak – “reigned supreme” in Rome until c. 850³⁷ and *azymes* did not, apparently, become universal in the West until about 1050.³⁸ By this date the older use of leavened bread had, generally, become distant enough for the West in general and Rome in particular to overlook it in the arguments with the East on the question in the mid eleventh century, when Rome believed that Christ used *azymes* at the Last Supper and the East interpreted the use of *artos* in the institution narratives to mean that leavened bread was used. However, Eastern opposition to the use of *azymes* does not seem to have become particularly contentious until just before the Great Schism between East and West in 1054. The belief that the use of *azymes* was an early

³³ Paschasius Radbertus, *De Corpore et Sanguine Domini* 22, 3, in Woolley, *The Bread of the Eucharist*, 19.

³⁴ Spinks, *Do This in Remembrance of Me*, 206.

³⁵ Quoted and trans. in *Early Medieval Theology*, ed. George McCracken and Allen Cabaniss (Philadelphia, Library of Christian Classics 11: Westminster Press, 1957), 100, quotation taken from Spinks, *Do This in Remembrance of Me*, 216.

³⁶ King, *Liturgy of the Roman Church*, 171.

³⁷ Jacques Sirmond, *Disquisitio de Azymo* (Paris: Cramoisy, 1651), cited in King, *Liturgy of the Roman Church*, 169.

³⁸ Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 331.

custom would seem to have been held by Leo IX, who mentions the matter in a letter to Michael Cerularius, Patriarch of Constantinople from 1043 to 1059.³⁹ This belief is also discussed in a letter from Peter of Antioch to Cerularius.⁴⁰

Later Symbolic and Practical Developments

Later on, well after the 1054 schism, we find the Western justification for unleavened bread stated by Rupert of Deutz (c. 1075 – 1129 or perhaps 1135).⁴¹ Almost three centuries after Hrabanus, Rupert uses Hrabanus' reasons for *azymes* (the Lord's example, the Old Law and Paul). Rupert follows Paul's festal image in writing "let us celebrate the paschal feast" ("epulemur paschali convivio") and then repeats Paul's association of leaven with "malice and wickedness" and of unleavened bread with "sincerity and truth."⁴² The West's use of *azymes* is then uncompromisingly set forth by Innocent III (1160 or 1161 – 1216). After quoting Exodus 12 in support of the use of unleavened bread, particularly on the grounds of Christ's having used it at the Last Supper in accordance with the prescriptions in Exodus 12, he restates Paul's symbolism by reference to two texts. Firstly:

For leaven designates corruption, as St Paul bears witness... "A modest amount of leaven corrupts the whole lump" (1 Cor. 5: [6, Vulgate]). Thus, so that nothing corrupt or tainting, but entirely pure and cleansing, may be shown to be in this sacrament, we consecrate, not leavened bread, but *azyme*.⁴³

1 Corinthians 5:7b-8 is then quoted in corroboration; thus Innocent, too, draws attention to Paul's festal image. Secondly, the strength of Innocent's convictions about unleavened bread is clearly shown by that of the value judgment he sets forth:

Azyme bread and leavened bread are utterly opposed things...: thus it was not fitting for God, as if opposed to himself, to abandon *azyme* bread and adopt leavened, as if preferring the less good.⁴⁴

³⁹ Leo IX, *Epistola ad Michaellem Caerularium* 20-21, PL, 143, 759-760.

⁴⁰ Michael Cerularius, Dominic of Grado and Peter of Antioch, *Epistolae Mutuae*, PG, 120, 808; the addressee of the letter in question was almost certainly Cerularius – cf. *ibid.*, 796 note 60.

⁴¹ Rupert of Deutz, *De Divinis Officiis* 2, 22, Hittorp, 881-882.

⁴² *Ibid.*, Hittorp, 882.

⁴³ Innocent III, *De Sacro Altaris Mysterio* 4, 4, PL, 217, 855.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 857.

Two of the main effects of the changeover to unleavened bread were that the Eucharistic bread ceased to be baked in ordinary households and that the size of altar-breads diminished – in particular, small hosts eventually came to be used for the people’s communion. After the Western adoption of *azymes*, baking the Eucharistic bread came to be done by the clergy and in other Religious Houses. The main reasons were, firstly, that unleavened bread was not made for domestic use. But this does not seem to be the whole explanation: it would not, in principle, have been impossible to ask housewives to bake it as their families’ contribution to the Church’s work. Secondly, there was the medieval piety which engendered “the effort to remove the bread destined for the altar farther and farther from the sphere of the merely profane.”⁴⁵ The importance of this process is shown by the coming-in of the same custom in the East, where the bread was, of course, still leavened. In the East the baking became a liturgical ceremony in its own right and it did likewise in some quarters in the West, particularly in Religious Houses.⁴⁶ We can thus say that both causes produced “the ushering in of the era of the specialized wafer, specially produced by ecclesiastical professionals.”⁴⁷ The great medieval reverence for Christ’s sacramental presence was, generally, based on adoration from afar rather than sacramental communion, and consistent with this outlook was the use of smooth white hosts, causing only the smallest of crumbs and containing bread of the highest “purity”, that is, virtually only the best flour with water. The advantage of unleavened bread with regard to crumbs is mentioned as early as the mid eleventh century by Humbert of Silva Candida,⁴⁸ who presented the bull of Cerularius’ excommunication at Constantinople in 1054.

When *azymes* came into use in the Middle Ages, the practice was, apparently, to make them relatively large and break them in the fraction-rite for the people’s communion. Ulrich of Zell (1029 – 1093) has left an account of baking the Eucharistic bread at Cluny by kneading the unleavened dough into flat cakes for cooking:

One [monk] sprinkles the flour [with water] and very vigorously kneads [it] on a very clean table... They sprinkle with cold water because then the hosts may be made whiter...Six hosts may be placed in the irons at the same time.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 331.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 331-332; Ulrich of Zell, *Constitutiones Cluniacenses* 13, PL, 149, 757-758.

⁴⁷ Buchanan, *The End of the Offertory*, 16.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Woolley, *The Bread of the Eucharist*, 25-26.

⁴⁹ Ulrich of Zell, *Consuetudines Cluniacenses* 13, PL, 149, 757; translation taken from Craig, *Fractio Panis*, 181 note 116.

The reduction in size of the celebrant's altar-bread is essentially a twelfth-century phenomenon⁵⁰ and seems to have been caused by the decline in lay communions. That protracted and complex process seems to have begun around Antioch as early as about 250;⁵¹ it seems to have been familiar in Rome as early as about 500.⁵² Such a reduction of the celebrant's altar-bread was subsequently maintained by allowing convenience to predominate over principle: since *azymes* do not harden quickly like leavened bread, the particles for the people's communion could be broken before Mass started. Thus arose the provision of ready-broken or, as has been normative since the eleventh century,⁵³ small round pieces of bread for communicating the faithful. Barry Craig has pointed out that such small hosts are nowadays baked in sheets of wafer bread, so that they are not individually baked and might be said to be broken before Mass insofar as they are cut from sheets,⁵⁴ though small hosts (of thicker bread) were individually baked in the late eleventh century, according to a common pattern of altar-bread irons at that time.⁵⁵

This eleventh-century date for the adoption of small hosts may seem early in view of Jungmann's statement that the priest's host was not made smaller until the twelfth century, but he appears to have got these events the right way round: the introduction of small hosts must have come first, then the reduction of the priest's host, since to give communion to the people from the latter (as and when lay communion was distributed) was no longer necessary. Sadly, the replacement of domestic bread-baking by "professional" baking of unleavened bread engendered a measure of alienation of the congregation from active liturgical participation which, though far from complete, was nonetheless furthered. As this alienation progressed, money gradually replaced gifts in kind.⁵⁶ In noting the form the unleavened breads eventually took, one should note the work of Julie Kerr, who sees the baking of altar breads in medieval monasteries, duly attended by suitable rites, as having been an annual event only.⁵⁷ Clearly, in houses where

⁵⁰ Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 332.

⁵¹ Ernest Benjamin Koenker, *The Liturgical Renaissance in the Roman Catholic Church* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), 97.

⁵² Josef Jungmann, *Public Worship: A Survey* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1957), 144.

⁵³ Jungmann, *The Mass of the Roman Rite*, 65.

⁵⁴ Craig, *Fractio Panis*, 109.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁵⁶ John Cardinal Bona (1609-1674), *Rerum Liturgicarum, (Liber II)*, ed. Roberto Sala (Turin: *Ex Typographia Regia*, 1753, facsimile republished Farnborough: Gregg International, 1970), 3: 194,196; Ellard, "Bread in the Form of a Penny," 335, 337-339.

⁵⁷ Julie Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister* (London & New York: Continuum, 2009), 158.

this was so, the breads would have had to be altogether dry, to facilitate storage, and decidedly thin, to facilitate consumption. The form of such thin white hosts can also be attributed to medieval piety; Clifford Howell well describes the effect on the *azymes*' form of the replacement of other gifts by money. He writes that “as a reminder that these coin-offerings were a substitute for the former bread-offerings, the altar-breads now began to be made to look like coins; they were cut like coins and stamped with an ‘image and superscription’ like coins, in fact – ‘wheaten money.’”⁵⁸ This change would have meant that, while Paul's festal metaphor still applied, it would have been more difficult to appreciate than before.

In describing these coin-like hosts, the tractate *Gemma Animae*, attributed to Honorius of Autun in the twelfth century, sees the “image and superscription” as an allegory of God's image in humankind being mended through sacramental communion,⁵⁹ and Craig explains Honorius' provision of such allegorical interpretations for the hosts' appearance as the coins for which Christ was betrayed and the coins with which the workers in the vineyard were paid in the gospel account.⁶⁰ However, we find strong opposition from Bernard or Bernold of Constance in his apparently lost work of 1089, which Georgius Cassander has paraphrased in the sixteenth century thus:

In some churches at (the original author's) time the bread offerings, which in the ancient custom of the Church were wont to be brought... by the pious faithful for the use of the sacrifice, were reduced to the likeness of coins, and to a thinness and lightness entirely foreign to the appearance of real bread, and hence (the original author) contemptuously calls them infinitesimal minted wafers, ascribing a fantastic and unreal smoothness to them, unworthy for their lightness of the name of bread.⁶¹

We find such hosts used in England by at least the early twelfth century in that Ernulf, Bishop of Rochester (1039/40 – 1124) writes of the Eucharistic bread, “we receive bread in coin shape (*nos in forma nummi panem accipimus*),” contrasting it with the everyday bread used in the primitive Church.⁶² There is also an interesting passage in the first of the Synodal Statutes, or Constitutions, of William de Bleis, Bishop of Worcester, of 1229. The passage must refer to

⁵⁸ Howell, “The Communion Rite,” 240; see also Ellard, “Bread in the Form of a Penny,” 340.

⁵⁹ *Gemma Animae I*, 35, Hittorp, 1190. See also Bona, *Rerum Liturgicarum*, (*Liber II*), 3: 194.

⁶⁰ Craig, *Fractio Panis*, 196.

⁶¹ Quoted and translated in Ellard, “Bread in the Form of a Penny,” 343-344, cited also in Howell, “The Communion Rite,” 240.

⁶² Ernulf, *Epistola ad Lambertum*, quoted in Ellard, “Bread in the Form of a Penny,” 319.

azymes; while it is not altogether clear whether they are in coin form, that is quite possible:

Therefore, concerning the species which are required for the same Sacrament, more diligent attention ought to be applied, so that the offerings may clearly be made from the pure kernel of the corn grain... Let the utensil in which the offerings ought to be cooked be greased only with wax, not with oil or other fat; the offerings which have a becoming whiteness and a seemly roundness may be offered over the table of the altar.⁶³

The same synodal tradition provides further legislation on this subject in canon 4 of an Exeter synod of 1287 under Bishop Peter Quinil (Quinel, Quivil). While this canon's contents do not seem unrealistic, they also reflect the high standards that Quinil set:⁶⁴

Let them provide among the priests that they have offerings prepared from the finest wheat-flour of grain, and water only, such that nothing should be mixed in with the grain; and let the offerings be whole, white and round.⁶⁵

While no canonical legislation was passed to the effect that altar-breads had to be made like coins, the practice, begun in the late eleventh century, had become widespread by the end of the thirteenth.⁶⁶ Thus Gulielmus Durandus, writing about 1286 and quoting an early thirteenth-century source, specifies that "the bread however is shaped in the manner of a denarius... and in a round shape."⁶⁷ We should also take note of an English source, relevant to this article's scope, which, though late, is particularly significant. In the First Prayer Book of King Edward VI of 1549, compiled for the nascent Church of England, the third directive after the Communion service runs:

It is meet that the bread prepared for the Communion, be made... after one sort and fashion: that is to say, unleavened and round, as it was afore, but without all manner of print, and something more larger and thicker than it was, so that it may be aptly divided in divers pieces... and men must not think less to be

⁶³ Frederick Maurice Powicke and Christopher Cheney ed. *Councils and Synods, with Other Documents Relating to the English Church* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964), 2.1: 170.

⁶⁴ Richard Pfaff, *The Liturgy in Medieval England: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 396.

⁶⁵ Powicke and Cheney, *Councils and Synods*, 2.2: 990; Nicholas Paxton, "From the Canon to the Communion in the Sarum Mass," *In Illo Tempore: Ushaw Library Bulletin and Liturgical Review* 23 (2003): 23-24.

⁶⁶ Ellard, "Bread in the Form of a Penny," 340; Howell, "The Communion Rite," 240.

⁶⁷ Gulielmus Durandus, *Rationale Divinorum Officiorum* 4, 41, 8, quoted and trans. in Craig, *Fractio Panis*, 197.

received in part than in the whole, but in each of them, the whole body of our saviour Jesus Christ.⁶⁸

From this, we can again see that, over the course of the Middle Ages, the hosts which the congregation received became stamped and became small and thin enough for each communicant to receive a complete, unbroken host. Here is the “wheaten money” to which Howell refers.⁶⁹ Moreover, the references to Bernard or Bernold of Constance and to Durandus, given above, indicate that these developments were not confined to England.⁷⁰ Nonetheless, while the difference which Craig postulates between wafers and his understanding of unleavened bread, as made from kneaded dough,⁷¹ agrees with a phrase quoted by Howell, that wafers are “called bread only by courtesy of the Roman Catholic Church,”⁷² Craig’s view cannot command universal agreement: the present writer considers, as do countless Catholics, that wafer bread is a variety of the unleavened bread with which we keep the feast of Christ our sacrificed Passover.

Conclusion

The Council of Florence, wishing reunion with the East, declared in 1439 that “the body of Christ is truly confected in both unleavened and leavened wheat bread,”⁷³ though that did not stop those Greeks who were opposed to the union agreed at Florence from stigmatizing the pro-union party as “azymites.” Furthermore, this statement of Florence about valid matter for consecration did not stop the polemics of the East and the West about the rival claims of leavened and unleavened bread, which Georgij Avvakumov has set out and discussed in our own day.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ *The First and Second Prayer Books of King Edward the Sixth* (London, Everyman’s Library: J. M. Dent, 1910), 230. See also Nicholas Paxton, “Ecumenical Perspectives on the Breaking of Bread,” *One in Christ*, 40, 4 (2005), 75-76.

⁶⁹ Howell, “The Communion Rite,” 240.

⁷⁰ See above, notes 57 and 62.

⁷¹ Craig, *Fractio Panis*, 181.

⁷² Howell, “The Communion Rite,” 239.

⁷³ Florence, *Definitio Sanctae Oecumenicae Synodi Florentinae*, 6 July 1439, in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, ed. Norman Tanner (London: Sheed & Ward, and Georgetown: Georgetown Univ. Press, 1990), 1:527; Tanner’s translation.

⁷⁴ Georgij Avvakumov, *Die Entstehung des Unionsgedankens: Die lateinische Theologie des Hochmittelalters in der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Ritus der Ostkirche* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2002), 87-159.

The post-medieval centuries have seen repeated studies of the nature and history of the difference in the form of the Eucharistic bread, within the West itself as well as between East and West, as described long ago in dissertations by the great Jesuit scholar Jacques Sirmond (1559 – 1651), and the monumental Maurist scholar Jean Mabillon 1632 –1707).⁷⁵ It nowadays befits all Christians to do their best to leave polemics behind. The quality both of church life and of theological study and writing tends to suffer if energies are diverted into polemics. Nowadays, one important idea might be to set the question of what type of bread is used at the liturgy in the context of the ecumenical movement, treating earlier attitudes with respect, building on them towards a new respect for different traditions and attaining a previously unknown level of symbolic richness. Perhaps the time has come to see the use at the Eucharist of leavened and of unleavened bread in terms of complementarity rather than opposition, concentrating on the one gift of Christ himself, of the body and blood which are the food and drink of his risen life, at every celebration of the Eucharist. For Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast.

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⁷⁵ Jacques Sirmond, *Disquisitio de Azymo* (Paris: Cramoisy, 1651); Jean Mabillon, *Dissertatio de Pane Eucharistico, Azymo ac Fermentato* (Paris: Billaine, 1674); Avvakumov, 31; Craig, 191-192.

A Historiographical Reading of the Pontificate of Benedict XV (1914-1922) Following the Opening of the Vatican Archives

In the quarter century following Spoleto, no substantial developments had been made until the documentation relative to Benedict XV at the Vatican Archives was made available in 1985. Following the enthusiasm that normally accompanies such openings, it remains to be ascertained what use historians have truly made of the now available material. As will be shown the historiographical analysis is now characterized not by the quantity, but rather by the quality of the studies produced. There is a clear continuity with the themes that have already captured the attention of historians in this field. Interest continues to be determined by the nationalistic concerns, especially as regards the diplomatic relationship between the Holy See and the states during the war, and with the newly formed states that now arise from its ashes. Given their specific nature, most studies are published as part of collective works. Yet attempts at a thorough biography of the Benedict XV is made by John F. Pollard, *The Unknown Pope. Benedict XV (1914-1922) and the Pursuit of Peace*, which remains until now one of the best introductions to this pontificate.¹

* Nicholas Joseph Doublet obtained a Licentiate in Sacred Theology from the University of Malta, and a Doctorate in Church History at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome with a study on the Congregation of Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs during the pontificate of Benedict XV (1914-1922). He also holds a *Diploma in Archivistica* from the Vatican School. He lectures in Palaeography and Diplomatics in the Department of Library information and Archive Sciences, and has also been invited to lecture on Church History at the Faculty of Theology, at the University of Malta.

¹ John F. Pollard, *The Unknown Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922) and the Pursuit of Peace* (London-New York: Geoffrey Chapman, 1999). John Francis Pollard (1944-) is a British

A revisiting of the themes already set out in Spoleto is undertaken in the volume edited by Giorgio Rumi, *Benedetto e la Pace - 1918*. This volume presents a remarkable re-evaluation of Benedict XV's efforts during the war and shows how much the study of a pontificate stands to gain even from nationalistic viewpoints. In his introduction, Rumi succinctly but clearly, delineates the coordinates of this pontificate placed as it were at the passing of a world order and the dawning of the contemporary age, which sees the Catholic Church established as a key player "non superata, non retriua, non importuna, ma viva, ma benefica, ma amica, madre e maestra."² In this light this pontificate truly set the agenda that was to determine the new face of the papacy on the world stage.

Alberto Monticone in *Benedetto XV e la Germania* sets out with great clarity, the main elements that determined a certain privileged German presence and influence in the Roman curia at the beginning of the war. The diplomatic break with France for a decade, and the relationship between the Italian modernist culture and its French counterpart, assured a certain preference for the German cultural, theological and spiritual tradition among the members of the Roman curia. Such a position was further advanced through the presence of eminent German Jesuit theologians, as well as the presence of Germans in significant roles within the curia itself. Among these, Gerlach³ clearly stands out for the confidence he enjoyed both with the pope and the German emperor. Having set clearly this premise of German influence within the Curia, the author uses the

historian, a fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, a fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and Emeritus Professor of Modern European History at Anglia Polytechnic University. He has published particularly on fascist movements, political and social Catholicism and the history of the papacy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

² Giorgio Rumi, "Introduzione," in *Benedetto XV e la pace - 1918*, ed. Giorgio Rumi (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1990), 8. Giorgio Rumi (1938-2006) was an Italian liberal catholic historian, and professor of contemporary history at the University of Milan. Of a lay mentality, and a friend of Montini, he rendered great service to the Holy See, and can be justly considered an authority as to study of the role played by the papacy in international relations, especially that carved out by Benedict XV.

³ Mgr. Rudolf Gerlach, a papal secret chamberlain and as such one of Benedict XV's closest personal assistants. In 1917, following the blowing up of two Italian battleships, he was accused by the Italian authorities of being "the leading light in an Italian espionage ring, with the role of financier and link to German and Austrian intelligence." Evidence against him remains controversial. Benedict XV remained unshakeably in favour of Gerlach's innocence, much to the consternation of cardinals De Lai and Gasparri. The case, known as the "the Gerlach affair," placed great stress on the relations between Italy and the Holy See and could have caused substantial damage to the credibility of the Holy See's impartiality. He was made to leave Italy before his trial began. See Pollard, *The Unknown Pope Benedict XV*, 103-107.

available documentation to trace out the development of the relations between the Holy See and German relations during the war. Contrary to the illusory hopes that some authors have imputed to Benedict XV's efforts with Germany, the author shows that these efforts were built on a clear understanding on the Roman part that Germany held the key to the resolution of this conflict, the so-called "via tedesca." For this reason the pope's efforts were directed to achieve a clarification by Germany about its reasons for the war, and towards a "diplomazia dell'assistenza," necessarily channelled towards Germany, for it held the greatest number of prisoners, camps and occupied territories.⁴ The influence of certain key players, among which Bülow,⁵ Erzberger,⁶ Bethmann-Hollweg⁷ and Pacelli, emerges as the relationship oscillates, from one of proximity (as the Holy See's use of German mediation between Austria and Italy so as to keep the latter out of the war) to the distancing generated by the lack of response, this time on the Holy See's part to a rarely quoted peace note, prepared by the Central Powers in December 1916. The author claims that the papal *Peace Note* of August 1917, "ha indubiamente una nascita tedesca, nel senso che è collegata a questo esperire - da parte della Santa Sede - la possibilità di intermediazione presso la Germania"⁸ that this note proves that the Holy See's great hope in the availability of the German government but the diffidence of the new German chancellor, Michaelis, and German knowledge of Article 15 of the London Treaty, stood in the way of any mediatory role on the Holy See's part.

Giorgio Rumi, through the publication of twenty letters exchanged between Benedict XV and the last Habsburg emperor, Charles I, seeks to clarify the relationship between these two men, and their respective responsibilities. The relationship is clearly marked by mutual devotion, but contrary to the charge

⁴ Alberto Monticone, "Benedetto XV e la Germania," in *Benedetto XV e la pace - 1918*, 17. Alberto Monticone (1931-) is an Italian historian and senator. He was professor of modern history at the *Università di Roma* from 1972-1992 and also served as president of the Italian Catholic Action from 1980-1986.

⁵ Bernhard Heinrich Karl Martin von Bülow (1849–1929) served as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to Kaiser Wilhelm II, as well as Chancellor of the German Empire from 1900 to 1909.

⁶ Matthias Erzberger (1875–1921), a prominent member of the German Catholic Centre Party, was a journalist and politician, and served as Reich Minister of Finance from 1919 to 1920. Although initially in favour of the war, by 1917 he had changed his position, and rose in the Reichstag to urge the government to conclude a negotiated end to the war. He was the one who signed the armistice between Germany and the Allies on 11 November 1918.

⁷ Theobald Theodor Friedrich Alfred von Bethmann-Hollweg (1856–1921) served as Chancellor of the German Empire from 1909 to 1917.

⁸ A. Monticone, "Benedetto XV e la Germania," 14.

of filo-Austrian tendencies on Benedict XV's part, the letters show that his proximity to the said monarchy stemmed from a true interest in the service of peace steering away from any legitimistic tendencies. Although Charles I, notwithstanding his good intentions, was clearly limited as to his sphere of action, Benedict XV perseveres in his intent for the settlement of a peace with Italy. Clearly preoccupied that the revolutionaries would be those who would decide the fate of the war, he attempts to carve out a role for the Austrian monarch as "pacificatore dell'umanità,"⁹ a role the latter was unable to fulfil. This role was taken up by the protestant and democratic Woodrow Wilson, and this marked the end of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.¹⁰

Enrico Serra's *La Nota del Primo Agosto 1917 e il Governo Italiano: Qualche osservazione*, returns to the Allied lack of response to the Papal Note, a position spearheaded by Sonnino. The author also considers the reactions to the note in public opinion. By way of conclusion, a number of questions are put forward: as to whether the note was truly "inopportune" as the American Secretary of State Lansing had said, a claim falsified by the tragic military events that followed; as to whether the Holy See had prepared the note in a diplomatically correct way (in this regard too much trust may have been placed in Vienna and Berlin's readiness for concessions); and about the extent of the Holy See's knowledge of Article 15 of the London Treaty. In agreement with Martin, Serra concludes that the note was born out of the need to make the Catholic voice for peace heard, when socialist movements were clearly taking up such a stand. Going beyond the stupor created by the phrase "inutile strage," the lasting legacy of the note is to be found in the proposed principles defining "a new doctrine" of international relations.¹¹

⁹ Giorgio Rumi, "Corrispondenza fra Benedetto e Carlo I d'Asburgo," in *Benedetto XV e la pace - 1918*, 25: As cited by the author: Documento 14: Lettera di Benedetto XV a Carlo I d'Asburgo (S.R.R.SS., AA.EE.SS, Stati Ecclesiastici, 216, vol. XII): "Il Signore, avendo finalmente misericordia della povera umanità, benedica il Suo proposito e faccia sì che la pace ritorni per l'opera della legittima Autorità e non già per l'imposizione degli elementi sovversivi, che riserverebbero ai popoli altre e forse più gravi sciagure [...] La Maestà Vostra, ringraziando il Signore, può dire con tutta verità che esce da questa guerra salvatore della Monarchia; se a questo titolo volesse aggiungere l'altro, non men bello, di pacificatore dell'umanità, avrebbe posto il colmo alla sua Gloria."

¹⁰ See G. Rumi, "Corrispondenza fra Benedetto e Carlo I d'Asburgo," 19-47: A selection of letters had already been published by Friedrich Engel-Janosi, *Die politische Korrespondenz der Päpste mit den Österreichischen Kaisern 1804-1918* (Wien-München, 1964), 379f.

¹¹ See Enrico Serra, "La Nota del Primo Agosto 1917 e il Governo Italiano: Qualche osservazione," in *Benedetto XV e la pace - 1918*, 49-63 for more information regarding the complex relationship between Italy and the rest of the Allies during the war. Enrico Serra was professor of the history of international relations at the University of Bologna; See also Luca

Vittorio De Marco, in *L'intervento della Santa Sede a Versailles in favore delle missioni tedesche*, sheds important light on Cerretti's mission during the Paris Peace conference. The strength of a dynamic and realistic Vatican diplomacy¹² fully emerges, as the Holy See sought to protect the missionaries themselves and their work, while safeguarding their Catholic property for continual Catholic use. On the other hand, in the interest of true peace, the Holy See also tried to reduce further humiliation for Germany. Some concessions were gained in the Chinese case, already before the actual Peace Conference, in the form of exemptions in favour of German missionaries, and later, against all odds,¹³ through Cerretti's mission, the modification requested by the Holy See to Article 438 of the peace treaty, protecting Catholic interests as regards missionary property.

Andrea Riccardi, famous for his work on inter-religious dialogue, in *Benedetto XV e la crisi della convivenza multireligiosa nell'Impero Ottomano*, returns to a theme introduced by Tamborra in Spoleto, exploring whether it is indeed possible to speak of a specific policy towards the Eastern Churches in Benedict XV. Opening up a new theme in the historiographical tradition being reviewed, Riccardi revisits the tragedy of the Armenian genocide¹⁴ of 1915-1916 in the ailing Ottoman

Riccardi, *Alleati non amici. Le relazioni politiche tra l'Italia e l'Intesa durante la prima guerra mondiale* (Brescia: Editrice Morcelliana, 1992), specifically 536-537; as regards the negative reaction to the Peace note, Luca Riccardi notes, given that Sonnino "temeva che gli anglo-francesi potessero, in qualche modo, aderire alle proposte di Benedetto XV, danneggiando così gli interessi e le aspirazioni dell'Italia. In questa trovò un'immediata rispondera dal governo di Parigi [...] Se quest'ultima avesse accettato la logica del passo papale, avrebbe dovuto inevitabilmente rinunciare alle proprie pretese sull'Alsazia, da sempre considerata parte integrante della Repubblica. All'interno del complesso dei rapporti politici dell'Intesa, quindi, il tentativo di Benedetto XV ebbe una risonanza limitata, poiché si scontrava con le aspirazioni "primogenie" sia della Francia che dell'Italia"; Luca Riccardi lectures at the *Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio meridionale*.

¹² See Vittorio De Marco, "L'intervento della Santa Sede a Versailles in favore delle missioni tedesche," in *Benedetto XV e la pace - 1918*, 66. Vittorio De Marco (1957-) is a professor of Contemporary history at the *Università del Salento*.

¹³ "L'alto profilo della diplomazia vaticana, espresso in quel periodo da prelati che possedevano un grande acume politico, si scontrava con una diplomazia europea arroccata su posizioni di un geloso particolarismo nazionale, quasi del tutto priva in quel momento della capacità di vedere lucidamente ben oltre l'oscura selva della guerra e dei suoi disastri immediati." *Ibid.*, 77.

¹⁴ For an authoritative study of the Armenian genocide, from the Hamidian massacres of 1894 to the consideration of the Armenian question by the League of Nations in 1925: See Georges-Henri Ruyssen ed. *La Questione Armena*, 7v (Roma: Edizioni "Orientalia Christiana," 2013-2015). Ruyssen (1967-), a Belgian Jesuit, lectures at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. Through his publication of the documents on this issue, conserved at the ASV, at the Archive of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches (A.C.O.), and at the AA.EE.SS, the author allows

Empire, and studies the manner Benedict XV reacts to this Christian “holocaust.” The author attests to Benedict XV’s vivid interest to the fate of Christian minorities in the region, as shown by the foundation of the Congregation for the Oriental Church in 1917. It is clear that the Holy See sought to strengthen these Eastern Churches and carry out a humanitarian mission in their favour through a direct dialogue with the authorities involved or through allies, but with the general desire of avoiding the protectorates altogether. Riccardi laments that so little has been done in studying Benedict XV’s action in this regard, an action to which Pius XII returns to when faced with the Jewish holocaust in the Second World War. Whereas so many have sought to condemn Pius XII, Benedict XV’s politico-diplomatic action to avoid the Armenian tragedy has remained shrouded in silence firstly because of a historiography of active denial on the Turkish side and secondly due to the Vatican’s discretion in the archival records it renders available, not least out of concern for a residual Catholic presence in the region.¹⁵ He enters into the details of these secret diplomatic negotiations and the public denunciations of the Armenian tragedy advanced by Benedict XV and Gasparri.

In *Santa Sede e Stati Uniti negli anni della Grande Guerra*, Luigi Bruti Liberati explains Wilson’s unwillingness to cooperate with Benedict XV for the achievement of peace, as he saw in the pope a dangerous competitor against his aim of reserving for the United States the role of sole mediator in the European conflict, thus assuring a dominant role for the United States in international affairs.¹⁶ The author seeks to show that contrary to those who assume a Benedict XV’s predominantly conservative attitude towards the United States, the pope,

a vivid reading of the events through the eyes of Vatican diplomacy and its informants, as well as doing justice to the concrete efforts by the Holy See in favour of the Armenians. Of particular importance to our study are the v.4-6 which publish the documentation held at the ASV and the AA.EE.SS. pertaining to the period 1908-1925.

¹⁵ See Andrea Riccardi, “Benedetto XV e la crisi della convivenza multireligiosa nell’Impero Ottomano,” in *Benedetto XV e la pace - 1918*, 89-95. Andrea Riccardi (1950-) is a historian and Italian politician. He is notably known for founding in 1968 the *Comunità di Sant’Egidio*.

¹⁶ See Luigi Bruti Liberati, “Santa Sede e Stati Uniti negli anni della Grande Guerra,” in *Benedetto XV e la pace - 1918*, 131-132. According to Bruti Liberati, Wilson’s approach to the European war; 131: “fosse perennemente in bilico tra idealismo e ‘Realpolitik’, tra i toni messianici e la realistica considerazione delle conseguenze di un’eventuale egemonia tedesca sull’Europa.” Bruti Liberati is contesting the diverse interpretation given by Dragon Živojinovic, *The United States and the Vatican policies* (Boulder, 1978), 23-24. The latter, polemical as regards the Holy See, proposed that the two approaches to the problem of mediation were diametrically opposed, the United States wanting to preserve its friendship with Great Britain, while the Vatican held that the Central Powers were not responsible for the outbreak of war. Luigi Bruti Liberati is ordinary professor of contemporary history at the University of Milan.

in reality, was truly convinced that only Wilson had the power to bring the war to an end showing he fully understood the centrality of the United States in the new world order. Taking into account the available documentation, the author approaches the problem in a novel manner to that defined by traditional Anglo-Saxon historiography, that had tried to interpret Benedict XV's and Wilson's relationship in terms of a clash between the old and new world, the old and new style of diplomacy. This conventional interpretation sought to clearly contrast a conservative pope to the democratic Wilson, whereas the documentation cited by Bruti Liberati reveals a change of attitude over time in Wilson: from a willingness to work together with the Pope to achieve peace to an attitude of distrust towards Benedict XV. The pontiff had to suffer the accusation of favouring the Central Powers for the steps taken to keep the United States from entering into the war with Germany. The author concludes that Benedict XV suffered not only being misinterpreted by his own fold, as indeed his master Rampolla had been before him (given the thirst for American world dominance), but also the Catholic bishops' fear of being considered unpatriotic.¹⁷

Roberto Morozzo della Rocca, in *Santa Sede e Russia Rivoluzionaria*, vividly describes the difficult situation in which Christians found themselves in Russia due to the total political chaos following the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II on 15 March 1917. The author explains how once again the realism of Benedict XV stands out, in contrast to a certain enthusiasm, widespread among Catholics at the time, for the conversion of Russia. The Holy See was primarily interested in reorganizing the Catholic communities spread all over the Russian territories, now further divided by the nationalistic sentiments that quickly took over and not in chimeras of a messianic or apologetic tone.¹⁸

Another issue historiography battles with is that of clarifying the prevailing nationalistic influences within the Roman Curia at the time, and their resulting effect, or lack thereof in determining policy and action. Massimo De Leonardis reflects on Great Britain's reasons for re-establishing a temporary mission at the Vatican in November 1914 to counterbalance the perceived Austrian and German preponderant influence in the Roman Curia, that necessarily placed the Allies at a disadvantage. Through a careful study of the documentation available, De Leonardis clarifies what British diplomacy understood to be the twofold aim of the Holy See's interest in the war: that of assuring its presence in the eventual Peace Conference (and this independently from the resolution of the Roman Question),

¹⁷ See *ibid.*, 146-147.

¹⁸ See Roberto Morozzo della Rocca, "Santa Sede e Russia rivoluzionaria," in *Benedetto XV e la pace - 1918*, 151-169.

and salvaging the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He argues against the filo-Germanic depiction of Benedict XV, by showing that even prominent members of the British mission, such as John Duncan Gregory,¹⁹ were in no doubt that:

Benedetto XV era personalmente francofilo ma proprio per questo era meno libero di condannare certi comportamenti della Germania; inoltre era stato eletto un nuovo papa, non era stato eletto un 'nuovo Vaticano,' la Curia era largamente favorevole agli Imperi Centrali ed il pontefice non poteva modificarne subito l'orientamento.²⁰

De Leonardis provides various such British and American testimonies, to show how much these were convinced that the pope was in fact siding with the Allies. Similar was the position assumed by the Catholic media towards the papal *Peace Note*. The author shows how nationalism prompted the lack of enthusiasm shown by English Catholics, always afraid of being considered unpatriotic, towards the papal initiative.²¹ More enthusiastic was the protest shown by Catholic members of the House of Commons, following the publication of a draft of the infamous London Treaty and its Article 15, in demanding an explanation for the exclusion of the Holy See, which caused Lord Cecil himself to seek a less offensive interpretation of that clause.²² As to the diplomatic mission

¹⁹ See Massimo De Leonardis, "Le Relazioni Anglo-Vaticane durante la Prima Guerra Mondiale: l'imparzialità di Benedetto XV e la sua Nota dell'Agosto 1917," in *Benedetto XV e la pace - 1918*, 185. John Duncan Gregory (1878-1951) was a British diplomat, and served at the British mission to the Holy See between 1915 and 1920.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 174: The author is here quoting from Gregory Drummond (private secretary to Grey, Foreign Secretary), 26 June 1915, which included the Memorandum "The Pope and the War," Fo 800/67, ff. 267-289. See De Leonardis, "Le Relazioni Anglo-Vaticane durante la Prima Guerra Mondiale," 200, ft. 12: "Gregory descriveva il papa come 'del tutto franco e sincero,' 'tremendo lavoratore e di forte carattere,' 'un geniale vivace piccoletto;' il cardinale Gasparri era 'estremamente ben intenzionato e del tutto caloroso';" Massimo De Leonardis is a professor of the history of relations and international institutions at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan.

²¹ See *ibid.*, 183-184. On p.185 he quotes from the commentary to the *Peace Note* in *The Tablet* (18 August 1917), translated "Fondamentalmente gli obiettivi di guerra degli alleati sono esattamente quelli che Papa Benedetto XV ha più vicini al suo cuore - sosteneva ancora il settimanale - [...] certamente non potrebbe esservi fondamento per il suggerimento che le proposte tradiscono un pregiudizio filo-tedesco o filo-austriaco." John Duncan Gregory changed his previous positive evaluation of Benedict XV, over the papal *Peace Note*, in a *Memorandum* described him as provincial and absolutely mediocre, even if not filo-Germanic, he was as to his sympathies filo-Italian and for the rest filo-French. He was nevertheless in favour of maintaining the British mission to the Holy See, for the war had shown that the pope was a first that could not be ignored.

²² See *ibid.*, 187-189.

to the Holy See, the author illustrates the debate for and against it, showing how notwithstanding the traditional anti-Catholic sentiment of the British establishment, it was decided that it should be kept, for the war had proved that, theological differences aside, the pope was probably the highest moral authority in existence, and as such could not be ignored, even if they could in no way accept him as a mediator.²³

Continuing on nationalistic concerns, Stanislaw Sierpowski's *Benedetto XV e la Questione Polacca negli anni della Grande Guerra* explores the papal *Peace Note's* influence for the internationalization of the Polish question. In so doing he explores the mixed reactions to its reception: those who applauded Benedict XV for the notion of justice he proposed, whereas others read in the papal initiative an understanding of peace based on the philosophy of the *status quo ante bellum*, the desire to limit Polish aspirations for a resurrected Poland only to what had been the "Polish kingdom" comprising only the Russian territories and leaving the Austro-Hungarian Empire intact. The author traces a certain development in Benedict XV's attitude towards an independent Poland, and argues that for the Holy See's interest in safeguarding the religious interests came before the political aspects that resulting from the rise of the new states.²⁴

Fundamental as to an understanding the relationship between the Holy See and Russia in the tumultuous events following the 1917 revolution, is the work of Roberto Morozzo della Rocca, *Le Nazioni non muoiono. Russia rivoluzionaria, Polonia indipendente e Santa Sede* in which he expands on a theme he had already explored. Taking his lead from this famous phrase of Benedict XV, contextualizing it, he probably give its proper interpretation, and through it provides the key to understanding what is truly at stake in this relationship. According to him both Benedict XV and Lenin shared a common concern: the problem of a surging nationalism and the nationalistic movements that were agitating Eastern Europe following the dissolution of the Tsarist Empire. Granted that for both this concern was due to completely different reasons and concerns, he insists that in reality the often misinterpreted phrase of Benedict XV:

Non era un complimento ai patrioti militanti [...] Benedetto XV chiedeva di tener conto delle aspirazioni nazionali dei diversi popoli per evitare lutti e guerre, non perché riconosceva giusta e santa la politica della nazionalità. Che anzi per lui e per la teologia cattolica, la convivenza di popoli differenti in un medesimo

²³ See *ibid.*, 193-198

²⁴ See Stanislaw Sierpowski, "Benedetto XV e la questione Polacca negli anni della Grande Guerra," in *Benedetto XV e la pace - 1918*, 213-230; Stanislaw Sierpowski (1942-) is a professor at the University of Poznan.

Stato era fattore di bene comune e di civiltà, mentre i particolarismi nazionali erano considerati elementi di divisione di quella società umana in cui tutti erano chiamati a riconoscersi fratelli.²⁵

Through an attentive reading of the sources Della Rocca clarifies many a complex situation, highlighting Benedict XV's and his Curia's understanding and response to an evolving situation, while avoiding the common pitfalls of an anachronistic or ideological reading of the events, one born of imposing on these early years problems that were only to come to the fore later, namely under Stalinism. For the Roman Curia, Bolshevism was nothing more than the latest passing political fancy. Of a traditional nature, the Roman Curia interpreted all revolutions in the light of a common ancestor, this being the French revolution; something that indeed brought about great change, but in itself was quickly extinguished. In truth, they were amazed how such an anarchic form of government inspired by revolution, could persist. The Holy See and Bolshevism clearly saw each other as being substantially unnatural; yet out of a certain sense of realism, at first, still tried to set aside their ideological concerns, so as not to immediately create an enemy out of each other.

As previously discussed, the primary concern of Benedict XV and his Curia, was not the the conversion of Russia, but rather the more concrete aims of, firstly assuring for Catholicism the religious freedom it was denied under Tzarism and secondly organizing the Catholic Church to be able to survive, once the Old Russian spirit returned.²⁶ Concerns for the *reconquista* of Orthodox Russia to the Roman See only emerged later. In adopting this policy, Benedict XV and his Curia were clearly driven by Uniatism. Even here a judgmental understanding of history must be avoided. Other than the study of the persecution of both Orthodox and Catholic faithful at the hands of the Bolshevists, the author also delves in the study of a related problem, the 1919-20 Polish-Russian conflict. The Holy See, understood that the conflict would have serious repercussions for the survival of the Russian Catholic Church: in Russia Catholic meant Polish, and the Pole was the enemy.²⁷

²⁵ Roberto Morozzo della Rocca, *Le Nazioni non muoiono: Russia rivoluzionaria, Polonia indipendente e Santa Sede* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992), 8. See also Roberto Morozzo della Rocca, "Benedetto XV e l'Oriente Cristiano," *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée* 116/1 (2004): 281-288.

²⁶ See Della Rocca, *Le Nazioni non muoiono*, 13.

²⁷ "In un'Europa orientale dove nazione e religione sono visceralmente connaturale, la Polonia cattolica e la Russia ortodossa hanno fatto dell'opposizione radicale tra due nazioni anche un'opposizione tra due fedi che, pure, vantano una comune origine." *Ibid.*, 15:

The volume also explores another problematic side of nationalism. Although Catholicism was present in Russia, no Russian Catholicism in effect existed, for the Catholics spread within the Russian diaspora were Poles, Ukrainians, Lithuanians etc. Firstly, the nationalistic sentiments set ablaze by the revolution, placed these Poles, Ukrainians, Lithuanians against each other, as their respective National Churches were instrumental in promoting their individual patriotic sense. A second level to this problem was tied to the issue of rites. For the Poles, Latinization equalled Polonization, and thus a conversion to Catholicism necessarily meant a conversion to the Polish identity, which essentially meant a conversion from Russian barbarity to Latin civilization. Consequently, they were fully in agreement with the Tzarist policy against Uniatism. Two contrasting models emerge: that favouring Latinization promoted by the Poles as part of their expansionistic desires, and that favouring Uniatism, promoted by the Ukrainian Greek-Catholics who had survived in Galizia,²⁸ led by outstanding metropolitan Szeptycky. Evidently, through his meticulous research in the Vatican Archives, and the lucidity in interpreting the events narrated, Morozzo della Rocca sheds light on the development of a very complex situation.

In contrast, Stewart A. Stalin's *The Emergence of a New Vatican Diplomacy during the Great War and its aftermath* seems a rather shallow attempt to cover more than a decade, 1914-1929, of intense diplomatic activity in a few pages. He describes the means by which the Holy See who "by the First World War appeared to many observers as if the Papacy for the Christian world, like the Caliphate for the Muslim world, was on the way out"²⁹ emerged from its position of isolation, thanks to the untiring efforts of Gasparri who at the service of two pontiffs, tirelessly worked for the achievement of a lasting peace, notwithstanding France's unwillingness to come to a just solution to German's reparation issue. The author seeks to show how Benedict XV and Gasparri "in a blend of moral vision and political realism"³⁰ worked to relieve human suffering, while assuring

²⁸ Regarding the persecution suffered by the Ukrainian Greek-Catholics in Galizia under the Tzarist occupation of this territory: See S.RR.SS., AA.EE.SS., Austria-Ungheria, 1914-15, Pos. 1051, fasc. 447, ff. 2r.-59v.: especially ff. 2r.-25r.: "La persecuzione religiosa in Galizia. Documentata dalla pubblicazione dei giornali russi, 10 novembre 1914."

²⁹ Stewart A. Stehlin, "The Emergence of a New Vatican Diplomacy During the Great War and its Aftermath, 1914-1929," in *Papal Diplomacy in the Modern Age*, ed. Peter C. Kent and John F. Pollard (Westport/CT: Praeger, 1994), 75. Stewart A. Stehlin is a professor emeritus of history at Yale University.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 84. Characteristics with which the author describes the pontiffs involved, but could easily be extended to Gasparri.

the Church's position in the new Europe, coupled with the effort to prevent the emergence of one dominant power.

Reaping the fruits of an attentive reading of the sources available, the monograph of Jan de Volder, *Benoît XV et la Belgique durant la Grande Guerre*,³¹ explored an aspect of this pontificate until then largely ignored. Such is surprising considering that the occupation of Belgium constituted the very heart of the conflict. In fact, it was greatly used by Allied propaganda to justify their war with Germany. De Volder's study exemplifies how much the Holy See stands to gain from the interest that the various national historical institutes present in Rome continue to show by investing in the study of its archives. It, not only promotes a nationalistic interest, but also reveals the complex situation that an international organization, in this case the Holy See, found itself in when confronted by a World War, in which her members were to be found on both sides of the conflict. The author shows that the 'Belgian question' constituted a major dilemma for the Holy See, as it struggled to maintain both its impartiality and yet find the way to respond through a moral condemnation of the unjust act perpetuated by Germany, a condemnation desired by a large part of the international public opinion. The attentive study of the sources available, such as those of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs sessions devoted to the study of the issues relating to Belgium, published in appendix by the author, allow him to explore another aspect of this conflict: the struggle between the demands of a nation episcopate spearheaded by Cardinal Mercier that fully equated the patriotic cause with that of religion, and those of the Holy See, an international organization that had to preserve its neutrality.

The documentation studied shows how much the Holy See did for the Belgian cause, which it raised above simply patriotic concerns, by inserting it within the wider plan of obtaining a lasting peace for the whole of Europe. It is in this wider spectrum that the Holy See's efforts for a separate German-Belgian peace must be interpreted, as well as in its attention to counsel moderation on the part of the Belgian bishops and their action in favour of the patriotic cause. This study also serves to clarify the figure of Mercier, explain the Holy See's attitude towards him and how much the Holy See was indeed conscious of the stature he enjoyed on the international plane. De Volder's study shows the complex situation the Holy See found itself in, the prudence it had to incarnate, as it sought to promote a just peace and undertake its humanitarian efforts, while the respective sides

³¹ See Jan De Volder ed. *Benoît XV et la Belgique durant le Grande Guerre* (Bruxelles-Rome, Institut Historique Belge de Rome, 1996). Jan De Volder (1967-) is a Belgian journalist and historian.

in conflict sought to bring the very centre of Catholicism, universal by its very nature, to their side. The seriousness with which the Holy See considers local issues, in this case the Flemish question, taking into account all the risks and possibilities it involved for the Church, shows as Riccardi concludes, that:

On voit comment la perspective supranationale de l'Église ne porte pas à sous-estimer un problème national aussi fondateur de la réalité belge [...] Identité et droit des nations doivent se concilier avec des exigences de caractère supérieur. Mais les nations ne meurent pas [...] C'est précisément dans cette perspective que le cas de la Belgique revêt une grande valeur pour le Vatican de Benoît XV. Ce petit pays catholique, dans lequel vivent deux "nations" différentes, a une valeur symbolique et stratégique de grand relief.³²

Of singular importance has been the publication of Baron Carlo Monti's diary. Monti, a long-time personal friend of Giacomo della Chiesa, served during the latter's pontificate, as the *incaricato d'affari* of the Italian government to the Holy See., His diary opens up an unprecedented window into the understanding of the day to day unfolding of the Holy See's political and diplomatic mission in general, and on the activity and thoughts of the Pope and his Secretary of State in particular. Through this work historiography is strengthened by its preference for the diplomatic realm. Antonio Scottà's introduction to *La Conciliazione Ufficiosa*, also traces out a revealing portrait of Benedict XV³³ and Gasparri,³⁴ based on the reflections of Monti, who in seven years had around 175 audiences with the pope, normally accompanied, before or after, by a meeting with Gasparri. Since a commentary on this diary or memoirs, of singular value,³⁵

³² Andrea Riccardi, "Préface," in *Benoît XV et la Belgique durant le Grande Guerre*, 10-11.

³³ See Antonio Scottà, "Introduzione," in *La Conciliazione Ufficiosa. Diario del barone Carlo Monti "incaricato d'affari" del governo italiano presso la Santa Sede (1914-1922)* (Città del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997), 1:29-57. Antonio Scottà is an Italian priest and historian. Through his research in the Vatican Archives, he has published on various aspects of Benedict XV's pontificate, of particular importance being the publication of this diary of Baron Carlo Monti in 1997.

³⁴ See *ibid.*, 57-62.

³⁵ "Nessun laico ha avuto la possibilità di accesso e di dialogo con Benedetto XV, quanto il barone Monti [...] La conoscenza e l'amicizia del Monti con Benedetto XV sin dagli anni infantili, la consuetudine dei rapporti personali, la familiarità e la confidenza affettuosissima, non priva di franchezza, non hanno l'eguale fra le persone che stanno attorno al papa, la libertà concessa al Monti stesso di muoversi in Vaticano, la possibilità di scambio d'idee, valutazioni, verifiche con il segretario di stato, cardinal Pietro Gasparri, o con il sostituto della segreteria, mgr. Federico Tedeschini danno al documento un alto grado di attendibilità, considerate anche le qualità morali dell'autore." *Ibid.*, 2-3. See also Giovanni Battista Varnier, "Benedetto XV e i problemi della società contemporanea," in *Benedetto XV: Profeta di pace in un mondo in crisi*,

goes beyond the scope of this study, our interest remains limited to what Scottà reveals regarding the relationship between Gasparri and Benedict XV, largely unexplored in previous works. Scottà's comments show how these two men, coming from completely different family background (Benedict descending from one of the noblest families of Italy, in contrast to Gasparri's humble origins), are shown to be unanimous in their views, to the point that "nelle relazioni sulle udienze si trova spesso di fronte a delle ripetizioni."³⁶ However, they were diverse in their style, this being due to differences "sia sul piano del carattere che in quello del tratto diplomatico."³⁷ Compared to the reserved attitude of Benedict XV, Gasparri emerges as spirited, affable and simple, indeed:

"Sua eminenza" – scrive il Monti – "è uomo di grande ingegno, di carattere molto alla mano ed ha una conversazione piacevolissima"; ed altrove sottolinea più di una volta la "conosciuta bonomia, [lo] spirito umoristico, facile alle battute." Ma era del cuore tenerissimo, come attesta il Monti vedendo il Gasparri in lacrime al capezzale del papa morente.³⁸

Once again the theme of war and peace takes precedence and the diary stands witness to the rigour by which the pope and his Secretary of State carried out their work, the minute preparation on every argument, corroborated by ample evidence, that failure in these matters was mostly due to the:

[...] imponderabile e dell'irrazionale [...] le insufficienze politiche dei protagonisti, o la stessa indifferenza ed inerzia, ma anche le passioni o i fantasmi ideologici, sia personali che collettivi.³⁹

Another point of contrast emerges between Gasparri's patriotic spirit and Benedict XV's greater discretion on this matter. United in their constant preoccupation over the suffering of the soldiers at war, "ma anche del prevedibile

ed. Letterio Mauro (Bologna: Minerva, 2008), 328-329: "Il Monti fu amico d'infanzia di Giacomo della Chiesa ma anche direttore generale del Fondo per il Culto del ministero di Grazia e giustizia; respirò l'ansia di quella parte della classe dirigente del Risorgimento desiderosa di giungere alla conciliazione e nel contempo fu il canale delle comunicazioni tra Italia e Vaticano durante il pontificato di Benedetto XV, rendendo marginale il ruolo di altri intermediari." Giovanni Battista Varnier lectures in the History and systems of the relationship between State and Church at the department of political sciences of the *Università degli Studi di Genova*.

³⁶ Scottà, "Introduzione," 58.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid. Quoting *Diario*, 1915, 34; *Diario*, 1916, 65; Gasparri shows a great capability for synthesis, at going straight to the heart of the matter, the tact with which he discusses the political and diplomatic situations with Monti.

³⁹ Scottà, "Introduzione," 59.

deperimento della razza,”⁴⁰ Gasparri does not keep back from expressing his joy for the resistance shown by the Italian army in the “battle of the solstice” in June 1918 and his disillusion at the way the papal peace notes were received. The cardinal is said to have abandoned the ‘neutrality’, he had sought so much to defend, exclaiming: “Nessuno può essere neutralista ormai, nessun italiano che ami il proprio paese può volere la pace a condizioni che sarebbero vergognose e quindi può essere neutralista.”⁴¹

A man for his time, Benedict’s openness to modernity and its liberties transpires through his work, reflected in his readiness to confront the burden of the *non expedit* that still hindered Catholic participation in Italian politics, as Scottà concludes, by the time of his death:

La questione romana, una delle congiunture più aspre della storia d’Italia, che aveva dilacerato per decenni la coscienza dei cattolici non meno che dei laici, si poteva dire sostanzialmente risolta [...] Ai posteriori rimanevano, più che altro, le formalità dell’accordo.⁴²

Returning once again to what by now had become an established *topos*, the insistence on the historiographical obscurity that envelopes this pope, John F. Pollard, an established author in the field, most aptly entitled his well-researched biography, *The Unknown Pope. Benedict XV (1914-1922) and the Pursuit of Peace*. His aim is clearly to present a critical, yet highly accessible, holistic presentation of the life of whom he considers a greatly neglected Pope. For the purpose of our study, it serves to highlight salient aspects, especially the manner in which he illustrates the relationship between Benedict XV and Gasparri, as his closest collaborator.⁴³ The keyword in this work is “peace,” as the pair, Benedict XV

⁴⁰ Ibid., 13.

⁴¹ Ibid., 61: quoting *Diario*, 1917, 99; Gasparri is shown as being liable to such outbursts of passion, defining Sonnino as “uomo nefasto per l’Italia,” ardent, frank and explicit in his language, especially in some letters of protest sent to Monti. On this point, Scottà comments, that according to Monti “il lato debole del cardinale Gasparri [...] era la diplomazia, meglio il tratto diplomatico, giudizio condiviso anche dal papa.” Precisely because of this bluntness often shown by Gasparri, that Monti emphasizes that the political and diplomatic direction assumed by the Holy See during the war are to be credited to the pope in person.

⁴² Scottà, “Introduzione,” 57.

⁴³ This study serves to illustrate this relationship between Benedict XV and Gasparri, as one of friendship and service, and in so doing, the author brings out nuances neglected by others, as he develops this account, based on the wealth of archival material now available, yet written in a flowing style. Access to such a broad spectrum of archival material, from the family archives of the Della Chiesa, to the *Archivio Arcivescovile di Bologna*, and most importantly the Vatican Archives, as well as the *Archivio Generale dello Stato* (Italian), and various diplomatic archives,

and Gasparri, are considered in the context of the world wide theatre in which they operate, as they tirelessly work to achieve peace at every level: peace among nations entangled and embittered in war; peace with a society torn by class struggle and the emergent ideologies; peace within a Church divided by the modernist crisis.⁴⁴ What is said of Benedict, is also largely applied by the author to Gasparri.⁴⁵ Once Gasparri became Secretary of State, Pollard shows how they worked in union of thought and action⁴⁶ in order to revitalize papal diplomacy, inherited in a very sorry state of isolation from Pius X, as “the Holy See assumed a high profile in international affairs, becoming a major diplomatic player in its own right, in a far better and stronger position to defend its interests.”⁴⁷

The war issue could not but take precedence. Pollard’s account lends new depth to understanding the Holy See’s impartiality throughout the conflict, especially in the light of accusations of favouring the Central Powers, a charge advanced both by contemporaries, as well as by later historians, that would continue to haunt Benedict XV. Given the poor diplomatic relations between the Entente Powers and the Vatican, it was not surprising that the Central Powers enjoyed both greater influence, and to a certain extent, greater sympathy within the Vatican. Pollard examines the reasons why both Benedict XV and Gasparri “could not be indifferent to the fate of Austria-Hungary, the last Catholic great power and a bulwark against Russian orthodoxy and Pan-Slavism”⁴⁸ and its possible demise

allow the author to set his protagonists within the wider historical context in which they operate, allowing him to survey the workings of a difficult pontificate from within. This work is further enriched by an exhaustive bibliography pertaining to the subject matter.

⁴⁴ See Pollard, *The Unknown Pope Benedict XV*, xiii-xv.

⁴⁵ See *ibid.*, 144; See also *ibid.*, 17. 25. 27. Their relationship went as far back as 1901, during their collaboration in the Secretariat of State, where Gasparri worked as the Secretary for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs and Giacomo della Chiesa as the Sostituto. It is illuminating to see that both have been referred to as a new Consalvi, and both found resistance from Merry del Val. Pollard comments “While Merry del Val was not the ‘evil genius’ of the Vatican during Pius X’s pontificate, he certainly had a powerful influence upon its policies which did not please either Della Chiesa or Gasparri, his two immediate subordinates,” both of whom were marginalized together in December 1907, separated for their opposition to the anti-modernist crusade. “Equally, like his friend Gasparri, he could not have enjoyed executing policies with which he profoundly disagreed.”

⁴⁶ “On the other hand, it could be argued that in some important respects Benedict XV returned to the policies of Leo XIII, and of his mentor, Rampolla. This is certainly true in regard to the diplomatic policies of Benedict XV and Gasparri.” *Ibid.*, 213.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

would also “leave Germany more powerful than ever.”⁴⁹ Serious is the charge that Gasparri “had little time for Belgian claims of victimization, declaring that the little kingdom should have given way to the German invasion.”⁵⁰ Yet, Pollard shows that Benedict and Gasparri were capable of changing their views in response to the developing circumstances, showing that although their main aim was that of limiting the war and the advancement of “a peace offensive that would culminate with the famous *Peace Note* of August 1917,”⁵¹ the Vatican was in no way a “disinterested observer” as it sought to obtain the desired “‘greater international presence’ for the Holy See,”⁵² that was in effect achieved. Benedict XV’s unwillingness to respond to the insistent calls for condemnation by the opposing sides in war, was also motivated by Gasparri’s concern for the “supreme interest of the Church.”⁵³

According to Pollard, even the opposition to Italy’s entry into the war was not disinterested for this further complicated the Vatican’s diplomatic position as it could no longer defend its neutrality by claiming it was “the guest of another neutral power.”⁵⁴ Pollard concludes that although Benedict XV’s and Gasparri’s peace efforts had failed, eventually they did bear fruit in carving for the contemporary papacy “a new peace-making role,”⁵⁵ a role that gained such moral prestige for the Holy See, that made future negotiations with the new realities emerging from the war possible, and that opened up a new era for a transformed instrument – the concordat. The connection between the new *Code of canon law* and the new style of concordats is hinted at by Pollard who speaks of the German case as the “first major guinea pig” through which Gasparri and his disciple Pacelli “began their campaign to use concordats, that is treaties between the Holy See and other powers, as a means of effectively enforcing the writ of canon law inside states.”⁵⁶ In this expression the author successfully encapsulates the aim of this new politics of concordats.

Although, Benedict XV and Gasparri emerge as preferring the multi-ethnic dynastic state that was the Habsburg Empire, and were uneasy, to say the least,

⁴⁹ Ibid., 144.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 89.

⁵¹ Ibid., 117.

⁵² Ibid., 91: Pollard is here quoting Italo Garzia, *La questione Romana durante la I guerra mondiale* (Naples, 1981), 68. Italo Garzia lectures on the history of Vatican diplomacy and international relations at the *Università degli Studi di Bari*.

⁵³ Pollard, *The Unknown Pope Benedict XV*, 94.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 95.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 136.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 194.

with the emergent nationalism, the author argues that once faced with the application of Wilson's principle of 'National Self-determination', they were ready to adapt their views out of pragmatic considerations.⁵⁷ Examining the post-war scenario through Benedict XV's encyclical *De Pacis*, Pollard shows how both the Pope and his Secretary of State were critical of the policies followed by the Allied powers after the First World War: from the League of Nations; their failure to settle the problems in Russia, ultimately leading to a state of civil war and the victory of Bolshevism; the way they treated the issues of the extinguished Ottoman Empire. Benedict XV and Gasparri were also drawn into the issue of Palestine. Their opposition to Zionist claims were motivated by their concerns for the fate of the Christian communities in that region. Feeling freer to express his views than the Pope, Gasparri's position on the issue was clearer,⁵⁸ to the great disappointment of many Jews world-wide.

Given the strengthening of Britain as a world super-power after the Versailles treaty, Pollard reports how the Holy See was especially concerned in maintaining good relations with Britain out of concern for the fate of Catholics in its vast empire. Although not supportive of the Irish nationalistic cause, this being in line also with their uneasiness with national self-determination *per se*, both Benedict XV and Gasparri were clearly concerned for the plight of Irish Catholics. A delicate diplomatic balance had to be maintained between the concerns of the British crown and refraining from condemning the Irish nationalistic movement.⁵⁹

Pollard claims that Benedict XV and Gasparri's success in diplomacy is not only to be judged by the number of countries diplomatic relations had been established with, but by the fact that the Holy See had truly become a new force in international affairs. Merry del Val's criticism that the "prevalence of too much politics, worldly diplomacy and intrigue are hardly in keeping with the lofty ideals of our mission, nor profitable to the best interests of God and his Church," is both unjust and false, for it cannot be denied that Benedict XV's and Gasparri's

⁵⁷ See *ibid.*, 145. Pollard shows that their fear was motivated by the rise of Bolshevism "that is that the creation of the successor States was not a good thing because they could not be self-sufficient, they would be vulnerable to the Bolshevik menace (a fear that had also prompted worries about too harsh a treatment of Germany), and that they would tend to fight among themselves, which history proved only too painfully to be correct."

⁵⁸ "As Sergio Minerbi has recognized, Benedict XV's policy boiled down to this: the great powers must guarantee the rights to Catholics, although without impairing the rights of Jews and also without giving Jews any privileges." *Ibid.*, 151. See Sergio Minerbi, *The Vatican, the Holy Land and Zionism, 1895-1925* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 149.

⁵⁹ See Pollard, *The Unknown Pope Benedict XV*, 152-155.

motivation lay in seeking the greatest good for the Church, or that they did not “set before the world the Christian principles on the basis of which alone, he believed, a just and lasting peace was possible.”⁶⁰ Pollard also investigates how Gasparri “was not averse to playing off one colonial power against the other,”⁶¹ in order to promote Benedict’s missionary policy through the entanglements of nationalism and colonialism.

Pollard considers the sending of Cerretti as the Holy See’s representative to France as the “crowning triumph”⁶² of Benedict and Gasparri’s diplomacy; a good step towards reversing the damage done by Pius X and Merry del Val. These efforts are read within the “lunga durata,” the real chance of Leo XIII’s policy of *ralliement* to give fruit.

Pollard also dedicates some space in his work to show how concern over the spread of Bolshevism determined a lot of the Holy See’s foreign policy. There was clear anxiety over the Entente’s support for Russia’s ambitious claims on the Bosphorus, precisely out of this fear. So, also Benedict and Gasparri entertained high hopes that the ‘schismatic’ churches of Bulgaria and Romania would return to Rome. All these hopes came to nothing, just as the extravagant hope of Russia’s conversion. Gasparri is said to have seen the fall of Tzarism in the February Revolution of 1917, as “a glimmer of light”⁶³ for the future of Roman Catholicism in Russia. The Kerensky government’s willingness to establish reciprocal relations strengthened this hope. Even the separation between Church and State in January 1918, the fruit of the rising Bolshevik’s militant atheism, was seen as possibly being advantageous for the Catholic Church. According to Pollard, it is difficult to understand Gasparri’s and Benedict’s optimism in this regard and even their willingness to negotiate with the threat they feared most, Bolshevism, entertaining the illusion that the Bolsheviks’ weakening of the Orthodox Church would somehow facilitate a conversion towards Rome. These unrealistic hopes of coming to terms with the Bolsheviks were not abandoned before 1929.⁶⁴

Pollard’s study benefits from the availability of greater archival material when dealing with the Holy See’s relationship with the Italian State. Thus the author is critical of Benedict’s and Gasparri’s continual denial that they indeed desired a place at the peace conference. The fact that various attempts were made to assure

⁶⁰ Ibid., 158.

⁶¹ Ibid., 202.

⁶² Ibid., 157.

⁶³ Ibid., 199.

⁶⁴ See *ibid.*, 195-200.

such a place, as well as their opposition to Sonnino, prove otherwise. In effect, efforts carried out behind the scenes between Cerretti and Orlando⁶⁵ achieved more for the Holy See than what it could have achieved at the peace table, as according to Pollard, this could have alienated Italy, setting back any progress made, for many years.⁶⁶

Regarding Luigi Sturzo and the formation of the *Partito Popolare Italiano*, Pollard argues that this was certainly one area for which Gasparri and Benedict did not share the same enthusiasm, even though they agreed as to the attitude that such a party was to maintain regarding the Roman Question. According to Pollard, and here he cites Monti, Gasparri had tied himself too closely to Francesco Nitti and the old liberal political class. Thus, the judgement that Carlo Monti, the intermediary between the two, passes on Gasparri's approach to Italian politics, that "Gasparri [...] though he is an able, if somewhat crude, diplomatist and a distinguished canon lawyer, does not understand internal politics very well"⁶⁷ is revealing and worthy of further study. But by 1920, the threat of socialism, which Benedict described as "the enemy,"⁶⁸ as well as the news of the horrors of Bolshevism, coupled by Sturzo's intransigent refusal to enter into an alliance with the liberals against socialism, fuelled Gasparri's and Benedict's anxieties over this *Partito Popolare Italiano*. However, Pollard considers it unfortunate, indeed a betrayal of Benedict's memory that Giuseppe Dalla Torre and Gasparri were to use his name after his death, in a letter they clearly had authored, but which appeared under the name of Monti-Guarnieri, in which the Pope is said to have had "nothing to do with the *Partito Popolare Italiano*. I have not recognized

⁶⁵ Vittorio Emanuele Orlando (1860-1952), was an Italian politician and jurist. As the person responsible for the government ministry "Grazia e Giustizia," he maintained the unofficial relationship between the Italian State and the Holy See, during the pontificate of Pius X. Later Minister for Internal affairs, he was then called to lead the Italian government as "Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri del Regno d'Italia" following the defeat of Caporetto, between 30 October 1917- 23 June 1919, when he gave his resignation. After having abandoned the Peace Conference in Paris during which he came in sharp contrast with Sonnino's imperialistic designs and was publicly humiliated by Wilson. Initially, a benevolent supporter of Fascism, even though he insisted to have always maintained his liberal democratic credentials, it was he who prepared Badoglio's proclamation decreeing the end of fascism. He remained active in various political posts, and present in the senate (1948-1952), till the end of his life. See Vittorio Emanuele Orlando, *I miei rapporti con la Santa Sede* (Milano: Edizioni Garzanti, 1944); Orlando, *Memorie* (1915-1919), R. Mosca (ed.) (Milano: Rizzoli, 1960); Orlando, *Su alcuni miei rapporti con la Santa Sede* (Napoli: Sabina, 1930).

⁶⁶ See Pollard, *The Unknown Pope Benedict XV*, 143.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 176.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 178.

it as a party and I do not wish to recognize it now so that I may disown it later.”⁶⁹ Pollard’s issue here is with the rise of Fascism, although he clearly admits that the end of Benedict XV’s pontificate had anyway already sealed the fate of the *Partito Popolare Italiano*. In treating such a wide spectrum of issues, a common weakness in such works emerges, as in certain respects, certain judgements are too generalised, betraying a certain degree of superficiality.

Going beyond the geographical limits generally set by the historiography reviewed so far, the volume edited by Agostino Giovagnoli, *Roma e Pechino. La svolta extraeuropea di Benedetto XV*, true to its title, explores another largely ignored aspect of this pontificate: the revolution one might say, brought about by this pontiff in the sphere of Catholic missionary activity, a true “svolta,” according to the various contributors to this volume.⁷⁰ This decisive change, coinciding with the peace of Versailles, finds its concrete expression in the publication of the apostolic letter *Maximum illud*. As Claude Soetens⁷¹ explains it illustrates Benedict XV’s determination “(per il) superamento del nazionalismo in favore di un progetto universale.”⁷² In the dialectic between continuity and discontinuity with the pontificate of Leo XIII that Rumi⁷³ further explores, the volume highlights the contribution of the various players involved in asserting the centrality of Rome in the government of Catholic missions, a desire many a time contrary to the colonial interests advanced by the very missionaries themselves. The change brought about by Benedict XV and his Curia sought to free the Holy See “dal condizionamento delle potenze europee sul terreno religioso, politico e finanziario: veniva in qualche modo ridefinita la stessa collocazione della Chiesa cattolica nel contesto internazionale contemporaneo.”⁷⁴ Thus Andrea Riccardi traces the historical background that led the Church to overcome the limited missionary vision of the “Patronato,” in a struggle extending over centuries while *Propaganda Fide* sought to vindicate its claims over Catholic missionary activity, its vision of *plantatio*

⁶⁹ Ibid., 185-186.

⁷⁰ Agostino Giovagnoli, “Introduzione,” in *Roma e Pechino, la svolta extraeuropea di Benedetto XV*, ed. Agostino Giovagnoli (Roma: Studium, 1999), 5. Giovagnoli (1952-) lectures in Contemporary history at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan.

⁷¹ See Claude Soetens, “La svolta della Maximum Illud,” in *Roma e Pechino*, 69-90; See also C. Soetens, “La Chine entre Propagande et Secrétairerie d’État. De Benoît XV à Pie XI,” *Mélanges de l’École Française de Rome. Italie et Méditerranée* 116/1 (2004): 289-301.

⁷² Giovagnoli, “Introduzione,” 4.

⁷³ See Giorgio Rumi, “Benedetto XV e il sistema delle relazioni internazionali,” in *Roma e Pechino*, 21-37.

⁷⁴ Giovagnoli, “Introduzione,” 7.

Ecclesia, a vision that saw in “Roma (è) la garanzia dell’internazionalizzazione delle missioni, perché non siano assorbite in un’ottica nazionale.”⁷⁵

It is in this context that China emerges, as the constant interest accorded to it by the Holy See shows, in particular to the controversy over the Chinese rites. This action, in favour of a universal Catholic project, spearheaded by Benedict XV, Gasparri, Van Rossum and their collaborators, traces its roots to the political action of Leo XIII, but is now strengthened by the experience achieved during the First World War, and the difficult circumstances that Catholic missions had found themselves in by its end. As Giovagnoli shows, the Chinese case stands out, in that Benedict XV, as Leo XIII before him, in his attempt to establish a diplomatic relationship with Beijing, had to face the same resistance from France with its claims to the protectorate of Catholic interests in this area. Whereas Leo XIII felt that he could not stand up to France, Benedict XV was determined to march ahead.⁷⁶

Returning concretely to the study of the key apostolic letter in question, Claude Soetens in *La svolta della Maximum Illud*, seeks to explain, firstly, to what extent this document constitutes “una svolta decisiva per l’evangelizzazione, un testo di “eccezionale importanza,”⁷⁷ una “ouverture sinfonica,”⁷⁸ un “colpo di

⁷⁵ Andrea Riccardi, “La Chiesa fuori della ‘Cristianità,’” in *Roma e Pechino*, 19.

⁷⁶ See A. Giovagnoli, “Rapporti diplomatici fra Santa Sede e Cina,” in *Roma e Pechino*, 39-67. On pp 66-67 we read that the direction taken by Benedict XV was continued by Pius XI who “[Pio XI], appena eletto papa, riprendeva e realizzava, con la massima celerità, la decisione del suo predecessore di istituire una delegazione apostolica in Cina, nominando per quell’ufficio mons. Celso Costantini, [...] comprese che la missione del delegato apostolico in Cina, benché prevalentemente religiosa, non era priva di qualche aspetto politico-diplomatico. [...] Come si vede, si trattava di una “politica” ispirata ad un progressivo distacco dagli interessi nazionali delle potenze europee, mentre nella Chiesa cattolica si rafforzavano contemporaneamente tanto la dimensione universalistica che la spinta verso l’adattamento.” Regarding Mgr. Celso Costantini as the first apostolic delegate in China: he received two directives from *Propaganda Fide*, to prepare for the celebration of a Chinese council, and to lay the foundation for the creation of a native hierarchy: See Ruggero Simonato, “Oltre l’Occidentalismo’: Mons. Celso Costantini,” in *Roma e Pechino*, 201-220; Gu Wei Ming, “Costantini e la ‘Naturalizzazione’ della Chiesa in Cina,” in *Roma e Pechino*, 221-225; J. Bruls, “Dalle missioni alle giovani chiese,” in *Nuova storia della Chiesa*, 5/II, 237-299. Costantini is clear in his negative evaluation of the French protectorate in China, and the hurdle it constitutes against the implantation of a local church. See Ruggero Simonato, 208: “Per lui il protettorato era diventato soltanto uno strumento di propaganda indiretta utilizzato dai governi europei, uno schermo frapposto tra Roma e le missioni, come dimostrava l’impossibilità di stabilire una nunziatura a Pechino, stanti le opposizioni di parte francese. Si trattava di avviare, invece, le missioni verso la semplice tutela del diritto comune.”

⁷⁷ See A. Battandier, in *Annuaire Pontifical catholique*, 33 (1920) 561.

⁷⁸ See A. Retif, *Les Papes contemporains et la mission* (Paris, 1966), 35.

gong”:⁷⁹ in sostanza la carta delle missioni contemporanee”; secondly, the role played by Cardinal Van Rossum, considered by some to be the second founder of *Propaganda Fide*, in developing this new missionary strategy and in the genesis of this apostolic letter itself.⁸⁰ Soetens considers the historical circumstances and motives behind the letter, the wider context of the war, with the concrete threat that German missions faced as to their fate, at its end. For the Holy See the missions provided the possibility of exerting a strong leverage on the international plane. In the wider spectrum of this pontificate, Benedict XV truly believed that Catholic universalism was the antidote to the exasperated nationalism that had brought about the war in the first place. In substance, according to Soetens, three factors occasioned the publication of this apostolic letter on the 30 November 1919: firstly, it was made possible due to the fact that Benedict XV could avail himself of a diplomatic *équipe* who like him were formed under Rampolla, promoters of the Holy See’s political presence on the international plane; secondly, through the successful modification of Article 438 of the Peace treaty, the Holy See is recognized as the supreme Catholic authority on the international plane; thirdly, by the concrete circumstances provided by that solidarity inaugurated between the Holy See and China.⁸¹ China provided the concrete occasion, for the Holy See to express its willingness:

di desolidarizzare le missioni dalle imprese coloniali e imperialiste [...] un documento che, certo, ricentra la responsabilità missionaria su Roma, ma la cui intenzione universale e la prospettiva di cattolicità sono innegabili.⁸²

⁷⁹ See *ibid.*, 40.

⁸⁰ See C. Soetens, “La svolta della *Maximum Illud*,” in *Roma e Pechino*, 69; See Giuseppe Buttarini, “Il ‘Problema delle missioni,’” in *Roma e Pechino*, 91-128. Buttarini offers a diverse reading as to the genesis of *Maximum Illud*, a more critical approach to the “svolta” brought about by this apostolic letter, a change which was to find great resistance among the missionaries themselves: 126-127. In Benedict XV he sees a greater emphasis on the “Catholicity” of the Church, that is the “creazione di delegazioni apostoliche rispondono molto di più alle esigenze di una mobilitazione del cattolicesimo su scala universale, in vista di una nuova civiltà cristiana, che all’istanza di estendere le Chiese locali “autonome,” sia pure in più stretta comunione con la Santa Sede. Decentramento e adattamento - oggi potremmo chiamarlo inculturazione - non rispondevano ancora al disegno della Santa Sede, la cui azione sembrava più volta a instaurare la civiltà cristiana e la creazione di una Chiesa universale rispondente ai canoni tridentini, che alla costituzione di Chiese locali veramente autoctoni. Questo sarà l’approdo del Vaticano II, al quale comunque, la “svolta” di papa Benedetto apriva la strada.”

⁸¹ See *ibid.*, 77-78.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 90.

Returning once again, specifically, to the *Peace Note*, Roberto Ricci in his essay *Il Papa del novecento*, hails Benedict XV as having been truly the pope for the contemporary age. In asserting this, he returns to established models, interpreting his pontificate in terms of both the hermeneutic of continuity (for he shows that with him we have a clear return to the diplomatic school of Leo XIII and Rampolla) but also change, as to the novel understanding of the proposed peace. His was the challenge of promoting a truly just peace addressed to all men of goodwill, which truly understands the challenges of the age with all the horror that the war had unleashed. Using the correspondence between Benedict XV and Valfrè di Bonzo,⁸³ the author provides a key to understanding the pontiff's particular conception of peace, promoting a religious understanding, which underpinned his diplomatic and political action pursued in its service, for truly:

in buona sostanza ci si affidava alla giustizia umana e civile per riportare il mondo alla pace cristiana; cioè si adoperavano gli strumenti della diplomazia per di comporre il dissidio egoistico delle Nazioni, fino a piegare le ragioni della diplomazia medesima a quelle morali e religiose.⁸⁴

This, the author explains, is the prophetic dimension, that regains for the Church a moral primacy in the Europe that rises from the ashes of war, as the Catholic Church entered into a new relationship with a world that had itself radically changed:

Benedetto ha agito in modo da risolvere e da avviare a soluzione problemi che i suoi predecessori avevano lasciato insoluti associando intimamente il suo nome ad una posizione della Chiesa indubbiamente cresciuta d'importanza internazionale e politica. I suoi predecessori hanno predicato le parole della vita *importune* ed *opportune*, egli ha avuto, e meritata, la ventura di predicarle soltanto *opportune*.⁸⁵

⁸³ See G. Rumi, "L'epistolario tra Benedetto XV e monsignore Valfrè di Bonzo," in *Civitas* (1991/1): 3-83.

⁸⁴ Roberto Ricci, *Il Papa del novecento. Benedetto XV e la Nota di pace del 1917* (Teramo: Interlinea editrice, 1999), 17-18. Roberto Ricci (1959-) researches mainly on the history and historiography of the 17th and 18th centuries; See also Ennio Bezzone, *Papa Benedetto XV e la nuova presenza della Chiesa nella società internazionale a partire della Nota di Pace del 1° Agosto 1917. Excerptum thesios ad Doctoratum in Iuro Canonico* (Roma: Pontificia Università Lateranense, 2004). Ennio Bezzone (1967-) has served in the diplomatic service of the Holy See in various countries.

⁸⁵ Ricci, *Il Papa del novecento*, 16: The author through these words of L. Degli Occhi, emphasizes the role of Benedict XV as pastor. L. Degli Occhi, *Benedetto XV* (Milano: R. Caddeo, 1921), 7.

Not only the peace efforts during the war, but also the Holy See's presence in the peace process that followed, demand constant interest in this historiographical tradition. So much so, that at a distance of eighty years from the Peace Conference in Paris, Antonio Scottà felt the need of bringing together various historians in order to reflect on the enduring influence of the treaty it produced, together with another four peace treatises in the fourteen months that followed, and the Europe to which they gave birth.⁸⁶ As regards Benedict XV, Emma Fattorini's *La Germania e la Nota di pace di Benedetto XV* is of certain interest. She contextualizes the famous note within the complex diplomatic and political relationships through a detailed step-by-step reconstruction of the events that led to it.⁸⁷ Fattorini concludes that "il Vaticano, pur coltivando il desiderio di un Europa cristiana, non sposa mai tesi pangermaniste e 'caroline'."⁸⁸

⁸⁶ See Pietro Pastorelli, "Presentazione," in *La Conferenza di pace di Parigi fra ieri e domani (1919-1920). Atti del Convegno Internazionale di studi Portogruaro-Bibione 31 maggio-4 giugno 2000*, ed. Antonio Scottà (Catanzaro: Rubbettino Editore, 2003), 16.

⁸⁷ See Emma Fattorini, "La Germania e la Nota di pace di Benedetto XV," in *La Conferenza di pace di Parigi fra ieri e domani (1919-1920)*, 229-252: Fattorini enumerates the following events as determining the publication of the papal *Peace Note*. Bethmann-Hollweg's openness towards Pacelli's demands for the liberation of Belgium and the Alsazia-Lorena during their meeting in Berlin between 26-29 June 1917, and Erzberger's discourse in favour of peace by compromise followed by Reichstag's vote in its favour (19 July 1917), the substitution of Bethmann-Hollweg, considered by the military and the political right to open towards democratic tendencies, for Michaelis, the taking over of the German army by Hindenburg and Ludendorff and its predominance over the Reichstag, all these factors coupled with the accusation on the Allies' part of a preliminary agreement between Germany and the Holy See, the lack of concrete steps by Germany, led Benedict XV to issue the *Peace Note* on 1 August 1917 without further ado. Fattorini further examines the divided reaction of German Catholics to the *Note*, as well as Wilson's rejection of it, demanding the liberation of the peoples subject to the Central powers from their military regimes and irresponsible governments. For a thorough study of Eugenio Pacelli's tenure as nuncio in Monaco; See Emma Fattorini, *Germania e Santa Sede fra la Grande Guerra e la Repubblica di Weimar* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1992). In this monograph the author specifically delves deep into the study of the whole German context occasioning the papal *Peace Note* during the 1918 revolution when he was personally attacked by communist revolutionaries, regarding catholic participation in the Weimar Republic, regarding the situation created by the Treaty of Versailles, the nunciature in Berlin and the concordat concluded with Hitler, regarding polish nationalism and the plebiscite in Upper Silesia, regarding the occupation of the Ruhr. In appendix the author publishes a number of documents from the AA.EE.SS., mainly correspondence between Pacelli and Gasparri, relating to the various issues treated. Emma Fattorini (1952-) is a centre-left Italian politician and historian. She lectures in contemporary history at the Sapienza University in Rome, and her work *Pio XI, Hitler e Mussolini. La Solitudine di un papa* (Einaudi: Torino, 2007) has been the source of great polemic.

⁸⁸ Fattorini, "La Germania e la Nota di pace di Benedetto XV," 252.

Studying a selection of the *Intercettazioni del Comando Supremo italiano dei dispacci telegrafici tra Benedetto XV e Carlo I d'Asburgo*, Giorgio Rumi⁸⁹ shows how in violation of that very *Legge delle Guarentigie* that it itself unilaterally stipulated, through these interceptions Italy had added access to key information on the enemy at crucial moments of the war. Such studies, which might seem at first verging on the minute, in effect allow historiography to dig deeper thus making greater clarity possible. Particularly moving is Benedict XV's plea to Wilson on the 7th October 1918, in whose hands lay the power to bring the war to an end, to accept the Central powers' request for an armistice and peace negotiations. Benedict's realism shines out in his confession to Charles, "Maestà né io né voi contiamo più nulla, quello che conta è il presidente della grande Repubblica Americana."⁹⁰ Benedict's affection towards Carlo and the Imperial family, and his desire to save this last Catholic empire, allows him to go beyond protocol in inviting him, even in the last hour, to undertake a courageous reform of his empire, suggesting the federal form and the concession of greater autonomy to Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Even when all was lost, Benedict never abandons the Imperial family in its time of dire need, and delicately offers even his financial support. Such studies clarify the motives behind the actions undertaken, and invite historians to go beyond superficial judgements.

Returning to the theme of peace, Antonio Scottà, in *Benedetto XV, la pace e la Conferenza di Parigi*, goes to the core of the papal peace initiatives. The author explains how Benedict traced the true root of this war to human greed, a result of that spiritual and moral decadence of society that found its concrete expression in the unbridled affirmation of a nationalistic spirit and exalted forms of patriotism. This in turn destabilized the international community and created the crisis in which international law found itself. In his understanding, the reasons for this war were not political, but economical in nature.⁹¹ Against this unbridled nationalism, Benedict offered the antidote of a Christian universalism that must find in fraternal love and mutual trust the source of a true and lasting

⁸⁹ See Giorgio Rumi, "Intercettazioni del Comando Supremo italiano dei dispacci telegrafici tra Benedetto XV e Carlo I d'Asburgo," in *La conferenza di pace di Parigi fra ieri e domani (1919-1920)*, 267-275.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 271.

⁹¹ "Come attesta il barone Monti il papa gli confidava che a suo parere le cause della guerra non erano politiche, ma economiche: ed esse puntavano alla eliminazione della Germania, da parte della Gran Bretagna e degli Stati Uniti, per timore della perdita della leadership dell'economia europea soprattutto per la crescente potenza marittima teutonica." Antonio Scottà, "Benedetto XV, la pace e la Conferenza di Parigi," in *La conferenza di pace di Parigi fra ieri e domani (1919-1920)*, 446. See S.RR.SS., AA.EE.SS., *Stati Ecclesiastici*, 216, vol. III, pp.1 e 3.

peace. Above all Benedict refused to allow the instrumentalisation of religion for war propaganda, indeed of confusing the cause of war with the causes of religion, an error from which other prominent cardinals and bishops were not immune. All this constitutes the logic at play in Benedict's numerous attempts for the achievement of just peace; from his protest against the confiscation of Palazzo Venezia, his protest to Wilson's rejection of the *Peace Note*,⁹² his understanding of the Balkan question, the peace conference itself and the unjust peace it imposed, and the missionary situation in China. Scottà shows how Benedict's attempts in trying to save the Austro-Hungarian empire to the very end, must be rooted in his desire for the universalism it expressed, concretized in the ample freedom it gave on the local level while maintaining a centralized system of government. Especially in the Balkans, Benedict XV understood the importance of ethnicity over and above any imposed system of states.

Conclusion

Obviously the treatment of this relatively short pontificate remains determined by interest in the war that conditioned it. Authors continue returning to the same themes, namely the peace efforts promoted by this pope on every front, amongst which the 1917 *Peace Note* occupies pride of place as the very fulcrum of this pontificate, coupled with his humanitarian action, both during the war and in its aftermath. Ironically, the very nationalism, the enemy against which Benedict XV fought, now, even if in another sense altogether, is acting to his advantage, for most studies on the Great War are motivated by a certain nationalistic interest, as historians from a diversity of backgrounds approach the Holy See's papers to unravel the role of this or that particular nation, and in so doing also shed light on Benedict XV, the Holy See and its diplomatic efforts in favour of a just and lasting peace. Such studies have clarified the neutrality of the Holy See, and have freed Benedict XV from a certain caricature imposed on him during the war itself by those who wanted to present him as being pro-German, or even pro-Allies, an effort either to win him over to their side or to discredit his efforts.

⁹² See Scottà, "Benedetto XV, la pace e la Conferenza di Parigi," 441-447: Scottà examines the protest presented in an article by Giuseppe Dalla Torre, in *Nuova Antologia*, September 1917, which Benedict XV declares as inspired by the ideas of the Holy See, published even before receiving Germany's definitive response. Scottà, 443, comments "Il testo, anche se tendenzialmente polemico, rappresenta in forma organica la visione politica di Benedetto XV, non solo in merito al conflitto, ma alla organizzazione interna delle nazioni, ispirata al sistema democratico, ed a quella della comunità internazionale."

Not foreign to such motivations are also those tied to the birth of new nations, the Slav countries and the Balkans, out of the demise of the four empires brought about by the war. Even if the Holy See was excluded from the Peace Conference, it still proved to be a major player on the international plane, as various studies have proved. Themes explored in this regard include, Benedict XV's efforts in favour of Austria and Germany, brought to their feet by the unjust peace imposed by the Allies, the Holy See's interest in the near and middle east, and its action in favour of the Armenians and other Christian minorities. Another area of study, which has been opened up, has to do with the Holy See's relationship with the newly formed League of Nations and the limits it envisaged in this regard. Some interest has been shown in the new politics of concordats, but evidently much more remains to be done as to its true motivations, and to the ecclesial vision on which it was founded and from which it found its bearing. A certain interest has been shown in the restoration of the diplomatic relationship with France, as well as a critical study of the steps accomplished towards the resolution of the Roman Question.

Historiography has also timidly opened up to the missionary aspects of this pontificate, what has been defined by some a "revolution", namely a certain renewed vision for missionary activity, as it struggled to free itself from the nationalistic interests of colonialism, a vision which found in *Maximum illud* its articulation, and in the Holy See's interest in China its concrete expression and motivation.

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Karel Skalický: Fundamental Theology in the Existential Horizon of Thinking¹

We are all parts of certain traditions. When we decide to walk some way, we are never completely alone. We have to consider those who preceded us on the roads and paths we walk. We have contact with those who walk with us. And last but not least, we have to think about those who will follow in our footsteps. In the process of our own education and growth we encounter those who teach us to read maps. And we meet others, who initiate us into the rules of traveling. Some present theories (maps) show us how to dwell in the labyrinth of the world and its landscapes that we eventually decide to travel and walk. Some skilful globetrotters know that maps are not the same as actual landscapes. They know that theories are not identical with practice, but both are necessary for us to have a complete picture of our surroundings. In other words, maps usually tell us that there is a river or a bush up ahead. But they do not tell us how deep the river crossing is, or how thick the bushes are for when we need to go through them.

For this information, we need someone who knows, someone who has experience – a local scout, an authentic insider. However, even the most skilful tracker cannot see the particular landscape in its wider context in the same way as those who create maps are able to see it. Connecting theory to praxis, reading maps, and walking through landscapes, learning to understand map signs and learning to know corners and streets, forests and rivers, roads and paths, local

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people, plants and animals; that is what we need to search for, that is what we need to learn from those who are settled in the local grounds as well as from those who travel a lot – from those who know places as well as from those who draw maps. Yet, there is always a danger of being too narrow-minded and think our (or my) map is the only one, that my reading of the landscape is the only possible. We need to read our landscapes, including our theological traditions, “widely”² in order to maintain balance between the general and the contextual so as to avoid abstract generalisation on the one hand and exclusive contextual interpretation on the other. We need to pay attention to one’s own context, yet we should not fall into the trap of ignoring the context of the other.

During my theological journey, I have met several “local scouts” who have never left their homelands. I have met some map drawers who were never out of their office. And I also have met a few who were able to draw maps, read them, and who always enjoyed scouting through the different landscapes. One of these was Mgr. Prof. Karel Skalický, who trained me in theology and continues to inspire my own theological journey. The aim of this article is to introduce his concept of fundamental theology and contribute in this way towards a revival of this theological discipline, which is, according to Gerald O’Collins, experiencing crises or decline:

(...) as the third millennium unfolds, even though the questions fundamental theology traditionally raised have in no way become outdated and irrelevant, the very existence of this discipline seems to be quietly threatened with non-existence.³

In the perspective of O’Collins the appropriate response to such a situation is to go back to the great masters of fundamental theology, recall them, and develop their legacy.⁴ Only then shall we be able to relaunch the discipline once again in the context of contemporary times, facing the collapse of Christian

² Chris Budden, “The Necessity of the Second Peoples’ Theology in Australia,” in *Contextual Theology for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Katalina Tahaafe-Wiliams and Stephen Bevans (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co, 2012), 61.

³ Gerald O’Collins, *Rethinking Fundamental Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2011), vii.

⁴ In the preface to his *Rethinking Fundamental Theology*, Gerald O’Collins names, for instance, Cardinal Avery Dulles, Gerhard Ebeling, René Latourelle, and Karl Rahner. See *ibid.*

civilisation,⁵ or Christendom if you prefer the term.⁶ It is characteristic to such a context that while Christianity in the global south flourishes today,⁷ European Christianity experiences disorientation and decline – it loses members, property, power, and influence in society.⁸ According to my opinion, it is not only the way how Christianity is lived that has changed, but also the way how people understand its (doctrinal) content. Therefore, the future task for theologians could be defined as threefold: (1) to participate actively in intra-denominational discussions about the development of doctrine facing the immense social and cultural changes of the world today; (2) to join theology to the interdisciplinary nature of thinking characteristic to contemporary times; and (3) to emphasise constantly the public relevance of theology as a service to thinking and to the sustainable development of life on a global scale. Fundamental theology has the potential to serve us well for the purpose of dealing with the abovementioned tasks.

However, in order to maintain and even rediscover the merits of fundamental theology as a discipline “living on the edge of empirical sciences and theology’ and being ‘enormously sensitive to changes of cultural environment and new ways of thinking,’”⁹ we must go back to the heritage our predecessors have left

⁵ It is necessary to note that such a reflection comes chiefly from the camp of Protestant authors. For instance, Stanley Hauerwas, *After Christendom* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1999); Stuart Murray, *Post-Christendom: Church and Mission in a Strange New World* (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2004); Stuart Murray, *Church After Christendom* (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2005); Douglas J. Hall, *The End of Christendom and the Future of Christianity* (Oregon, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2002). Catholic authors do not speak about post-Christendom, but their reflections on Christianity living in the globalised world (e.g., Bevans, Schreiter) correspond to a certain extent to the concept of post-Christendom.

⁶ According to Hauerwas and Willimon, the fall of Christendom occurred somewhere between 1960 and 1980. See Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1989), 15-16. Further, it is important to note that by the term Christian civilisation a close link between Christianity and European cultural heritage is meant here, and consequently the term Christendom emphasises the fact that this particular form of Christianity exercised its sovereignty and decisive (cultural) power beyond its original geographic borders.

⁷ The fact that so called “western Christians” will become a minority within the global Christianity of the 21st century was predicted more than 15 years ago by Phillip Jenkins. See Phillip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2002), 1-14.

⁸ Cf. Hans-Peter Geiser, *The Community of the Weak: Social Postmodernism in Theological Reflections on Power and Powerlessness in North America* (Oregon, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2013), xi.

⁹ Karel Říha, “Fundamentální teologie v existenciálním horizontu myšlení [Fundamental theology in the Existential Horizon of Thinking],” *Studie* 122-123 (1989): 146.

us and carry their legacy forward in a creative way. Only in this way may we stay faithful to the constant task of renewing tradition and become truly able to react to new and upcoming signs of the times. And that is why I would like to start with presenting the adventurous life story of Mons. Skalický which shaped his unique theology in a decisive way. Skalický himself became part of the larger theological tradition while he continued the work of his predecessor at the Lateran University in Rome, Prof. Boublík. In this sense my personal connection to Skalický and to his style of fundamental theology helps to carry this tradition further for a while. The second part of this article proceeds with presenting fundamental theology as a reflection of the continuous and gradual concretisation of the sacred in human lives and the world. Such a reflection then results in Skalický's concept of fundamental theology, being done in the existential mode (or horizon) of thinking (part 3). Consequently, the conclusion attempts to summarise the major lines of inspiration we may draw from the works of Karel Skalický today and their use for the task of the discipline's renewal.

1. Karel Skalický – A Biographical Narrative

Karel Skalický (1934)¹⁰ was born as the only son in the family of a forest engineer in Hluboká nad Vltavou, a small town in the region of South Bohemia. After he finished high school and had a brief working experience, he decided to study at Charles University in Prague. In 1953 he enrolled at the Agricultural Faculty to study the mechanisation of agriculture. Despite the technical orientation of his study, he appreciated music, dance, and reading. During his university studies, the desire to become a priest started to mature. In this respect, Skalický was influenced by Vladimír Třebín – a Premonstratensian priest candidate whom he met during Easter 1955. Soon they became friends and Třebín gave him a book, *The Following of Christ, in Four Books* by Thomas à Kempis. Skalický started to read and meditate upon his vocation. Slowly, he decided to give his life fully to the service of Jesus Christ as a priest in the Catholic Church. But it was rather impossible to realise such a vocation in the context

¹⁰ This short biographical sketch is based on my interview with Karel Skalický, which was recorded for the Memory of Nations – a non-profit organisation collecting and recording stories connected to the most important events of the 20th century narrated by living witnesses. I recorded and edited the whole story of Karel Skalický in 2014 within the project “Fleeing into Freedom.”

It is available at: http://www.pametnaroda.cz/witness/index/id/4143?locale=en_GB. [Accessed 21st June 2018.] The whole story and audio samples are in Czech but crucial parts of Skalický's narrative and his short biography are available in English translation.

of the early 1950s in a Czechoslovakia that was ruled by the Communist party which was well advised by Soviet counsellors. In the whirl of uncertainties and ruminations about what to do, a clear impulse suddenly came, again from Třebín, who unexpectedly invited Skalický to join him for an escape to “the West,” where they both could freely study for the priesthood and reach ordination.

Skalický was shocked because he knew about the military-guarded electric fences and barbed-wire barriers freshly built along the Czechoslovakian border to separate the Eastern Bloc from the free western world.¹¹ Friends of his father, workers in border woods who worked with trees in the “forbidden zone,” told him stories about its impenetrability. “Do you want to join me?” asked Třebín. Skalický remembers that he started to fudge the issue. He first told his friend that he had to finish university, that he was not the kind of person who runs away from a work in progress, and that he could not leave his parents behind. But deep down he knew that the die was cast, that he had already decided, and that these were just excuses. “Ok, fine, I’ll go,” answered Skalický in the end. During the dark and rainy night from 15th to 16th June 1956, their desire to become priests led Skalický and Třebín to the southern border of Czechoslovakia. They managed to get past guards and wired barriers including an electric one. And after crossing the swollen river they finally reached Austria. The road to Rome was open to the new (overnight) refugees.¹²

After this inner (the decision to go) and outer (planning the journey itself) adventure, and after a few months spent in Austria (Vienna, Geras), both refugees safely reached Rome and the Czechoslovakian seminary. While Třebín was eventually dismissed from the Nepomuceno College for his aggressive

¹¹ Such barriers were parts of the broader concept of the so called “Iron Curtain,” a complex effort of the former Soviet Union to seal off itself and countries under its political influence (including Czechoslovakia), ideologically, politically, and even physically from the (non-communist) West. While it is common knowledge that the Berlin Wall is used as the symbol of the Iron Curtain, particular post-communist countries have their own symbols as well. In the contemporary Czech Republic, the forbidden border zone and so called “wires” function as symbols of the Iron Curtain.

¹² At this point it is necessary to note that the story has another dimension revealed to Skalický only a few years ago from newly discovered archival materials. The escape of Třebín and Skalický was not actually illegal. In fact, Třebín was already an agent of the StB (State Security – plainclothes secret police serving as an intelligence and counter-intelligence service for the communist regime in former Czechoslovakia) and Skalický was used as proof (a young idealist) of their escape’s authenticity and Třebín’s mission abroad. Třebín was sent to the Czechoslovakian seminary in Rome (Nepomuceno College) to collect information about the site, people, and life there.

behaviour,¹³ Skalický completed his spiritual formation and was ordained priest in the Lateran basilica just after Christmas 1961. Soon after, in 1962, he finished his theological studies and defended his licentiate. After that, Skalický started to work as a youth minister in St Peter's oratory in the Vatican City. Simultaneously, he continued to study philosophy and was also offered the opportunity to take part in the final Second Vatican Council session as an "assignator locorum" (usher). Skalický of course did not miss the unique opportunity to witness the Council's aula atmosphere. Later, he recalled this experience in a commentary to the *Gaudium et spes* conciliar document, which soon became a prominent reference work for everyone in Czechoslovakia who wanted to deal with the Council and this particular constitution.¹⁴

In 1966, the communist regime of Czechoslovakia expatriated Cardinal Josef Beran, who retired in Roman exile. Very soon after his arrival, Karel Skalický became his second secretary. Meanwhile, Skalický finished his theological doctorate and together with his secretarial duties also became the editor in chief of the famous Czechoslovakian exile journal "Studie." He served in this place until 1990, when the journal ended. In 1968 Skalický officially became an Italian citizen and it was again possible for him to travel freely with an Italian passport. In the same year, he was appointed assistant professor at the Lateran University, where he became a colleague of Vladimír Boublík, a prominent Czechoslovakian theologian in exile.¹⁵ Skalický had met Boublík already as a

¹³ When the undercover agent had finished his mission at Nepomuceno College, he caused trouble (he struck a clerical colleague publicly in the face) and for that reason he was expelled from the college. The mission was accomplished, and the agent was free to return undiscovered.

¹⁴ Karel Skalický, *Radost a naděje* [Joy and Hope]. (Kostelní Vydří: Karmelitánské nakladatelství, 2000). The original book was published in 1968.

¹⁵ Vladimír Boublík (1928-1974) was a Catholic priest, theologian, and a professor of the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome (1959-1974). In 1972, he even became the dean of its Faculty of Theology. His life journey was quite adventurous, and it is no exaggeration to say that the same is true about his theology. For Boublík, theology was a way of searching for the meaning of life in facing its inevitable termination in (physical) death. His time was marked by flourishing existentialism seeking to find the meaning of human existence experienced by people as being towards death – "Sein zum Tode" in Heidegger's term. And therefore, in his work, Boublík sees theology as an (existential) adventure of searching for life meaning. He is convinced that theology can help us to find out: (1) who we are as human beings; (2) what our specific place is in this world; and (3) what is the purpose of our existence, directed, and slowly floating towards death. According to Boublík, answers to these questions may come from a relationship with the transcendent, personal, and triune God of Christianity. This kind of relationship has a model in the life and story of Jesus Christ. Human life is an adventure of love (Cf. Vladimír Boublík, *Duchovní deník* [Spiritual Diary], (Olomouc: Refugium, 2010), 147-148). In the

seminarian. Boublík was his teacher, older mentor, and later he became his friend too. Their friendship and collegial cooperation lasted until Boublík's early death in 1974. After Boublík passed away, Skalický took over his job at the Lateran University and became full professor of fundamental theology.¹⁶ He also became responsible for the Theology of Religions programme established by Boublík.

From student, youth minister, and Council usher, Skalický became secretary to a Cardinal, an editor-in-chief, and later professor of the Lateran University. Skalický knew that if his university teaching career were to be fruitful, he had to stay in contact with daily life and praxis. Therefore, despite his university commitments, he served as a chaplain in the general house of the Marist Brothers (1970-1985), and he was a spiritual administrator of Czechoslovak refugees in Italy (1970-1979). His university activities were not limited only to the city of Rome. He travelled a lot and lectured in most European countries, U.S.A., Zambia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and Puerto Rico. In 1987, he was named "Monsignor" by Pope John Paul II as a reward for his excellent service to the Church. His reputable career as a respected professor and prominent clergymen was in full blossom when the communist regime in Czechoslovakia collapsed. This was the second time this evil ideology of the 20th century turned Skalický's life upside down. At the instigation of his long-time friend and confrere Monica Schreier, he relinquished his post at the Lateran University, left his comfortable, sunny Vatican flat and at the age when other university professors retire, he relocated back to the town where he was born, and started to work again.

In 1994, he became a local priest in Hluboká nad Vltavou. At the same time, he became a professor at the newly established University of South Bohemia, Faculty of Theology in České Budějovice, which was a nearby city. From 1996 to

perspective of Boublík, love seeks not only understanding, but also its own fullness within the ahistorical completeness of Love. This Love, however, became part of history in the event of Jesus Christ. The ahistorical became historic, and yet remained ahistorical; the transcendent became immanent and yet remained fully transcendent. This paradox reveals the true nature of God and sets up a possibility for human beings that their love as a particular, historical act can connect to God, the transcendental, personal, and everlasting source of all love.

¹⁶ As his successor, Skalický builds on the fundamental theology developed by Vladimír Boublík. Cf. Karel Skalický, *Za nadějí a smysl* [For Hope and Meaning], (Praha: Zvon, 1996), 233. It is especially obvious from the extensive introduction he wrote for Boublík's fundamental theology, which was discovered in the estate of the deceased Monica Schreier (a close friend of Boublík and Skalický) as late as in 2014 and was published two years later in 2016. See Karel Skalický, "Saggio Introduttivo: Vladimír Boublík e la sua teologia [Introduction: Vladimír Boublík and His Theology]," in Vladimír Boublík, *Alla ricerca di Gesù di Nazareth: e altri scritti* (Città del Vaticano: Lateran University, 2016), 11-85.

1999 he also served as its dean. In the year 2006 Skalický received the highest state distinction – the Order of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk – from the President of the Czech Republic for his service to the state in the area of democracy, humanity, and development of human rights. In the year 2010, he received an honorary doctoral degree from Palacký University in Olomouc. In 2013 Skalický became professor emeritus of the University of South Bohemia. Nowadays, Skalický is still active within the university. He teaches a few courses and continues with his writings. For instance, despite the extensive introduction to Boublík's fundamental theology which was already quoted, in 2016 Skalický published an article on revelation and time in *Lateranum*,¹⁷ and during the spring of 2018 he finished the manuscript of his upcoming book dealing with the Christian understanding of European history in the perspective of revolutions.

Apart from the attempt to contribute a little towards the renewal of the discipline of fundamental theology, I would like to introduce Skalický's concept of fundamental theology to the English-speaking readership, because his theology has been available only in Italian and Czech (with a few exceptions in German and English).¹⁸ It would be of course possible to present other aspects of Skalický's work (for instance his theology of the world, his interpretations of the history of salvation, religion and politics, religious studies, etc.), but I regard his fundamental theology as the most inspiring and therefore I have opted for devoting the remaining pages of this text to the effort of summarising its principal contours. However, there are two difficulties in such an attempt. First, Skalický's work is still under development and it will be the task of future

¹⁷ Karel Skalický, "La rivelazione e il tempo: Abbozzo della tipologia della rivelazione secondo il parametron del tempo," *Lateranum* 82/1 (2016): 161-170.

¹⁸ Prior to his return to the Czech Republic, Skalický published mostly in Italian and in Czech (exile journals). Most of Skalický's recent work (during the last 25 years) appeared in the Czech language. Despite this, he published occasionally also in English, Italian, and German. Two recent Italian publications have already been mentioned. The most important English and German texts include: Karel Skalický, "Thinking about God Philosophically in Europe Today: A Czech Perspective," in *Naming and Thinking God in Europe Today: Theology in Global Dialogue*, ed. Norbert Hintersteiner (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2007), 157-168; Karel Skalický, "Religion in the Modern World," in *Das Wesen des Menschen, Integrale Anthropologie* 6, ed. Karel Mácha (München: Minerva, 1985), 313-328; Karel Skalický, "The Vicissitudes of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia, 1918 to 1988," in *Czechoslovakia: Crossroads and Crises, 1918-88*, ed. Norman Stone and Eduard Strouhal (London, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989), 358-376; Karel Skalický, "Wer ist ein Christ? Zur Theologie des Christseins," in *Christliche Identität in Europa auf dem Prüfstand: Pastoraltheologische Begegnungen: Horizonte und Optionen: Eine Veröffentlichung des Post-Netzwerks der mittel- und osteuropäischen Pastoraltheologinnen und Pastoraltheologen*, Pastoraltheologische Hefte 7 (Gniezno-Wien: Gaudentium, 2014), 81-94.

research to assess properly the whole corpus of his work. Second, because of the limited space given by the character of this text, I can present just a brief sketch, and not a deep study of his fundamental theology.¹⁹

2. Fundamental Theology as Gradual Concretisation of the *Sacred*

Skalický's first comprehensive text on fundamental theology dates back to 1979. He wrote an Italian textbook for his course at the *Istituto superiore di teologia a distanza: Ut Unum Sint*.²⁰ He used the same text for his lectures at the Lateran University. Skalický's textbook soon became popular among students and thus the second (corrected) edition was published by the *Ut Unum Sint* institute already in 1980.²¹ The third edition was published by the Lateran University Press in 1987 as a proper book.²² Finally, the fourth expanded edition of Skalický's *Teologia fondamentale* was published in 1992.²³

Even though we may find in his "Fundamental theology" a certain structure, Karel Skalický denies that he would proceed strictly systematically while writing it.²⁴ Despite that, its first version consists of 10 didactical units (and Skalický decided to keep this structure in all future editions of his book) proceeding

¹⁹ I published a larger text on Skalický's fundamental theology in the festschrift celebrating his 80th birthday. See František Štěch, "Fundamentální teologie a křesťanská identita [Fundamental Theology and Christian Identity]," in *Církev a společnost* [Church and Society], ed. František Štěch and Roman Míčka (České Budějovice: Jihočeská Univerzita, 2014), 23-38. At this point it has to be noted that I joined the story of Karel Skalický in 1999 as one of his students in České Budějovice. Soon I became his student assistant (2000) and therefore (naturally) he served as a consultant of my master thesis and later also as the promotor of my doctorate. After completing my doctoral degree in theology, I became a colleague of Skalický and took over his responsibility of teaching fundamental theology at the University of South Bohemia. We worked together until summer 2016 when I moved to Prague, becoming a researcher at Charles University. Since that time, we still keep close contact, and I consider his theology and life example as formative for my own theology.

²⁰ Karel Skalický (Carlo Skalicky), *Teologia fondamentale* [Fundamental Theology], (1st edition), (Roma: Istituto di teologia per corrispondenza del Centro 'Ut Unum Sint', 1979).

²¹ Karel Skalický (Carlo Skalicky), *Teologia fondamentale* [Fundamental Theology], (2nd edition), (Roma: Istituto di teologia per corrispondenza del Centro 'Ut Unum Sint', 1980).

²² Karel Skalický (Carlo Skalicky), *Teologia fondamentale* [Fundamental Theology], (3rd edition), (Roma: Istituto superiore di teologia a distanza – P.U.L., 1987).

²³ Karel Skalický (Carlo Skalicky), *Teologia fondamentale* [Fundamental Theology], (4th edition), (Roma: Istituto superiore di scienze religiose a distanza dell'Ateneo Romano della Santa Croce, 1992). It is necessary to note that even though some part of Skalický's fundamental theology was translated into Czech, the whole book is still available only in Italian.

²⁴ Cf. Skalický, *Za nadějí a smysl* [For Hope and Meaning], 229.

from the study of the general religious phenomenon (religious studies), through a philosophical reflection of religion, to the theological interpretation of the crucial event of Christianity – that is, according to Skalický, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. After a careful study of various concepts of the idea of God and their origin,²⁵ Skalický comes to the conviction that the idea of God is born only from the need for orientation and meaning. Human beings need a plausible concept of meaning for their elementary residing in the world. However, he does not build this argument as another “proof” of God’s existence, but he rather shared his own expertly reflected experience, his own explanation of the origin of the idea of God in the human mind.

Skalický shows that religious fact (or as Skalický prefers, “phenomena”) is always somehow ambiguous, it oscillates between human and divine, while both elements are interconnected and work together on its forming. After all, “each questioning for God always finally leads to questions for humanity.”²⁶ But religious studies alone cannot answer Skalický’s further question whether something in reality corresponds with the idea of God.²⁷ In the effort to answer this question Skalický leaves the field of religious studies and turns to philosophy. After considering two traditional philosophical argumentations for God’s existence, that of St Thomas and the other of Anselm of Canterbury, he also considers the axiological argument of Albert Lang, popular at that time.²⁸ Skalický is satisfied with neither Lang nor St Thomas and Anselm. Consequently, he attempts to work out his own argument, which would best be called “comparative.” In this effort, he was inspired by Claude Trésmontant and Avery Dulles (especially by his thinking in models). Skalický strives to prove the relative character of humanity and the world in relation to the absolute, which means for him chiefly to prove the createdness of the whole “worldly-human reality.”²⁹ In his opinion, classical arguments for God’s existence presuppose the relative nature of the world, thus logically they must reach the conclusion that the absolute cause of the relative world must exist. But is the world really relative?

²⁵ Skalický concentrated his interest on different hypotheses about the origin of the idea of God provided by different scholars, such as Edward B. Tylor, Andrew Lang, Wilhelm Schmidt, Sigmund Freud, Raffaele Pettazzoni, Emile Durkheim, Carl Gustav Jung, and Peter L. Berger.

²⁶ Karel Skalický, *Po stopách neznámého boha* [Tracking the Unknown God] (Svitavy: Trinitas, 2011), 19.

²⁷ Cf. Skalický, *Za naději a smysl* [For Hope and Meaning], 230.

²⁸ See Albert Lang, *Wesen und Wahrheit der Religion: Einführung in die Religionsphilosophie*, (München: Max Hueber, 1957), 236-253.

²⁹ Skalický, *Za naději a smysl* [For Hope and Meaning], 231.

This question leads Skalický to a methodological approach different from those applied by St Thomas, Anselm, or Lang. He suggests the human being in its humanity as a criterion³⁰ for the truthfulness of various non-biblical “universal” or “total” systems. Skalický identifies altogether six of them: (1) the system of chaotic-evolutionary myths; (2) the onto-static system of Parmenides, which has (according to Skalický) its parallel in the cosmology of the Upanishads; (3) the emanationist system of Neoplatonism; (4) the substantial system of Spinoza; (5) the dialectical-spiritual one of Hegel; and the final “total” system of world interpretation is (6) the dialectical-materialistic concept of Marxism-Leninism. In all of these systems, the humanity of the human being is always somehow reduced, while only in the biblical understanding of God and his creation is the human being preserved in all its values. Therefore, Skalický concludes that God (or at least the concept of God), the creator of the world and all human beings, as introduced in the Bible, is truthful, because he is the only one substantially and explicitly enhancing the humanity of human beings and not denying it in any of its aspects.

But this argument is a result of a typically objectivistic way of thinking, very clear and accessible, but yet rather probabilistic than apodictic. Skalický is aware of that and thus he gradually resigns to all attempts to give another proof of God’s existence. He points out only the rationality of religious faith in the (1) absolute, (2) transcendental, and (3) personal (and thus immanent too) God instead. He presents this rationality in contrast with (and as an alternative to) the six ideological rationalities named above. The first step of Skalický’s fundamental theology aims at presenting a credible concept of transcendence and points out the rational aspects of religious faith open to its more concrete formulation in human lives. In short, he starts his fundamental theology with a firm conviction that the God of Christianity demands human love instead of any proof of his own existence. God does not need people for any manifestation of his own existence, but he appreciates them as partners in a relationship. Skalický presents this conviction in a form of the “Cartesian dream:”

I had a dream that soon after Descartes gave a perfectly irrefutable and strictly apodictic proof of God’s existence, God revealed to him and said: Excellent! Your proof of my existence turned out well. You will surely enter the history of human thought with it. But consider what you have done to me by your proof. Actually – if I may say so – you force me to exist. From this moment, when you irrefutably proved that I am, I cannot presume to pretend as if I would not exist. Can you

³⁰ “But it would be a misapprehension of this idea to see it in the sense of Pythagoras’ ‘pantón metron anthrópos.’” Říha, *Fundamentální teologie v existenciálním horizontu myšlení* [Fundamental theology in the Existential Horizon of Thinking], 139.

see what that does mean? Probably not, thus pay good attention: in order that you understand, I am not the God of reigning and hegemony, who always needs a scientific ideology for his own justification, proving undeniably the existence of such a super-ruler, but that I am the God of freedom, who can do without such an ideology very well, I reveal myself to you today to tell you that I will confuse all human thinking. I will confuse it in such a way that you will search me, but you won't find me, as long as you say: it is not our speculating but our love to Him, that love exceeding all other love, that is the highest proof of His existence. Thus, do not say that God exists because we strictly-logically proved him as a necessarily existing Being. But rather say: He exists, because we love Him more than anything else. Consider that I do not want to exist alone out of my own power of an independent Being. I want to exist also – and primarily – through the power of your love, your will to God. Thus, give existence to my Being. Make an endeavour that I will exist not only as a consequence of your logical considerations, but that I will exist through the power of your active and creative love.³¹

But in Christianity, people are exposed not only to the question of God's existence (or non-existence), but also to the question of Jesus Christ (the God who has been born and died, God who became man). This question was central already to Skalický's predecessor at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome, Vladimír Boublík. Skalický naturally builds upon his thought and continues to develop especially the issue of the Resurrection as being of primary importance for any kind of theology, and for fundamental theology above all. The Czech Jesuit philosopher Karel Říha affirmed this position in his review of Skalický's *Teologia fondamentale* in this way: "The possibilities and tasks of fundamental theology can be only measured on the unique character of this problem [of the Resurrection]."³² For Skalický, the phenomenon of the Resurrection points out the mysterious unity of the full deity and full humanity in the person of Jesus Christ – God who was born, lived, and died, while (mysteriously) not losing anything of his divinity. Therefore, he rejected the common argumentation of classical apologetics considering the Resurrection as a kind of "peak miracle" (the Miracle among other miracles) as one-sided and too evidentialist, because in that perspective Jesus functions more or less only as a bearer (messenger) of God's revelation. Skalický is looking on the theological problem of the Resurrection in a more complex way. In the revelation of Jesus Christ, there is an identity of revealer with the mystery of salvation (with what is revealed). "The deepest truth about God and the salvation of man shines out for our sake in Christ, who is both

³¹ Skalický, *Po stopách neznámého boha* [Tracking the Unknown God], 182.

³² Říha, *Fundamentální teologie v existenciálním horizontu myšlení* [Fundamental Theology in the Existential Horizon of Thinking], 146. The title of Říha's review inspired the title of this article.

the mediator and the fullness of all revelation (DV 2).” With explicit reference to the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation of the Second Vatican Council, Skalický sees the Resurrection as: (1) inseparable from revelation, (2) the concrete and visible manifestation of God in human history (from below), and (3) the *mysterium salutis* (from above) at the same time.³³

In his theological investigation on the Resurrection Skalický starts searching for data already available. What do we know about the Resurrection? What texts do we have available? What are their differences and what do they have in common? After an extensive and careful analysis of biblical narratives dealing with the Resurrection³⁴ Skalický goes deeper in his linguistic investigation. What language is employed in order to present the paschal event? What words, terms, and expressions are used? Skalický finds altogether four different styles (languages) used in the Bible to describe the Resurrection³⁵ and thus concludes that for human language it is an extremely difficult challenge to speak about the event, which is real and eschatological at the same time.³⁶ Is it possible to share reality (both historical and trans-historical) and (continuous) radical newness of such an event at once? Skalický thinks it is only possible through a “combination of various languages which complement one another and yet it seems they oppose each other,”³⁷ as it was expressed, for instance, by Melito of Sardis in his famous work *Peri Pascha* (On Pascha).³⁸ These different languages unveil different aspects of the paschal event and drive our attention to the level of its truthfulness and meaning, yet they never exhaust all possibilities to express the mystery so close and yet so far.

What does it mean for us that Jesus was born, lived, died, was buried, and rose from the dead on the third day? If it does make sense for us, is it true? Did it really happen? And how? “What actually happened that night in Jerusalem?”³⁹

³³ Cf. Skalický, *Teologia fondamentale* [Fundamental Theology], (4th edition), 195-209.

³⁴ Skalický highlights 1 Corinthians 15:3b-5 as the most important text for interpretation of the paschal event from a theological as well as historical point of view. Cf. Karel Skalický, “Třetího dne vstal z mrtvých podle písem [On the Third Day He Rose from Dead According to the Scriptures],” in *Věřím ve vzkříšení těla a život věčný* [I Believe in the Resurrection on the Body and Life Everlasting] (Praha: Katechetická sekce ČBK a nakladatelství Tomáš Halama, 2007), 17.

³⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 24-31.

³⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 31.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Melito of Sardis, *Peri Pascha: On Pascha and Fragments* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

³⁹ Skalický, “Třetího dne vstal z mrtvých podle písem [On the Third Day He Rose from Dead According to the Scriptures],” 41.

These questions are for Skalický “an urgent invitation to a decision of faith.”⁴⁰ They challenge the human ability to believe, which is closely related to the human ability to receive and give love. Behind human faith in resurrection there is always a desire to be loved and to love. Yet, such a desire is not anonymous, because it is grounded in concrete historical events and particular experiences of certain historical personalities who loved (e.g., Rm 13:8; Eph 5:2; 1 Jn 4:10-11, 19; etc.) and were loved (e.g., Jn 11:5.36; 13:1.34; 15:12.17; etc.). Skalický sees Christian faith as a particular way of exercising love which is inseparable from confidence:

When you think of it, the Christian faith is inseparable from confidence in the truthfulness of the personal witness of the apostles. Whoever is not willing to be confident of the other in principle is not actually able to believe in the true Christian way. Faith in God and the willingness to trust in people are uniquely interconnected in Christian faith and this has no equivalent in any other religion (...). In Christianity, it is not possible to separate faith in God from confidence in people.⁴¹

In confidence in the witness of St Paul (especially 1 Cor 15:3b-5), Skalický provides us with an excellent exercise regarding what fundamental theology should be – an art of discernment of various ways of thinking, knowledge, and understanding (empirical, rational, intuitional, creative, provisional yet informative, improvisatory, and spiritual). In other words, while remaining within a thorough scholarly discourse, Skalický’s fundamental-theological account of the Resurrection meets the call that theology must be beautiful, compelling, engaging,⁴² understandable, and existentially relevant.⁴³ Fundamental theology should respect specific competencies of all possible approaches to theology and its themes, and look for good values they may offer⁴⁴ to our complex theological investigation – similar to what St Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5:21 - “test everything (and) hold fast to what is good.”

⁴⁰ Říha, “Fundamentální teologie v existenciálním horizontu myšlení [Fundamental theology in the Existential Horizon of Thinking],” 147.

⁴¹ Skalický, “Třetího dne vstal z mrtvých podle písem [On the Third Day He Rose from Dead According to the Scriptures],” 43.

⁴² Jonathan Roach and Grisel Dominguez, *Expressing Theology: A Guide to Writing Theology that Readers Want to Read* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015), 19-22.

⁴³ Štefan Štofanič, “Popularization and Autobiography: Towards an Accessible Theology,” *Acta Universitatis Carolinae Theologica* 4/1 (2014): 68.

⁴⁴ Cf. Tomáš Špidlík, “Skalického fundamentální teologie [Skalický’s Fundamental Theology],” *Studie* 78 (1981): 608.

Consequently, we may say that Skalický does not want to (*a priori*) exclude any possibility for understanding love – the basic principle of our humanity, of human relationships (including that with God). He uses hermeneutics as well as the metaphysical principle of *analogia entis*.⁴⁵ He always attempts to mediate both theory as well as praxis.⁴⁶ In the fundamental theology of Skalický there is a principal openness to all expressions of faith as a relationship to the divine or “sacred,” but at the same time there is a firm confession of particular faith in Jesus Christ, who is, according to Skalický, the only one who reveals the true meaning of humanity, and who actually is the only true (incarnated) answer to the mystery of humankind – the way, the truth, and the life (Jn 14:6).

In claiming this, Skalický invites his readers to track with him the “unknown” God – the initially anonymous “sacred” perceived and experienced in human lives. In his theological endeavour he wrestles with the sacred,⁴⁷ motivated by the desire to fill the term “sacred” with progressively more accurate content or meaning in a way that the face of Jesus Christ – the Resurrected one – slowly appears in clear contours on the canvas of Skalický’s fundamental theology. For Christianity, Jesus Christ is a concrete content, shape, substance, and meaning of the sacred. It is already obvious that emphasising the Resurrection and its inseparable link to revelation plays a significant role in Skalický’s fundamental theology. At this point it is possible to conclude that the initially apophatic start of Skalický’s fundamental theology turns cataphatic; it satisfies rational minds with arguments pointing towards the credibility of the Christian faith but at the same time reminds us that the more we think we know God (*Deus Revelatus*), the more mysterious, hidden and “unknown” (*Deus Absconditus*) he appears to us.⁴⁸ And precisely this kind of interplay of cataphatic and apophatic moments in Skalický’s theology shows that we need to choose a horizon in which we would like to think (and live) theology. In which mode of thinking do we approach the

⁴⁵ Cf. Skalický, *Po stopách neznámého boha* [Tracking the Unknown God], 28.

⁴⁶ Cf. Říha, “Fundamentální teologie v existenciálním horizontu myšlení [Fundamental theology in the Existential Horizon of Thinking],” 134.

⁴⁷ Cf. Karel Skalický, *Alle prese con il sacro: religione nella ricerca scientifica moderna* [In a Struggle with the Sacred: Religion in Modern Scientific Research], (Roma: Herder – Pontificia Università Lateranense, 1982). Czech translation: Karel Skalický, *V utkání s posvátnem: náboženství v religionistickém bádání* [In a Struggle with the Sacred: Religion in the Perspective of Religious Studies] (Brno: CDK, 2005).

⁴⁸ In this way, Skalický is an example of the theologian desired by Gerald O’Collins: “Insofar as they deal with the mystery of God, theologians cannot be too ‘knowing’ but must remain provisional, modest, and apophatic in what they say and claim.” Gerald O’Collins, *Rethinking Fundamental Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 336-337.

experience of revelation and the reality of the Resurrection? In which mode of thinking do we reflect upon our theological life?

3. Fundamental Theology in the Existential Horizon of Thinking

Skalický distinguishes two horizons of thinking – the intellectual and the existential. He prefers the latter as the principle for his own fundamental theology because, he holds, authentic Christian faith can only be born within an existential framework. In the first horizon we ask and answer but questioning and answering is not enough! In the second horizon we search and create, we fight for the meaning of one's own existence in this world.⁴⁹ In other words, the reality of the Resurrection must be connected with the radically existential experience of and with the Resurrected one. Such an experience is certainly also an experience of revelation (or revelatory experience as such). The search for the meaning of Jesus' Resurrection is the main and specific task of fundamental theology, holds Skalický. In the interview with Jan Regner for Radio Vaticana he says:

I regard as a primary task for fundamental theology today rather what my predecessor at the Lateran University Vladimír Boublík started to work at, and what I attempted to do in my Italian fundamental theology: that is, to point out the credibility and deep meaning of the Resurrection of Jesus.⁵⁰

But where is this meaning? And how could it possibly become credible (and existentially relevant) for contemporary people? Hypotheses of the transcendental God might be only a matter of reason and respond only to a question of the rationality of the world's origin. The real idea of God can only arise in the context of faith. If we search for meaning of the human dwelling in this world, and thus also the meaning of this world as such, it is necessary to leave the path of searching for solely a hypothesis of God and find courage to enter a relationship with him. Karel Říha thinks that “the meaning of life as a whole (...) is not only an active relating (...), but a relationship of the (human) spirit as such to the transcendence.”⁵¹ In this sense, meaning is the unity of its

⁴⁹ Cf. Říha, “Fundamentální teologie v existenciálním horizontu myšlení [Fundamental theology in the Existential Horizon of Thinking],” 150.

⁵⁰ Jan Regner, *Víra a fundamentální teologie. Rozhovor s Karlem Skalickým* [Faith and Fundamental Theology. Interview with Karel Skalický], November 17, 2011 [accessed 27th June 2018], <http://www.radiovaticana.cz/clanek.php4?id=653>.

⁵¹ Říha, “Fundamentální teologie v existenciálním horizontu myšlení [Fundamental theology in the Existential Horizon of Thinking],” 148.

discovering and creating, and is characteristic to human relationships. If we pin down the meaning into some relationship, simultaneously we find it there as well.⁵² But religion in the Christian perspective is rather an interpersonal relationship between the personal God and created persons who relate to God as individuals, but also as groups or communities (of faith). There is God on one side, who relates himself to a human being through His Word (Logos), and this Word is God, who says “human” so fervidly and lovingly that He himself became human – he incarnates. On the other side, there is a human being who relates to God through his/her calling of faith “God, Father!” It is a very simple yet deep meaning of the word “Theo-logy.”⁵³

For Skalický this interpersonal communication between human and divine is possible because God reveals himself in human history in order to confirm his promises of new life for humanity, wrestling with trembling and fear in foreseeing his/her own physical termination (death). Karel Říha summarises Skalický’s emphasis on the Resurrection as follows:

Anticipation of death and new life is the meaning which was revealed in history that is in the life, sacrifice and Resurrection of Jesus, in its radical way. Since then the decision of faith, the decision towards a fullness of life is carried by unification with Christ. To become open to life in Christ means to have a share of his life, death and Resurrection. Therefore, the question of the Resurrection is crucial for fundamental theology.⁵⁴

Skalický’s emphasis on the reflection of the Resurrection enabled through the experience of revelation sheds light on the mystery of life and death (of Jesus as well as of our own). Through understanding the Resurrection and the experience of revelation people are able to see at least a glimpse of the meaning of their own life historically framed by birth and death. Skalický’s focus on questions regarding the meaning of life and death (existential questions) marks and implies a new understanding of fundamental theology and a new conception of metaphysics, understood as an “open system of correlativity of the acts of the mind – knowing and wanting – in the necessity of being and freedom of love.”⁵⁵ As such, Skalický’s fundamental theology offers a clear and concrete (Christian) vision of the absolute horizon of humanity which we are not only able to experience,

⁵² Cf. *ibid.*, 148-149.

⁵³ Cf. Štěch, “Fundamentální teologie a křesťanská identita [Fundamental Theology and Christian Identity],” 30.

⁵⁴ Říha, “Fundamentální teologie v existenciálním horizontu myšlení [Fundamental theology in the Existential Horizon of Thinking],” 150.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 148.

but through faith we are also able to enter into a personal relationship with “it.” This is precisely because the absolute horizon of humanity is in the Christian perspective not a blurry vision, but the particular person instead. It is not “it” but “the person” instead. It is Jesus Christ, God with whom we may become friends,⁵⁶ God with whom we cooperate in the constant improvement of our humanity and the world we live in.⁵⁷

Following Boublík, Skalický’s fundamental theology maintains not only theological but also anthropological focus. Put simply, we cannot love God unless we love our fellow human beings and the world.⁵⁸ And I think this is what fundamental theology may offer to Christians as well as non-Christians (to all those who search for mysterious meaningfulness of the world and our being in it) – a reflection of the God-Human mutual relationship experienced within the scene of this world and its particular (contextual, socio-historical, geographical...) landscapes. According to Skalický, emphasising and enhancing humanity could be used as a criterion to assess the truthfulness of the world view (Weltanschauung) because (at least in Christian terms) everything that improves humanity and preserves it in all its aspects directs us and leads us to God – who became one of us in order to reveal that the human being shall be nothing other

⁵⁶ This was already a conviction of Vladimír Boublík who spoke about the mystery of Nazareth where they were meeting Jesus as their fellow human being – as a neighbour or even a friend. “Inhabitants of Nazareth were meeting the incarnated God on the streets, when working, having fun or with a glass of wine. Meeting God on the street is perhaps better than in the smell of incense and faded flowers.” Vladimír Boublík, *Setkání s Ježíšem* [Meeting with Jesus] (Svitavy: Trinitas, 2002), 126–127.

⁵⁷ “No relationship is played out in an absolute vacuum; it needs always its proper context, where it can be perceived, developed and understood. Of course, the quality of a relationship is measurable only with difficulty for an external observer. However, it is possible to estimate the quality of a particular relationship from the way those involved in it treat each other, and their surroundings. Each relationship manifests itself in its environment. The garden of those who love each other blossoms and is beautiful, because they work together in it. The garden of those who quarrel is overgrown with weeds and fruit of trees nobody harvests. Relationships and their quality are expressed in their tangible contexts. The context of theology understood as a multifaceted relationship of free persons (God – human beings), is the ‘garden’ of the world and its history.” František Štěch, “Co je teologie? [What is Theology?],” in *Domov jako most: Festschrift k padesátinám Ivany Noble*, ed. Zdenko Širka [Home as a Bridge: Festschrift celebrating 50th birthday of Ivana Noble] (Jihlava: Mlýn, 2016), 14-15.

⁵⁸ This accords well with how the late Cardinal Avery Dulles defines crucial questions for the discipline of fundamental theology: “Fundamental theology, I would suggest, must ask not only how we get to God but how God comes to us. It must maintain a theological as well as an anthropological focus.” Avery Dulles, *The Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System* (New York, NY: Crossroad, 1995), 56-57.

than a human being heading towards its completeness and fullness offered by God as salvation.

Conclusion

At this point, it is possible to conclude that even though Skalický's fundamental theology was shaped a few decades ago, it does not lose any of its relevance for its readers today. It might appear a little outdated here and there, but as such it maintains the potential to inspire contemporary theologians in a considerable way. First, it must be mentioned that the whole work of Skalický shows that the personal story as well as the story of the community of believers does matter for theology. In fact, the particular story is always decisive for how people interpret and use classical sources of theology: Scripture, Tradition, and the magisterial teaching of the Church. This naturally influences the way theology appears, performs, and functions in human society. Since the Second Vatican Council, the classical triad of sources for theology became a tetrad when the signs of the times were suggested by the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (GS 4). This imperative of scrutinising and interpreting phenomena characteristic to present times in the light of the Gospel always resonated in Skalický's life and theology. Therefore, Skalický never considered himself just as a theologian, but also as an active citizen of Italy and the Czech Republic. He was engaged in dialogue with Marxism, in interreligious and intercultural dialogue, and also in dialogue with secularised society and its representatives. In this respect he has always been a kind of public theologian whose theology rests upon the relationality of God, people, and the world. In this sense we may say, that Skalický is a "son of the Second Vatican Council" in the best sense of the term, passionately promoting and defending the council's legacy since the end of the 1960s until today when (despite his advanced age) he is one of the most prolific advocates of Pope Francis and his vision of the Church in the Czech Republic. Skalický's theology was never done as an abstract intellectual exercise but instead, it might be said, it was and still is the way of his life. Consequently, it would not be a mistake to characterise Skalický's fundamental theology as a fruit of the post-conciliar period in Catholic theology. And it is precisely a task for contemporary theologians to respond creatively to the achievements of their predecessors and rethink their positions in the context of our time. Skalický's fundamental theology offers plenty opportunities for that. We may start developing his theory of revelation and time relationship, or we can focus on the notion of the presence (and form) of revelation in world religions. Another possibility is to undertake a serious study of the phenomenon of the

Resurrection, which is now being neglected again in theological debates, even though the debate about the Resurrection was intensive during the course of the 20th century.⁵⁹ We can also engage in theology and religious studies encounters and dialogue or develop the line of dialogue with philosophy. Reading Skalický, we may also set off in the direction of engaged, public theology or the theology of religions. In this respect, Skalický's theology as such calls for interdisciplinarity. He suggests that theologians need to come out from the "totem" of their own profession and take courage to meet and embrace other disciplines, no matter how far from theology they are. Theologians need to behave according to the principle of "totemic exogamy,"⁶⁰ says Skalický, because

Whoever wants to be 'vulnerable' and wants to 'deliver' must leave the shelter of one's own 'disciplinary totem' and search somewhere else. Just as totemic exogamy obliges tribe members, interdisciplinarity (...) is gradually becoming urgent.⁶¹

Skalický himself entered into dialogue with different facets and representatives of religious studies and philosophy as it is obvious from large parts of his fundamental theology. Despite this "outer interdisciplinarity," he has also maintained dialogue within the broad field of theology.⁶²

⁵⁹ Kenan Osborne notes to this issue, "At the beginning of the twentieth century not all Roman Catholic, nor all Protestant theologians and biblical scholars shared (...) interest in the resurrection of Jesus. At that time, Roman Catholic theology was by and large still dominated by the so-called manuals of theology, used extensively in seminary education. When one reviews these manuals of theology, two major items concerning the resurrection of Jesus emerge. First, in the sections devoted specifically to Christology the authors generally spent only a few paragraphs on the resurrection. (...) Second, outside of the specific chapters on Christology in these text books, the pages dedicated to apologetics offered a somewhat more extensive explanation of the resurrection. Nonetheless, in these Christological sections of theological apologetics the resurrection of Jesus was considered primarily as a proof both of his divinity and of the claims and prophecies that Jesus had made during his earthly life." Kenan Osborne, *The Resurrection of Jesus: New Considerations for its Theological Interpretation* (Eugene (OR): Wipf and Stock, 2004), 7-8.

⁶⁰ A principle described already by James George Frazer in his extensive four-volume work *Totemism and Exogamy*. See James George Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy: A Treatise on Certain Early Forms of Superstition and Society*, vols. I – IV (New York: Cosimo, 2010). The principle of totemic exogamy according to Frazer obliges tribe members to find their partners in a different tribe or totemic clan.

⁶¹ Skalický, *V utkání s posvátnem: náboženství v religionistickém bádání* [In a Struggle with the Sacred: Religion in Perspective of Religious Studies], 12.

⁶² In the afterword to Skalický's book *Struggles for Tomorrow or Quo Vadis Ecclesia*, the Czech philosopher and theologian Karel Vrána states that "theological thinking of Karel Skalický (...) surmounts dialectical method and becomes an integral dialogue." Consequently, he characterises

Drawing on Skalický, it can be said that apart from practising inner interdisciplinarity within theology, theologians must seriously consider the contemporary cognitive pluralism present in the “shared realm of public discourse,”⁶³ as Wenzel Van Huyssteen puts it. If theology wants to take part in public discussion, it must be able to enter the arena of interdisciplinarity beyond its own boundaries. That means, “to accept the unavailability of consensus, and to work at creating a communal framework of the wide reflecting equilibrium of thought and action.”⁶⁴ The true interdisciplinarity in theology is a call for public theology, and happens,

when our conversations proceed, not in terms of imposed ‘universal’ rules, nor in terms of purely ad hoc rules, but when we identify this (post-foundationalist) space where both strong Christian convictions as well as the public voice of theology are fused in public conversation.⁶⁵

Even though interdisciplinarity is an imperative for scholars, it should not become just a void, a programmatic necessity. This warning sounds strongly from Aaron Ghiloni, who reminds us that interdisciplinarity should not be only a motto in today’s university culture,⁶⁶ but rather a deep attitude of openness free of each attempt to ideologise interdisciplinarity. In theology, interdisciplinarity must be motivated by a mission mind-set which

understands the necessity of communicating between cultures, thus balancing interdisciplinarity’s competing demands for clarity and nuance. Indeed, early missiologists, such as St Luke and Eusebius, might be seen as proto-interdisciplinary theologians, inasmuch as they develop narratives which deliberately draw on ‘non-religious’ sources in addition to sacred writings.⁶⁷

All in all, interdisciplinarity and public discourse in theology are not the only ways forward, but certainly remain powerful tools for keeping theology up to date, understandable, and (existentially) relevant to contemporaries. Skalický’s fundamental theology advocates the use of these tools by its own example, invites

Skalický’s theology as “integral” and “holistic.” Karel Vrána, “Doslov [Afterword],” in Karel Skalický, *Zápasy o zítřek aneb Quo Vadis Ecclesia* [Struggles for Tomorrow or Quo Vadis Ecclesia], (Rychnov nad Kněžnou: Ježek, 2000), 136.

⁶³ Wenzel J. Van Huyssteen, *The Shaping of Rationality: Toward Interdisciplinarity in Theology and Science* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 279.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 279-280.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 280.

⁶⁶ Aaron J. Ghiloni, “On Writing Interdisciplinary Theology,” *Practical Theology* 6:1 (2013): 13-14.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

readers to learn, inspires them to reflect, and encourages them to set off on their own direction.

However, these important inspirations (namely emphasising interdisciplinarity and involvement in public discourse) that Skalický's theology provides for contemporary theology might seem to some to be somewhat commonplace. In order to avoid such possible feelings, I would like to offer at least one concrete example of what Skalický's theology implies for current theological debates. It is beyond doubt that one of the central questions of fundamental theology today is the question of human identity, or more specifically the question of Christian identity (human identity in theological terms) in the context of the contemporary world.⁶⁸ Skalický's fundamental theology suggests Christian identity to be human identity transformed by an encounter with God's revelation. He brings the question of human identity into a close relation to the identity of Jesus Christ. In the perspective of Skalický, Christianity is about an everyday discernment and readiness to affirm the essentials of Christianity over and over again. No one can say that he or she will be, for sure, still a Christian tomorrow. No one knows what can happen in life and how one's own faith might be threatened and may also be shipwrecked during the storms of life. Therefore, continuous conversion is principal to Christianity, it is a *modus operandi* in the process of searching for and building Christian religious identity, which is not set up (or gained) once and forever (for example, by primary conversion or baptism), but it is rather a life-long process of discernment and theologising. Consequently, each attempt to come closer to a potential defining of the Christian religious identity must consider its own inner plurality, and even with a kind of paradoxical nature, because Christian religious identity is something still in the making; it is a gift people cannot possess or claim but can only receive it with gratitude and take care of it with a loving attitude.

Karel Skalický is also well aware of the fact that it is impossible to give a single, comprehensive definition of Christian religious identity, at least not in contemporary times. In the past, when denominational struggles, especially those between Catholics and Protestants, dominated Christianity, it was possible to define Christian identity in clear terms. Only one who is baptised in the true church of Christ, confesses the true creed, and subordinates to the only

⁶⁸ As for instance, Clemens Sedmak says that identity is "one of the basic questions of theology. In this sense we do theology all the time, because we constantly try to find our place in our community, in society, in the world. Questions of identity are theological questions." Clemens Sedmak, *Doing Local Theology: A Guide for Artisans of a New Humanity* (New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 74.

true church authority has Christian identity.⁶⁹ Skalický understandably rejects this way of defining religious identity and offers an alternative. He thinks that Christian religious identity may be defined by three interrelated paradigms: (1) the paradigm of God's self-communication (Karl Rahner), (2) the paradigm of the first and the second creation (Karel Skalický, Vladimír Boublík) and (3) the practically-oriented paradigm of following Christ (Hans Küng). Even though Skalický thinks a combination of these three paradigms allows for a relatively complex discernment of Christian religious identity, he still favours the second approach, which he defined himself in building to great extent on his predecessor at the Lateran University, Vladimír Boublík. This approach enables us to connect the first paradigm with the third and pictures Christian identity as being born within the bipolar dynamics of the first and second creation.

Such bipolarity is significant even within the nature of Christian identity. The Christian is a human being like anyone else, but still the new and last Adam, the Risen one, who anoints each person with his Spirit, lives in him or her. By the power of this anointing each Christian is born twice: bodily from his or her parents and spiritually from the resurrected humanity of Christ, through the anointing of the Holy Spirit. From a theological point of view, such an identity is not homogeneous, but heterogeneous in the sense that the whole humanity of the first creation is oriented towards the risen Christ, who is the tree of life, the perfect kingdom of God, the heavenly Jerusalem.⁷⁰

Such a gradual transformation of the first creation into the second is possible according to Skalický only through the praxis of following Christ (paradigm 3) and thanks to God's revelation throughout history (paradigm 1).⁷¹ However, true Christian identity cannot be established exclusively by following the crucified Jesus but must be balanced also by following the risen Christ. As it is not possible to separate Jesus from Christ, it is not possible to separate his death from his resurrection. Both moments of his life must be held and meditated upon in close

⁶⁹ Karel Skalický "Kdo je křesťan? K teologii křesťanské existence" [Who is Christian? Towards a Theology of Christian Existence] *Teologické texty*, 25:2 (2014): 58.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁷¹ In the perspective of the first paradigm Christians are able to accept God who freely communicates (reveals) himself to humanity (1) in the historical event of Jesus Christ, continues to communicate with people through (2) being encountered in the life of individuals and communities (dependent revelation), and finally (3) promises to pronounce the concluding word towards this world in the eschatological future of the definitive implementation of God's kingdom announced by Jesus Christ (eschatological revelation). Cf. František Štěch, "Zjevení a teologický obrat v teologii" [Revelation and the Theological Turn in Theology] *AUC Theologica* 7:2 (2017): 59.

unity otherwise our Christian religious identity suffers again from (theological) unbalance, having an effect on the practice of the Christian life as well.

It is now possible, in line with Skalický's vision of Christian identity, to see that questions of Christian religious identity are individual as well as communal, they are actual as well as perennial, and they are relevant for particular persons as well as for whole communities. They can be perceived as truly public questions relevant for Christians and non-Christians, too. Skalický thinks that searching for Christian religious identity is inseparable from searching for human identity in the light of Christian revelation. This could be a particular perspective which Christians could bring to the society-wide, public process of discernment and realisation of the ideals of humanity and contribute towards forming basic human identity. Everyone who wants to realise fully his or her own humanity naturally searches for the absolute horizon of humanity. If this is true, the Christian endeavour to find and become closer to such a horizon (perceived in Christianity and experienced through revelation) represents a challenge open to everyone. Christians are not following Jesus Christ for the sake of their own salvation but for the sake of the welfare of the whole of humanity.

It was in 1982, during his political imprisonment, when Václav Havel, the famous Czech intellectual, playwright, dissident, and later also president of Czechoslovakia (1989-1992) and the Czech Republic (1993-2003), wrote:

People seized the world in a way that they de facto lost it; they subjugated it in a way that they destroyed it (...). The deepest causes of this tragic development are obvious I think: a continually deepened crisis of experience of the absolute horizon growing out of the very spiritual structure of our civilization leads towards losing a sense for the integrity of existence, mutual interconnection of beings, and of their independence. From the phenomena of the world, their mysterious meaningfulness drains out (they are neither mysterious nor meaningful any more), and everything turns into 'conciseness' – and what is most important: a crisis of experience of the absolute horizon leads naturally towards a crisis of substantial responsibility of human beings towards the world and for the world – that means towards themselves and for themselves. And where there is no such responsibility – as a meaningful basis of the relationship between people and their environment – human identity as the unmistakable place of the human being in the world set by such a relationship, vanishes inevitably.⁷²

Havel's essay "Crisis of identity" depicts very well the nature of human identity from a general perspective. Human identity finds its place not only in the coherence of person with one's own personality, nor solely in the relationship

⁷² Václav Havel, *O lidskou identitu* [On Human Identity] (Praha: Rozmluvy, 1990), 349.

of human beings with the world they create and live in, but also in relation to the experience of the absolute horizon of humanity. Havel sees the absence of such an absolute horizon as a deep source of societal crisis, which is after all a spiritual crisis. Much has changed in the world since Havel wrote his essay on human identity, but I think the message of his text is as urgent today as it was at that time. Dehumanisation tendencies in the contemporary world are even stronger than they were towards the end of the 20th century and people suffer through a crisis of their identities now, just as they did before. Havel's diagnosis of the problem is very accurate. He suggests that people should try to behave responsibly, that is, in a way they think it is right to behave and in a way they think (according to their most honest conviction) all people should actually behave.⁷³ Who would not perceive in this kind of thinking the age-old wisdom of the "golden rule" which says, "what you hate, do not do to anyone" (Tobit 4:15)? But is it acceptable if we ground our identity and also our morals in personal convictions about what is right or wrong?

As a humanist, Havel was hesitant in all his writings to name the transcendence perceived and therefore here and elsewhere he rather remains with the general term "experience of the absolute horizon," because he takes seriously practically all ancient religious traditions "Christian, Jewish, 'Pagan,' Hermetic, Asian."⁷⁴ Martin C. Putna, author of a book on the spirituality of Václav Havel, perceives Havel's proclamation in his first presidential speech of 1st January 1990 to invite the Pope and the Dalai Lama to Prague as a symbolic act of claiming allegiance to the old spiritual traditions of the world in front of the mostly secular Czech society. Havel's willingness to listen to experiences of different religious traditions is perhaps the most important spiritual heritage he left us. He reminds us that the most important thing is to free ourselves from prejudices and to keep the public space open to different voices of different ancient wisdoms, which may help humanity grow.⁷⁵

Havel's experience of the absolute horizon is from the Christian perspective an experience of Jesus Christ, an experience of God's divine revelation. It is an experience with transcendence which has a name "above every name that is named" (Ephes 1:21). It is a transcendental experience of faith manifested as courage to the fullness of the meaning of life. Contrary (but also complementary) to Havel, Skalický would claim that Christianity offers a clear and concrete vision of the

⁷³ Ibid., 351.

⁷⁴ Martin C. Putna, *Spiritualita Václava Havla* [Spirituality of Václav Havel] (Praha: Knihovna Václava Havla, 2009), 79.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

absolute horizon which is not only to be experienced or perceived but to which we may find that we have a relationship after all. It is because in Christianity the absolute horizon of humanity is not merely a vision but a particular person instead. It is the person of Jesus Christ, who asks everyone searching for a mysterious meaningfulness of human life to respond to the question he asked the disciples at Caesarea Philippi: "Who do you say I am?" (Matt 16:15; Mk 8:29; Lk 9:20).

Searching for Christian identity is therefore not a mission impossible but rather a mission responsible. And that is in two ways: (1) It is about responsibility (response-ability) towards the self, the other, and the world in the sense of Havel's thought, where responsibility seems to be about transforming values to action; and (2) It is about the ability to respond (response-ability) to the call of God to do his will (cf. Matt 7:21), and also, it is about the ability to respond to the question of Jesus. Christians are not Christians just for being Christians: they are Christians for others. Christian life is about being on mission responsible. It is about participation in the mission of God (*missio Dei*) in the world, which means, above all, to do theology in the style of the Anointed One sent from God to "bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn" (Isa 61:1-2). Discussion on Christian identity is the concrete example of how we may engage with Skalický's fundamental theology in contemporary theological debates.

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Awaken a Human Imagination Academic Oration Delivered in the Graduation Ceremony (28 November 2018)

It is a great honour to be here with you on this occasion. Your story, dear graduands, is unfolding in front of our very eyes. Your time, reading, reflecting, and years of studying hard, has now revealed the best of your abilities. Well done! On behalf of all academic and administrative staff, I congratulate you on your achievement!

All About Life and a Yearning for Knowledge

“Life is a journey, along different roads and different paths which leave their mark on us” (Pope Francis). You have come for your reward after months of patience, courage and determination. Undergoing this self-transforming journey is priceless. Success comes with sacrifice, and excellence comes with endurance. A university degree proves that a specific area of knowledge has been mastered. It is all about knowledge and wisdom, and yet it is all about life and one’s search for meaning. You have now matured in wisdom, steadfastness and vision for life.

Earning a degree entails reading ahead, seeing beyond and questioning assumptions. But making a difference to your own life and to the lives of other people will also require you to constantly cultivate a sense of humility, and the conviction that even if you have learnt a great deal there is always more to discover. This recalls the ABC of academia, or perhaps, the ABC of life: Always Be Critical. “Always” means do not miss any opportunity to learn new things. Seek, read, discover, question and learn so that when you need to make your

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voice heard, you will be prepared. “Be” means live your life to the full in spite of all adversities. Put passion into your work and you will never have a tiresome day in your life. It is not just about doing, but about being yourself. “Critical” means never take anything for granted. Take the plunge. Be different. Examine everything yourself and leave no stone unturned. Learn rhetoric, read the classics, have an open heart and a clear mind and prove yourself right with gentleness and humility (1 Peter 3:15).

Protagonists of Change, Not Guilty Bystanders

It is at the end of a university course that one starts to capture the beauty of the profession or vocation sought through one’s studies. You stand on the shoulders of giants and you can become like them through unrelenting dedication and diligence to perfect your expertise. Write your own narrative and do it in your own way. Remember that, as Paul Ricoeur says, life stories are meant to be “written,” just as much as to be “read.”

Our Alma Mater has provided space for research, reflection, collaboration and collective action. In gratitude, recognise your respective gifts and use them in a creative way for those around you. Go forth braving all issues, be they intellectual, ethical, religious, artistic, cultural, economic, political or social. According to Thomas Merton, you have a choice of either being “guilty bystanders” or a “significant voice” in the world. Challenges are there to be overcome. It is today that we have to create the world of the future. Recall the words of Etty Hillesum, a young Jewish woman who was your age, who said “And if God does not help me to go on, then I shall have to help God.”

The world is our common home, even if it continues to bear the marks of suffering, corruption, confusion and uncertainty. Take small, but effective steps to help our community, and beyond, to reach the sustainability targets, to respect future generations. Think about the contribution that you are privileged to make for a more humane and flourishing world. Your expertise in financial services, ocean governance, law, including business and comparative law, pastoral theology, youth work, family counselling, school leadership, chaplaincy work, island and small states, performing arts, - all enhance the quality of our life. You are all dealing with humanity, with human lives. Therefore, using Mother Theresa’s words, I urge you to “spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier.” Be protagonists of truth, freedom and authenticity.

Widen Your Horizon and Have the Right Disposition

We need imagination since this is our threshold to new possibilities. Enlarge your mind (John Henry Newman). With imagination, something gets healed even when hope seems to be fading. Imagination leads to questions. How simple, yet beautiful and powerful words we find in the non-fiction book *Letters to Juliet*: “‘What’ and ‘If’ are two words as non-threatening as words can be. But put them together side-by-side and they have the power to haunt you for the rest of your life.”

What if? It helps us to trust and explore possibilities. We also ask “how,” because we seek meaning as we deal with sensibility, fragility and life-stories of redemption. On a day like this, your graduation date, the completion of your studies, there is far more than the eyes can see. Let this occasion awaken in you a deeper human and even a religious imagination. “*Redi in te ipsum*” said Augustine. “Do not look outside; return to yourself. In our interior, the truth resides” (*The True Religion* 39,72). May your quest be an existential one, engaging your mind and your heart. Explore the role of affectivity, engage in sincere dialogue and ask questions too. We are at once that human spirit that searches, desiring self-fulfilment, while trying to transcend all obstacles, yearning for beauty, meaning and love.

As you come to the different crossroads of life, remember to refer to the lessons you learnt, your grammar of justice, the commandments of love, to complement all the training you have received in your respective backgrounds. Do not get stuck in positivism or mere arguments. Change your wavelengths so as to enter relationships of trust, and seek to have the right disposition (Bernard Lonergan) – openness, readiness and the disposition to wonder. The latter is the key to persevere in your duty, vocation and love. “The readiness is all” said Shakespeare through Hamlet. I conclude with the words of John O’Donohue:

May you awaken to the mystery of being here and enter the quiet immensity
of your own presence.

May you respond to the call of your gift and find the courage to follow its
path.

May you take time to celebrate the quiet miracles that seek no attention.

May you be consoled in the secret symmetry of your soul.

May you experience each day as a sacred gift woven around the heart of
wonder.

(Benedictus: A Book of Blessings)

Modern Atheism

Excerpt from *Melita Theologica* 19/1-2 (1967): 29-34

It is first of all on the intellectual level that the certainty of God's existence is undermined in the minds of many people. The atheistic argument here runs chiefly on two different levels, objective and subjective, which basically correspond to the two levels in the structure of human consciousness. Objective atheism, if we may use this term, is that system which calls the existence of God into doubt on the grounds that the proofs that have been provided so far are found lacking. One must not underestimate the interior conflicts of certain men who found that their scientific discoveries and rational convictions were at odds with religious tradition, and we know that many a scientific mind has spent much thought and energy in reconciling scientific insights with religious tradition. And the time had come when Western man thought he could shake off this tradition as standing in the way of what seemed to be the destiny of Western culture, namely the scientific and technological mastering of this world for the benefit of mankind, a task which was sometimes met with indifference by representatives of religion, if not outrightly opposed. Thus, science was one of the most important agents in the secularizing process of mankind. And while many of the pioneers of modern science - like Newton and Descartes - were devout believers, they actually explained much of nature that previously seemed godly mysteries. When the French astronomer Laplace was asked by Napoleon why there was no mention of God in his new book about the stars, he coolly

* Maurice Eminyan (1922-2010) was professor of dogmatic theology at the University of Malta between 1965 and 1993 and director of the Institute of Religious Studies at the University of Malta for many years. He was Dean of the Faculty of Theology between 1975 and 1982 and Jesuit Provincial between 1960 and 1966. Among many other roles, he was national chaplain of the German-speaking community.

answered: "I had no need of that hypothesis."¹ Neither for that matter, did Charles Darwin in uncovering the evidence of evolution.

Subjective atheism is the other kind of intellectual atheism. It rests on the rational analysis of man as a religious subject. The problem here is not whether or not God exists, but whether religion is at all possible. It is man himself who is questioning his own motivation to believe. According to some, God is really believed in only because man needs to believe in God (and the reason why man needs to believe in God may be different in different persons); hence it follows, according to these, that God does not really exist, but that He is only the projection of man. This kind of argument, with which we meet, for instance, in the existentialist philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre and others,² returns in an even more subtle way in another form. Modern man feels the need to be wholly in his activity, to be authentically himself. And his eyes are open to all the possibilities of self-deceit and hypocrisy on the one hand, and of escapism and day-dreaming on the other. The high degree of rational understanding of the structure of human culture has no doubt diminished the spontaneity with which man could recognize himself in cultural values. Hence atheism is an expression of a deep uncertainty of man in a world which he has himself created and made dangerous. Relatively well off materially, and reasonably certain as regards the primary needs of daily existence, modern man is uncertain with respect to the ultimate meaning of it all. He does not believe any more, because he is incapable of believing.

Another source of atheism for modern man consists of considerations which have to do with morality, with human dignity, with questions of right and wrong. But here again the rejection of God is related to the image of God which is rejected, and hence we can distinguish three kinds of moral atheism: the atheism that rejects the very idea of God, the rejection of faith in God as a proper human attitude, and finally the rejection of God as a protest against the moral attitude of the believers.

In the first category we would classify such forms of atheism, as the rebellion against the idea of a God who is love, because of the suffering and injustice in this world. In the second group fall such forms of atheism that consider it a sort of escape from the human condition to rely on God rather than on man's own power. The third form rejects God because one does not see any positive fruits of faith in the group of the believers, no higher moral standards, no more human dignity, no more love, but, on the contrary sometimes even injustice and oppression

¹ "Is God Dead?" Time magazine, April 8, 1966.

² See Ignace Lepp, *Atheism in Our Time* (New York: Macmillan, 1963), 141.

in the name of faith. It would take us too long to judge such attitudes and to see to what extent similar allegations may be true at times; but we may perhaps only make ours some remarks that are contained in a recent book entitled *The Meaning of Modern Atheism*, by Jean Lacroix,³ who is a Catholic. Here we have a study on the relation that is thought to exist between human responsibility and the denial of God. None of the various possible ways of avoiding responsibility is specifically Christian; nor indeed can it be claimed that Christianity encourages irresponsibility. What is it then that led some to think that being a believer tended to make one less aware of one's responsibilities as a man? What is it that makes one give up the struggle in this life and remain content to be no worse than the majority of men? Is it the admission of an afterlife that is fully happy and unending? Is it a false notion of the providence of God, which they turn to suit their own laziness and greed? Is it a false notion of the will of God, which they have set into their minds to conceal their lack of hunger and thirst after justice? The answer to these questions is somehow given by Michael Novak in the introduction to his book *The Open Church*:⁴

For many centuries the Church has not *appeared* to be developing a Godlike race. It has appeared to not be forming men to integrity, to courage, to humble charity. It has seemed to many to call men to lead an unreal life, an irrelevant life.⁵

The third source of atheism in our analysis is religious. What we mean here is perhaps not a real form of atheism, but a rejection of the traditional forms of theism. It is a form of negative theology pushed to its extreme. It is the assertion of the utter incomprehensibility of God, who is the Unknowable and has therefore to remain undefined. As an attitude, this form of atheism can run through a whole range of positions, from no concern with the Unknowable to a deep awareness of God's complete mysteriousness. The high God is, so to speak, too high to have any real interest in man's problems. There is the rather frequent attitude of people who say they believe there must be "something behind it all," but have no real concern to come to any clear conception of him. To many who do formulate their notion of God, he could be anything from a celestial body well beyond the range of astronauts, to an invisible honorary president "out there" in space. When a student of theology was asked to formulate his own notion of God, his answer

³ J. Lacroix, *The meaning of Modern Atheism* (Dublin: Gill & Son, 1965).

⁴ M. Novak, *The Open Church* (London & New York, 1964); of the same author see also *Belief and Unbelief* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966).

⁵ See also I. Lepp, op. cit., 190 ff.

was: "God is all that I cannot understand."⁶ Very often this sceptical form of atheism is a clear protest against the certainty with which certain churchmen, especially preachers, sometimes express themselves, just as if they had just finished having lunch with God, or against certain popular conceptions of God which appear to be rather childish and primitive, like that of God as an insensible judge who seems to have somewhat more fun in punishing than in rewarding men.

I think we must also include here, under the heading of religious atheism, that form of atheism which finds the pole of religious commitment not in God but in some other value, like for instance one's personal dedication to the benefit of mankind. In this form the phenomenon of atheism seems to be rather frequent and, indeed, rather typical of modern religiosity, even though its identification with religion is perhaps not so commonly accepted. I think we can admit that in such a mentality there is not certainly a full rejection of transcendence as such, even if there is a rejection of a transcendent God. For today the idea of the "sacred" is being more and more defined in terms of a realization of mankind's highest potentialities, which may well imply transcendent spiritual values. And this can have a meaning even in an evangelical context, where the love of God and the love of man would be identified to such an extent, that the love of man becomes the final content of man's religious life.⁷ Hence what we really end up with is this: an acceptance of the religious contribution of Christianity, accompanied by a rejection of its basis in revelation. This is what is meant today by secularized Christianity and religious atheism.

These are then the answers we might expect from one out of three persons we meet in a busy street of any large modern city, like Oxford Street, London, or Fifth Avenue, New York City, although for most atheists, as I have already suggested, these causes are only active in their subconscious and one would often find it hard to draw them out. "Personally, I have never been confronted with the question of God," says a politely indifferent atheist, Dr. Claude Levi-Strauss, Professor of Social anthropology at the College de France. We may perhaps call this phenomenon, with Father John Courtney Murray, the atheism of distraction: "People are just too busy to worry about God at all."⁸

⁶ Time, loc. cit.

⁷ See John A. T. Robinson, *Honest to God* (London: SCM Press, 1963). In a subsequent booklet *The New Reformation?* (London: SCM, 1965) Dr. Robinson faces the question, "Can a truly contemporary person not be an atheist?"; see also W. Hamilton, *The New Essence of Christianity* (New York, 1966); F. Jeanson, *La foi d'un incroyant* (Paris, 1963); P. Van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel* (New York, 1963).

⁸ Time, loc. cit.

At this point of this study, where one might have logically expected to see, at least in outline, a refutation of atheistic thinking, I must come to a conclusion. My aim was to understand, not to disprove. For much too long, I think, we Christians have been content to dismiss opposing points of view as erroneous and futile, while making little attempt to understand why these opinions were held. Yet, if the Christian message of salvation is to be relevant, and seem relevant, to all men, then the Church, in the words of the Second Vatican Council, and of Pope Paul in his Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, must look not with censure, but with understanding; she must not condemn those who are away from her, but establish a dialogue with them. And this Pope Paul has done, when in April of 1965 he announced to the world the setting up of a special Secretariat for non-believers, with the specific task of organizing inquiries in various countries, seeking contacts and drawing up norms and directives for the use of Catholics in the dialogue with atheists of all kinds. Hence, it was not a complete surprise for us when a few months ago Pope Paul himself received in audience none other than the President of the Soviet Union.

Nietzsche spoke of the death of God, and the theme became a catchphrase. But it was not Nietzsche's invention, nor should it come as such a shock to Christians, whose faith is based on the death of a person who was God and on his victory over death. But what surprised the ancient world most was not that God was dead, but that, once and for all, he had risen from the dead. God is not dead: He is the most living of all living things. But many false gods must die before man can make his way to the living God.

Book Review:

SANDRI Luigi,

Il Papa Gaucho e i Divorziati – Questo Matrimonio (non) s’ha da farsi

(Ariccia: Aracne Editrice, 2018), 356pp.

ISBN 978-88-255-1595-4

Luigi Sandri, journalist accredited to the Vatican (former ANSA correspondent to Moscow and to Jerusalem) and Church historian (author of the monumental *Dal Gerusalemme Primo al Vaticano III*) has recently published *Il Papa Gaucho e I Divorziati – Questo Matrimonio (non) s’ha da Farsi*. The book is specifically about certain passages in the apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*; passages that concern the (possible?) admissions of remarried divorced Catholics to the sacraments. The book however, touches broader topics like the role of the *Magisterium* within the Catholic Church, the nature of Catholic doctrine, the concept of Tradition, and some of the key themes of Vatican II. In the book Sandri:

- i) gives some context regarding papal pronouncements on marriage, sex and admission to the sacraments;
- ii) gives the content of Pope Bergoglio’s document;
- iii) illustrates the different interpretations of and reactions to *Amoris Laetitia*; and
- iv) suggests that the issues raised by this papal document (which go much beyond that of access to sacraments by divorcees) may be successfully resolved only through an ecumenical council.

The part of the text that raised most controversy is a note which holds that “In certain cases, [pastoral care for divorcees] can include the help of the sacraments. Hence, ‘I want to remind priests that the confessional must not be

a torture chamber, but rather an encounter with the Lord's mercy' (Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* [24 November 2013], 44: AAS 105 [2013], 1038). I would also point out that the Eucharist is not a prize for the perfect, but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak." The Vatican claims that the said passage is not doctrinally innovative with respect to papal pronouncements on such matters by recent popes like Paul VI, John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Many conservative critics on the other hand, consider it to be inconsistent with the Church's Tradition and teachings.

Sandri discusses the arguments that support the two claims, holding that while Conservatives are correct to claim that such passage is inconsistent with what has been asserted in papal documents since the Council of Trent; that a definite "no" has become a "maybe;" it is not obvious that it is inconsistent with Catholic Tradition as such. Canon 8 of an earlier Church Council, that of Nicea, holds that "Concerning those who call themselves pure, if they come over to the Catholic and Apostolic Church, the great and holy Synod decrees that they who are ordained shall continue as they are in the clergy. But it is before all things necessary that they should profess in writing that they will observe and follow the dogmas of the Catholic and Apostolic Church; in particular that they will communicate with persons who have been twice married, and with those who having lapsed in persecution have had a period [of penance] laid upon them, and a time [of restoration] fixed so that in all things they will follow the dogmas of the Catholic Church." This seems to suggest that at an earlier time the Church, while considering Christians who married more than once on the same par as those who apostatized during the Roman persecutions and hence required to do penance, admitted them within its fold.

Amoris Laetitia however, has been criticized on other grounds, specifically that it is inconsistent with the Gospels and that it is logically unsound. Regarding the former, Sandri presents the Conservative case which holds that what the Gospels say (Matthew 19) regarding the issue; i.e. that divorce is condemnable and never to be admitted; ought to be accepted *sine glossa*. He also considers possible ways of rebutting this claim, like the argument which holds that the Gospels do not speak of divorce but of repudiation, that *porneia* ought not to be translated as "illicit union," and that the exception this involves might have been inserted for reasons of mercy to balance and complement the rigid command not to divide what God had united.

Finally, the presumed innovation *Amoris Laetitia* introduced has been contested on logical grounds. The leniency shown in passages like the one quoted above is seen by the Conservative camp to be inconsistent with the objectivity

of the Ten Commandments. So a divorcee who remarries is guilty of adultery. Adultery is condemned in the Decalogue and hence is objectively wrong. There can be no situation or contexts where something that is objectively wrong becomes acceptable, justified or allowable; citing various papal documents in this regard. Sandri brings also the opposing argument which holds that such reasoning is incorrect and inconsistent with Church teachings on a number of matters. The fifth Commandment for instance, enjoins one not to kill. "Thou shall not kill" is an objective and absolute commandment. Yet Church teaching on a number of issues, most pertinently through such theories as the Just War Theory, establishes that while killing is objectively wrong, in certain circumstances and provided certain conditions hold, one may be justified in killing, if not actually have a duty to do so. After considering these and other arguments, Sandri devotes the final section to his argument as to the need for a new Ecumenical Council.

The book will be especially valuable to students of Theology and to Seminarians, to ministers involved in pastoral care on the grounds as in parishes who have to face queries related to such matters on a daily basis, and to the interested public at large.

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