

The Missionary Oblate



People of God pray for the victims of Bomb Blast
which took place in Srilanka on Easter Sunday
(April 21, 2019)



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THE BOMB BLAST IN SRI LANKA ON EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 21, 2019 AND OUR TASKS

An extremist and well organized terrorist group employing suicide bombers carried out very inhuman attacks during morning Mass on Easter Sunday, April 21, 2019, at St. Anthony's Church, Kochchikade, Colombo, at 8.25 a.m and at St. Sebastian's Church, Katuwapitiya, Negombo at 8.45 a.m and also at Zion church at Batticaloa, at 9.05 a.m and three bomb blasts on the same day between 9.15 – 9.30 a.m at three hotels in Colombo (Cinnamon Grand hotel, Shangri-la hotel and Kingsbury hotel, while the Easter Sunday breakfast was being served), killing more than 250 civilians, 3 police officers and 46 foreigners and injuring more than 500 people shocked the people of Sri Lanka and of the world. According to available information, all seven of the suicide bombers in the attacks were Sri Lankans associated with National Thowheeth Jama'ath, a local militant Islamist group with suspected foreign ties, previously known for attacks against Buddhist and Sufis.

These suicidal attacks bore the hallmarks of church attacks that took place on Palm Sunday in 2017 on the two Coptic Christian churches in Egypt, killing 45 people. On 2012 Easter, Nigerian Boko Haram carried out a car bomb attack on a church and killed 41 people. It was also on Easter Sunday that a terrorist group carried out a suicide blast at a public park in Lahore, Pakistan.

No acceptable answer has been given to the people of Sri Lanka by the government about the culprits, their origin and about the number of swords, arms, ammunition found in certain places. There was prior information to prevent such a disaster on April 21, 2019. India, our neighbour, had warned Sri Lanka on April 4, 2019 of the impending terrorist attacks on churches.

In a democracy, persons responsible for maintaining security, peace and development of our country should have been vigilant since these objectives should be their primary concern. They should take responsibility for the lapse because there was sufficient information and ample time to avoid the Easter disaster. A minister of transport in India resigned over a train derailment. But in Sri Lanka those who were responsible for maintaining security did not resign when they failed in their responsibility. However, the minister of defense should take responsibility for the lapse because there was sufficient information and ample time to avoid the Easter disaster.

Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Colombo, who had won much praise and appreciation for his timely action from every strata of Sri Lankan society, for appealing to the Christians not to harm anyone, has been appealing also to the political leaders to investigate honestly and know and reveal the persons who were responsible for the terrorist bomb blast on Easter Sunday (April 21, 2019), the holiest day of the Christians. He had also requested the government to conduct house-to-house inspection in the vicinity of the blasts that took place on April 21, and this was not done.

On Sunday, July 21, 2019, three months after the Easter Sunday disaster, during the consecration of St. Sebastian's Church which had been damaged on Easter Sunday suicide bomb blast, Cardinal Malcolm Ranjith, manifesting very emotionally his feelings of dissatisfaction about the government's failure to

investigate so far and identify those behind the suicide bombings on Christian churches on their holiest Sunday, asked the government to resign and allow competent persons to manage the country. He said during the sermon, “I have no faith in any of these committees and commissions of inquiry. These are election gimmicks. The leadership must allow someone else to run the country.”

It is my opinion that Cardinal Malcolm should have expressed his feelings in a non-aggressive manner and not during a sermon. It is better to tell the truth with love.

The Catholic Bishops’ Conference (CBCSL) in Sri Lanka in an open letter published in August, 2019, stated, “It has been our earnest appeal to the government that an impartial inquiry be held and the perpetrators brought before the law. The CBCSL is profoundly saddened to note that a just and fair and impartial investigation has not yet taken place. We observe that several committees have been established and their main focus appears to be to find out those responsible for the serious lapses in security. Even though this effort is useful, we insist that as a matter of justice, the final aim of the inquiries should be to ascertain who the perpetrators are and those who have aided and abetted in anyway in this dastardly act. Unfortunately, we do not see any positive signs in this direction.....There is still fear and uncertainty in the minds of the people.”

Our Christian responsibility now

The spirit of Christian responsibility has motivated the Catholics (Bishops, priests, the Religious and the lay faithful) to visit and gather together the injured, those who are bereft of a dear one, relation and friend and those who are disturbed psycho-spiritually. They are involved in this mission of love, inspired by the example of Jesus in order to console and comfort, while trying also to find financial assistance for the felt material needs of the people. Many persons of good will and several Institutions have also collaborated in this charitable exercise.

Emmanuel Fernando, OMI

“The word ‘church’ always referred to a *family-gathering of Christ-followers*, for they constituted the *House of God* (I Tim 3:15). Note in passing that it was “God’s House”, *in this original Christian sense of a “worshipping Community”* that was bombed on Easter Sunday 2019 by the IS in Sri Lanka and, therefore, needed to be re-assembled and renewed!” (Aloysius Pieris, S.J)

Church is a Home (Oikos), not a Boarding House FAMILY MEMBERS VS. TEMPORARY RESIDENTS *Aloysius Pieris, s.j.*

Church as the “Home” of Christ-followers

Among the Scriptural occurrences of the word “house” (*oikos* in Greek; *bayit* in Hebrew), the expression ‘**House of God**’ (*bēth-el*, *bēthYHYH*, *bēth-elohīm*) takes the pride of place. In the First Testament it could mean either the material building where God is believed to dwell and is worshipped, such as the *Jerusalem Temple*; but it equally refers to the *People of God*, as in the phrase “**House of Israel**” (*bēt Yisrael*), implying that God has taken possession of the Jewish People as the sacred residence from which God would exercise God’s salvific mission over the whole world and over all its nations.

During the New Testament times, the Christian Community, as the *New Israel*, came to be known as the “House of God”; but no building ever earned that name because the early Christians did not own buildings specifically set aside for their regular worship, as we do now; for they assembled in homes and therefore we refer to such *communities* as *household churches* (Rom 16:5; I Cor 16:19); even then, such houses or buildings were never referred to as ‘churches’. The word ‘church’ always referred to a *family-gathering of Christ-followers*, for they constituted the *House of God* (I Tim 3:15). Note in passing that it was “God’s House”, *in this original Christian sense of a “worshiping Community”* that was bombed on Easter Sunday 2019 by the IS in Sri Lanka and, therefore, needed to be re-assembled and renewed!

The following passage from the New Testament clearly states that Christians, who are bold and feel “proud” [= not ashamed] of their faith and persevering to the end in their hope are authentic members of the House of God:-

Therefore brothers and sisters, holy partners in a heavenly calling, consider that Jesus, the Apostle and the High Priest whom we confess, was faithful to the One who appointed him just as Moses also was faithful in all **His** [i.e., God’s] **House**. Yet Jesus is more worthy of more glory than Moses, just as the builder of a house has more honour than the house itself. [...] Now Moses was faithful in all **God’s House** as a servant, to testify to the things that would be spoken later. Christ, however, was faithful over **God’s House** as a Son and *we are His house* if we hold firm the confidence and the pride that belong to hope. (Heb. 3: 1-6). *Emphasis added.*

Accordingly we qualify ourselves to be the family members of God’s Household by showing our *parrhēsia* or “bold outspokenness” and *kauchēma* or “holy pride” [prophetic self-confidence?] in what we hope for, accompanied by a dogged perseverance (“steadiness enduring to the end”). ***This is the insider’s role in the church.***

But before we compare the insider’s view of the Church as the House of God against the background of a boarder’s approach, we must ensure that we first grasp the nature of the **entire Creation which is conceived in the Bible as a Shrine of Divine Presence.**

Created Universe as God’s Shrine

This biblical assertion was a critique of other religious beliefs prevalent at that time, according to which this material universe was so evil that it needed to be abandoned in favour of another *non-material* dimension of existence identified with final salvation! The Book of Genesis opposes this view by maintaining that the Creator has declared His creation to be GOOD; as Good as God’s own home. That is why the created universe is mentioned in the Scriptures as *Heaven and Earth*, which the contemporaries always understood as “God’s abode” (heaven) and the “Human habitat” (earth). This created universe is, therefore, a Holy Temple, where the Divine and the human meet and relate to each other; in such a hallowed place of worship, such as this universe is, an *icon of God* has to be enshrined; and that icon of God is none other than the *human person*, whom God Herself has made in “His own image and likeness”. Hence the startling conclusion:- “worship” (‘*ābōdah*’) rendered to God demands “service” (also ‘*ābōdah*’) rendered to other humans! Here is a ‘religion’ in which faith in God and inter-human justice is inseparably linked.

Furthermore the whole of Creation has to be maintained as a Sacred Space where the Creator God is enthroned and God’s Image (humanity) is enshrined. Hence *Laudato si* of Pope Francis is a long over-due affirmation of the central biblical teaching about our universe. Eternal salvation does not consist in

abandoning this “House of God” to dwell in some other *non-material destination* (as traditional theology has taught us under the influence of Greek philosophies). No! Salvation is in *this very universe transformed into a New Heaven and New Earth* i.e., this Temple of God will be resurrected into to new existence. So we cannot and should not hope for another world in order to be saved but, rather in the company of ancient Jews long for “the age to come”, (*‘ôlām ha bā*); i.e., not another world but another age to this very world. We Christians believe that this New Age has already begun with the resurrection of Jesus, which was the inauguration of God’s Kingdom on earth. Hence we do not live in this world as boarders expecting to go to our real home which is believed to be “somewhere God knows [*not*] where”!!!. It is this very House of God that will be transformed or resurrected into our place of eternal rest.

The Boarder and Insider in the Church

The Church analogically is also the *House of God* which is not a boarding house where we stay as strangers until we enter the allegedly ‘real’ Church which will dawn at then of time. Christians are not “boarders” in the Church just as humans are not expected to live as aliens in this Universe.

The aforementioned anti-biblical belief about this material *world* is applied by one influential stream of Christianity to the *church* itself and this view is so widely spread today that some biblical scholars such as Bp. T. Knight, living in the West (where this misinterpretation originated), are now battling against it tooth and nail. We welcome this long-overdue correction. But the boarders’ mentality towards both the universe and the Church has not gone away.

Boarders would not be over-enthusiastic about any repairs or restoration that could take place in the house where they lodge, because they think their real home would be a total break from God’s House which they believe to be occupying now. Those who are culpably unaware of their own Maternal Father being the Divine owner of the house (known as the Church) which they inhabit, are bound to behave like unhappy boarders. Their negativity and their hypercritical attitude spoils the homely atmosphere in the House of God.

The grateful insider, by contrast, sees no other home than the one he or she lives in because he or she knows that *the Church to come is a radically renewed form of this very Community*. It is the Body of Christ *now* and it will be the Body of Christ *then*. Everything that happens therein has an eschatological value for the insider. Unlike the boarder, the insider *actively participates in the events of the house*, which she or he would consider to be one’s own home, to the extent of agitating for and even getting involved in salutary changes. In fact there is no home outside this house; eschatology is about this very home being transformed (i.e., resurrected) into a new community-gathering.

Rahner’s Test for Identifying Insiders

I would like to cite Karl Rahner as a typical insider with a strong sense of belonging. His much quoted observation was that when the church (or a church-member) reminisces the highlights of its own ecclesial life ---as one gratefully recalls the unforgettable turning points in one’s personal private life--- he or she would/should spontaneously dwell on three creative phases of the church, as did Rahner himself. Here below I express in my own words the three phases that Rahner highlights as the three turning points in the ecclesial life that must be joyously reminisced by every insider or authentic Catholic:-

- (a) the church's *birth and infancy* which coincides with the ministry of Jesus [culminating in the Pentecost];
- (b) the so-called *Council of Jerusalem* described in Acts 15; here the church made a irrevocably revolutionary decision by which it refused to be a 'mere sect of Judaism' and became so saturated with the mystery of Christ as to evolve into being a universal movement that would embrace all races, cultures and language groups; and finally
- (c) (after a centuries of stagnation, corruption and even deviations) the *experience of a second Pentecost in Vatican II*, when the *Holy Spirit threw our Home into a chaotic phase of a long-overdue renovational process* under the papacies of John XXIII and Paul VI.

The obvious conclusion one can draw from this observation of Rahner is that whoever feels that way is a family member of the House of God. Such a person is an insider involved in the overhauling activity of one's own home. He or she is thoroughly and indefatigably engaged in the continuous renovation of his her own dear household, expectantly conscious of the Church's resurrected version that looms in the horizon.

Had Rahner (RIP) been with us today in his mortal existence, he would have expressed his wild enthusiasm for the *fourth* phase: Pope Francis re-launching this renewal process after three and a half decades of standstill ---- or more precisely (and as proven beyond doubt), three and a half decades of a deliberate reversal. Hence the insiders who identify themselves as *the* Church will not simply act as distant observers but get involved in the present Pope's radical renewal program with a passionate sense of belonging.

To sum up: Those who join Pope Francis' heroic battle to protect the earth as our present and future home as well as cooperate with his efforts to renew the Church in continuity with the renovational programme of Vatican II must equip themselves with bold outspokenness (*parrhēsia*), holy pride (*kauchēma*) and dogged perseverance that the Holy Writ (Heb. 3:1-6 cited above) demands from authentic and loyal family members of God's Household! []

THE CHURCH, THE KINGDOM AND SPIRITUALITY

(We are happy to publish this article of **Fr. Hilarion Dissanayake, OMI**, an eminent ecclesiologist, posthumously. Fr. Hilarion passed away on 28th March 2008.
 .He explained clearly the nature of the Church and of the Christian spirituality(Ed).

In a broad sense, Spirituality is the way, the manner, in which a person relates to God. More specifically.it is the style of a person's response to God before the challenges of everyday life, in his / her historical and cultural situation and environment. It becomes evident that spirituality embraces the whole of life.

The relationship of Jesus to the Father is characterized by His concern for, and commitment to the Kingdom. The thought of the coming Kingdom of God, His Father, filled the entire consciousness of Jesus. There was nothing that Jesus said or did, which was not in some way connected to the Kingdom.

Being the final goal of God's plan (1 Cor 15: 24), it is on the Kingdom that Christian spirituality has to be based, if it is to be authentic. It is possible however, for Christians to lose sight of the Kingdom. Instead of seeking first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness (Mt 6:33), they can make the Church the centre and basis of their lives. While the spirituality of Christians should be Kingdom-centred, it can be indeed, it often is Church-centred.

The orientation of a Christian spirituality has many grave repercussions. A Christian's outlook on life, his/her way of life, understanding of his / her vocation and mission in life, and even his / her values are determined to a large extent on whether his / her spirituality is centred on the Church or on the Kingdom. Let us indicate briefly some differences between a Church-centred spirituality (CCS) and a Kingdom-centred spirituality (KCS).

- CCS stresses on what is considered as 'spiritual things.' These mainly consist of behaving religiously by participating in church activities and various devotional practices. KCS distinguishes but does not separate the 'spiritual' from the 'material' or the 'supernatural' from the 'natural.' It is therefore concerned about the whole of life, and everything that has to do with being human.
- CCS feels comfortable with tradition, routine and uniformity. It feels threatened by diversity, new questions, and the discoveries of science, technology and the findings of the behavioural sciences. KCS welcomes these, and sees in them an enriching potential.
- CCS fears and worries that the world is influencing the Church. KCS is open to events in the world. It is in the world that the signs of the times can be seen.

While being aware of the differences between a Church-centred spirituality and a Kingdom-centred one, it needs to be emphasized that all the features of the former are not wrong or bad. There is nothing at all wrong for example, in administration or in trying to get people to come to Church. However, the means and the end have to be distinguished. The Church is (has to be) both the herald and the servant of the Kingdom. But if the Kingdom is lost sight of, the Church becomes a self-glorifying and closed-up end in itself. The church then becomes a hindrance to the coming of the Kingdom, even **subverting** the cause of the Kingdom at the same time, there is always the danger that a Church-centred spirituality could turn into an **ideology**, incapable of effectively transforming lives of people.

The true nature of the relationship between the Church and the Kingdom is well expressed in a prayer found in the Didache, an early 2nd century Liturgical Book: **“Remember O Lord, your Church. Deliver her from all evil, perfect her in your love, and gather her together from the four winds into your Kingdom. For yours is the power and the glory forever. Amen.”**

DON'T LET SPRING TURN TO WINTER

Dr. Hans Küng

When Jorge Bergoglio took the name Francis as Pope, he did something no pontiff has done before: he placed himself in the tradition of the Poverello.

When I decided, some months ago, to resign all of my official duties on the occasion of my eighty-fifth birthday, I assumed that in my lifetime I would never see fulfilled my decade-long dream that – after all the setbacks following the Second Vatican Council – the Catholic Church would once again experience the kind of rejuvenation that it did under Pope John XXIII.

Has Jorge Mario Bergoglio considered why no Pope has dared to choose the name of Francis until now? At any rate, the Argentinian was aware that with the name Francis he was connecting himself with Francis of Assisi—the thirteenth-century downshifter who had been the fun-loving, worldly son of a rich textile merchant in Assisi until the age of 24, when he gave up his family, wealth and career, even giving his splendid clothes back to his father.

It is astonishing how, from the first minute of his inauguration, Pope Francis chose a new style: unlike his predecessor, he wears no mitre with gold and jewels, no ermine-trimmed cape, no made-to-measure red shoes or headgear, uses no magnificent throne. It is astonishing, too, that the new Pope deliberately abstain from solemn gestures and high-flown rhetoric and speaks in the language of the people, as lay preachers can. And it is astonishing how the new Pope emphasizes his humanity: he asked for the prayers of the people before he gave them his blessing; he settled down his own hotel bill like anybody else; showed his friendliness to the cardinals in the coach travelling to their shared residence and at the official goodbye; and on Maundy Thursday washed the feet of young prisoners, including those of a young Muslim girl. This is a Pope who demonstrates that he is a man with his feet on the ground.

All this would have pleased Francis of Assisi and is the opposite of what Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) represented in his time. In 1209, Francis and 11 friars minor travelled to Rome in order to lay before Pope Innocent their short Rule consisting entirely of quotations from the Bible, and to ask for papal approval for their way of life, preaching as lay preachers “according to the form of the Holy Spirit” and living in poverty.

Innocent III, the Duke of Segni, who was only 37 when he was elected Pope, was a born ruler – he was a theologian educated in Paris, a shrewd lawyer, a clever speaker, a capable administrator and a sophisticated diplomat. No Pope before him or since had as much power.” “Instead of the title of “Successor of St. Peter” he preferred the title of “Vicar of Christ.”

But the triumphal pontificate of Innocent III proved itself to be not only the high point of the papacy but also the turning point. Already in his time, there were signs of decay which, in part up until in our own time, have remained features of the Roman Curia system: nepotism and favouritism granted to relatives, acquisitiveness, corruption and dubious financial dealings. By the end of the twelfth century, however, powerful non-conformist penitent and mendicant movements, such as the Cathars and Waldensians, were emerging. But Popes and bishops acted against these dangerous currents by banning lay preaching, condemning “heretics” by the Inquisition and even by the Albigensian Crusades.

Yet it was Innocent III himself who tried to integrate into the Church evangelical, apostolic mendicant Orders during all the eradication campaigns against obstinate “heretics” such as the Cathars. Even

Innocent knew that an urgent reform of the Church was needed, and it was for this reform that he called the Fourth Lateran Council. So after a long admonition, he gave Francis of Assisi permission to preach.

As for the ideal of absolute poverty as required by the Rule, the Pope first sought to know the will of God in prayer. On the basis of a dream in which a small, insignificant member of an Order saved the papal Lateran Basilica from collapsing – so it was told – the Pope finally allowed the Rule of Francis of Assisi. He let this be known in the consistory of Cardinals but never had it committed to paper.

In fact, Francis of Assisi represented the alternative to the Roman system. What would have happened if Innocent and his ilk had once again taken the Gospel seriously? Even if they had understood it spiritually rather than literally, Francis' evangelical demands meant – and still mean – an immense challenge to the centralized, legalised, politicized and clericalised system of power which took over the cause of Christ in Rome since the eleventh century.”

Thus, the early Christian basic concerns of Francis of Assisi remain even today questions for the Catholic Church and now for a Pope who, indicating his intentions, has called himself Francis. It is above all about the three basic concerns of the Franciscan ideal which have to be taken seriously today; it is about *paupertas* or poverty, about *humilitas* or humility, and about *simplicitas*, or simplicity. This probably explains why no previous Pope has dared to take the name of Francis: the expectations seem to be too high.

That raises a second question: What does it mean for a Pope today if he bravely takes the name of Francis? Of course the character of Francis of Assisi must not be idealized – he could be singled-minded and eccentric, and he had his weaknesses too. He is not the absolute standard. But his early Christian concerns must be taken seriously even if they need not be literally implemented but rather translated into modern times by Pope and Church.

Paupertas, or poverty: The Church in the spirit of Innocent 111 meant a Church of wealth, pomp and circumstance, acquisitiveness and financial scandal. In contrast, a Church in the spirit of Francis means a Church of transparent financial policies and modest frugality. A Church which concerns itself above all with the poor, the weak, the marginalized. A Church which does not pile up wealth and capital but instead actively fights poverty and which offers its staff exemplary conditions of employment.

Humilitas, or humility: The Church in the spirit of Pope Innocent means a Church of power and domination, bureaucracy and discrimination, repression and Inquisition. In contrast, a Church in the spirit of Francis means a Church of humility, dialogue, brotherhood and sisterhood, and hospitality for non-conformists too; it means the unpretentious service of its leaders and social solidarity, a community which does not exclude new religious forces and ideas from the Church but rather allows them to flourish.

Simplicitas, or simplicity: The Church in the spirit of Pope Innocent means a Church of dogmatic immobility, moralistic censure and legal hedging, a Church of Canon law regulating everything, a Church of all-knowing scholastic and of fear. In contrast, a Church in the spirit of Francis of Assisi means a Church of Good News and of joy, a theology based on the Gospel, a Church that listens to people instead of indoctrinating from on high, a Church that does not only teach but constantly learns anew.

In the light of the concerns and approaches of Francis of Assisi, basic options and policies can be formulated today for a Catholic Church whose façade still glitters at great Roman occasions but whose

inner structure proves itself to be rotten and fragile in the daily life of parishes in many lands, which is why many people have left it, in spirit and often also in fact.

While no reasonable person will expect that all reforms can be effected by one man overnight, a shift would be possible in five years: this was shown by the Lorraine Pope Leo IX (1049-54) who prepared Gregory VII's reforms, and in the twentieth century by the Italian John XXIII (1958-63) who called the Second Vatican Council. But today the direction should be made clear again: not a restoration to pre-council times as there was under Pope John Paul II and Benedict XVI, but instead considered, planned and well-communicated steps to reform along the lines of the Second Vatican Council.

But won't reform of the Church meet with serious opposition? Doubtless, Pope Francis will awaken powerful hostility, above all in the powerhouse of the Roman Curia, opposition which is difficult to withstand. Those in power in the Vatican are not likely to abandon the power that has been accumulated since the Middle Ages.

Francis of Assisi also experienced the force of such curial pressures. He, who wanted to free himself of everything by living in poverty, clung more and more closely to "Holy Mother Church". Rather than be in confrontation with the hierarchy, he wanted to be obedient to Pope and Curia, living in imitation of Jesus: in a life of poverty, in lay preaching. He and his followers even had themselves tonsured in order to enter the clerical state. In fact, this made preaching easier but on the other it encouraged the clericalisation of the young community which included more and more priests. So it is not surprising that the Franciscan community became increasingly integrated into the Roman system. Francis' last years were overshadowed by the tensions between the original ideals of Jesus' followers and the adaptation of his community to the existing type of monastic life.

On 3 October 1226, aged only 44, Francis died as poor as he had lived. Just 10 years previously, Pope Innocent III died completely unexpectedly at the age of 56, one year after the Fourth Lateran Council. On 16 June 1216, Innocent's body was found in the Cathedral of Perugia: this Pope who had known how to increase power, property and wealth of the Holy See like no other before him was found deserted by all, completely naked, robbed by his own servants. It was like trumpet call signaling the transition from papal world domination to papal powerlessness: at the beginning of the thirteenth century there was Innocent III reigning in glory; at the end of the century, there was the megalomaniac Boniface VIII (1294-1303) arrested by the French; and then the 70-year-long exile in Avignon and the Western Schism with two and finally three Popes.

Barely two decades after Francis' death, the rapidly spreading Franciscan movement in Italy seemed to be almost completely domesticated by the Roman Church so that it quickly became a normal Order at the service of papal politics, and even became a tool of the Inquisition. If, then, it was possible that Francis of Assisi and his followers were finally domesticated by the Roman system, then obviously it cannot be excluded, that a Pope Francis could also be trapped in the Roman system which he is supposed to be reforming. Pope Francis: a paradox? Is it possible that a Pope and a Francis, obviously opposites, can ever be reconciled? Only by an evangelically minded reforming Pope.

To conclude, I have a final question: what is to be done if our expectations of reform are dashed? The time is past when Pope and bishops could rely on the obedience of the faithful. A certain mysticism of obedience was also introduced by the eleventh-century Gregorian Reform: obeying God means obeying

the Pope and vice versa. Since that time, it has been drummed into Catholics that the obedience of all Christians to the Pope is a cardinal virtue; commanding and enforcing obedience – by whatever means – has become the Roman style. But the medieval equation of “obedience to God= to the Church=to the Pope” patently contradicts the word of Peter and the other apostles before the High Council in Jerusalem: “man must obey God rather than any human authority”.

We should then in no way fall into resigned acceptance. Instead, faced with a lack of impulse towards reform from the hierarchy, we must take the offensive, pressing for reform from the bottom up. If Pope Francis tackles reforms, he will find he has the wide approval of people far beyond the Catholic Church. However, if he allows things to continue as they are, without clearing the log-jam of reforms now in progress, such as that of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious, then the call of “Time for outrage! Indignez-vous!” will ring out more and more in the Catholic Church, provoking reforms from the bottom up. These would be implemented without the approval of the hierarchy and frequently even in spite of the hierarchy’s attempts at circumvention. In the worst case- as I wrote before the recent papal election- the Catholic Church will experience a new Ice Age instead of a spring and will run the risk of dwindling into a barely relevant large sect.”

Courtesy: The Tablet. 11 May 2013.

HIERARCHY AND THEOLOGY ALIKE ARE CAUGHT UP IN CATHOLIC DISRUPTION

by **Massimo Faggioli**

Editor's note (National Catholic Reporter) : Following is the transcript of a June 7, 2019, talk given by Massimo Faggioli at the annual conference of the Catholic Theological Society of America held in Pittsburgh.

1. The church in a time of disruption

Once, Catholicism was a synonym for status quo; now, it could be disruption. The institutional church is not exempt from the crisis that is affecting all institutions today: a social and political crisis, in part a response to growing inequality, which in many countries has brought to power parties and political leaders harboring xenophobic if not racist sentiments; a crisis of globalization in terms of a redefinition of international political alliances and alignments; a cultural and intellectual disruption where the emergence of a social-media-driven public discourse shapes a redefinition of the role of knowledge and scholarship, together with the crisis of authority of cultural institutions and education.

There is also a particular intra-Catholic disruption. The most visible phenomenon is the politicization of the theological rifts, that is, the identification between theological rifts and different political parties around some key issues that cement political and theological cultures in binary terms, resulting in a mutual quasi-excommunication between Catholics — political excommunication and sacramental excommunication. Largely overlapping with this political polarization, there is an "extremization" around

the role of Vatican II in the church today: By extremization, I mean here the opposite of radicalization. Etymologically, radicalization means a return to the core, to the radix, and usually a shedding of culturally laden encrustations. Extremization is an identification of one particular, and secondary, set of allegedly "traditional" or "progressive" teachings on social issues with the very essence of Catholicism and, then, the elevation of these issues in extreme ways as a supposedly existential threat against the church, ignoring the vast historical and geographical complexities of global Catholicism.

On one side, there is an extremization of the reactions against the alleged "liberalism" of Vatican II with the return of a theological traditionalism that is hardly different from the schismatic interpretation of Vatican II by Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and the Society of St. Pius X, SSPX. In this respect, it is worth noting that lately highly respected institutions of higher education, such as Harvard and Notre Dame, have become the stage for the launch of a new Catholic integralism. There is a genetic modification within American Catholic conservatism going on that would deserve much more attention from scholars of theology — and not just journalists or politicians.

On the other side, there is also an extremization of the disappointments with Vatican II and the post-Vatican II church in light of the sexual abuse crisis: The recent debate about the option of leaving or staying in the church has to do with the scandal, but also interjects and complicates an historiographical debate on the recent past of church history, especially the history of the post-Vatican II period.

The fault line about Vatican II is dividing Catholics in their pews and parishes in many different ways, one of the most prominent being the divide around the liturgical reform. This phenomenon seems to be stronger than anywhere else in Anglo-American Catholicism, where the preference for the Latin Mass is often associated with a particular set of strongly held political and theological opinions.

The Catholic disruption has accelerated in the last decade, thanks in part to the pontificate of Benedict XVI beginning in 2005 and the change of pontificate with Francis in 2013, especially in the USA and the North Atlantic hemisphere. This situation has produced in the Catholic Church a series of attempts, coordinated between conservative factions in the USA and Rome, to undermine Francis' papacy since the late spring and summer of 2013 — up to the point of flirting with schism in August-September 2018. More than two dozen U.S. bishops went on the record in those days to say that they trusted the "Viganò testimony," in which the former nuncio to the USA accused Francis of being part of a vast conspiracy and asked him to resign.

The new wave of the sex abuse crisis that started in 2018, with the direct involvement of bishops and cardinals guilty of cover-ups, but also of sexual abuses themselves (Theodore McCarrick, George Pell), is merely the accelerator of a much deeper and more ramified ecclesial disruption. All this speaks of a vertical collapse of the hierarchical authority of the institutional church — the bishops, the clergy and the Vatican. But this is a problem also for the intellectual authority of Catholic academia and academic theology.

2. Shifting mutual relations between academic theology and the institutional Catholic Church

Ecclesiology is turning into ecclesiody: the pressure, in light of the daily news feed of financial and sexual scandals, to justify or to find for the church the reasons to exist as a historic organization instituted by Christ. Because it is clear that the institutional Catholic Church cannot continue to do business as usual in the future.

I think the same should be said for academic theology. I suspect that the situation of mutual estrangement and alienation between the institutional Catholic Church and theology, in the long run, will endanger theology more than the institutional church.

On the one hand, the present disruption means that the relations between academic theology and ecclesial institutions are no longer the same as in the early post-Vatican II period (Paul VI), and not even the same as in the second Vatican II period (John Paul II and Benedict XVI). I often wonder if my relationship with the institutional church is not driven by my rejection of the bishops trying to dictate to me how we should vote (in Italy: I have a green card), more than by a healthy *sensus ecclesiae* that helps me look at the real people of the church without being pointed in the wrong direction by its hierarchical leadership.

On the other hand, there is also a crisis of authority within academic theology: Maybe less publicized, it is a crisis not less serious than the one afflicting the institutional church. It is the result of different and coexisting pressures: the commodification and the technocratic paradigm in higher education; the collapse of institutional curricular support, students' interest and publication subsidies in the humanities; the erosion of Catholicism at the popular level; lately, the rejection of the theological establishment by the strange mix between populism and neotraditionalism that is part of the church today.

These forces will not go away soon — and when they go away, they will have done considerable damage to the academic-theological establishment, in the sense of the role of departments of theology and religious studies, but also damage to the moral and intellectual standing of our disciplines in the world. The current disruption will affect both the institutional church and academic theology, but in very different ways. The institutional church has resources (financial, political, symbolical) to survive this disruption that academic theology simply does not have. The crisis of theology and religious studies in academia does *not* affect the seminaries to the same degree: hence a growing clericalization of the theology that runs in the veins of the institutional church, which will be more and more driven by concerns and worldviews that are not just different, if not actually opposed, but also in a position of financial and systemic advantage in the competition with academic theologians.

The current disruption also translates into a movement of militant or energized Catholics regrouping around the fortress — the existing institutional church or another fortress to be built, once the ongoing traditionalist, neo-Donatist, and neo-Pelagian rage gets rid of the remaining allegedly "liberal" bishops and of the intellectual liberal elite. This must be seen in the context of the fight for the future of Catholicism where the reconquest of the institutional church is seen as a goal by what I will call here, for lack of a better term, the anti-Vatican II agenda. There is in the Catholic Church a neo-traditionalist *revanche* that sees not just Pope Francis but also Vatican II, and the achievements of Catholic theology since Vatican II, as something to be eliminated. Academic Catholic theology in dialogue with the secular world, with other churches, and other religions is a prime target.

But even setting aside for a moment the ongoing fight for the soul of Catholicism waged by the neotraditionalist, anti-Vatican II *revanche*, it is clear in my experience that the people who want to study Catholic theology are those who really want to be Catholic, and want to see in the theology programs something more openly Catholic *in the sense of ecclesial*. Granted some exceptions, most other students tend to be either bored by theology or baffled by it.

The price for ignoring these movements may well be that theology will return to what it was until a few decades ago: the preserve of a self-interested and self-absorbed clerical clique — only, now with very few ordained clerics in its ranks and with no support from the institutional Catholic Church. Academic Catholic theologians and academic theologians working in Catholic institutions need to disabuse themselves from a few misapprehensions: The neotraditionalist *revanche* is part of the "*revanche de Dieu*" and it will not go away anytime soon. What many Catholic students want today is a more intentionally Catholic study of theology.

Let me be clear here. The detachment of academic theology from the control of the institutional church was one of the most important achievements in the post-Vatican II church because it gave freedom to

intellectual inquiry. There is no rolling back from the Land O'Lakes statement and what it meant for theological academia.

What I want to say to other academic theologians is that I do *not* want Catholic academic theology to become catechesis or the voice of the institutional church or go back to old neo-Scholastic apologetics. But I think it will have to become more "ecclesial" in the sense of more aware of the expectations of Catholics today, especially the young generation. In this sense, the current pattern of detachment of academic Catholic theology from the fate of the institutional church is in the long run unsustainable: There is no detachment from the institutional church that does not entail also some detachment from the real people of God. In this, there is, I believe, one of the missed opportunities that Pope Francis' pontificate represents for academic theologians.

This is clearly also a challenge to the institutional church and the bishops: There is no estrangement of the hierarchical leadership of the church from theology that is not also a statement about the estrangement of bishops and their seminaries from the broad intellectual conversation.

3. Academic theology and the sex abuse crisis

The detachment of Catholic academia from the institutional church is unsustainable also for another reason and has to do with a major cause of disruption for the church: the sex abuse crisis.

Among the long-term effects of the abuse crisis, there is, theologically, the temptation of militant Catholics to return to a new monocultural universalism — a return to the Gregorian reform in the 11th century or the Counter Reformation in the 16th century. Institutionally, the crisis will have a disproportionate impact on different kinds of Catholics, accelerating the exodus of disenchanting Catholics and the circling of the wagons of more clerical- and tradition-minded Catholics around an institution seen as under attack.

But there is more that academic theology has to ponder today. The sex abuse crisis has been (rather, *still is*) a massive game of denial in the clerical ranks in the church. It was a systemic crisis caused by abusive priests and by a catastrophic failure of the episcopal hierarchy in dealing with them. The focus on the legal and moral responsibility for the sexual abuses has been almost exclusively on the institutional clerical church. The mutual estrangement between academic theology and the institutional church, and the fact that the vast majority of academic theologians are now lay men and women, allowed academia to keep a certain public detachment from the abuse crisis.

But this is a *Catholic* abuse crisis, not just a clerical abuse crisis. It is not just a legal crisis, but also a *theological* crisis. Thus, I wonder whether we will have to talk, at some point, about the responsibilities of academia (myself first of all) in terms of much-delayed action and intellectual failure in the sexual abuse crisis. It is worth asking if there has been any complacency among the intellectual elites of the church in the disastrous misrecognition of the abuse crisis as a theological crisis. I personally started to pay attention much later than I should have.

I have asked myself many times: Is there anything academic theologians could do to shape a reaction to the crisis different from the one we have seen in the last year? I wonder whether academic theology has been or is playing a game of denial: denial about the role of academic theology in higher education and in the ecclesial turmoil, but also in denial about the sex abuse crisis itself.

This is not to say that theologians have done nothing about the abuse crisis. There is available and fine literature of some individual scholars. But the fact is that there has been so far no systemic, organized and coordinated effort by Catholic theologians to think about the sexual abuse crisis. What became public at

least since 2002 could and should have sparked a vast theological rethinking, in a way similar to when new sources became available to tackle key intellectual issues for the life of the church. What I know is that there is no one center or institute dedicated to an inquiry into the root causes and consequences of the abuse crisis on Catholic theology. Some Catholic universities took action or promised to take action lately, only after the storm of 2018.

If Catholic theology fails to do so, then maybe technocrats are right when they say that Catholic theology in the academia is a relic of the past, now merely protecting old privileges, and deserves to die or at least to be marginalized in higher education today. Public debates and high-profile lectures are a supplement to and a consequence of the journalistic work on the abuse crisis, not a substitute: Public panels will not be able to change the terms of the conversation and to add an intellectual contribution to it — which is something that academic theology must be able to provide.

Conclusion

This is a personal *mea culpa* more than a "*J'accuse*." It is most of all an invitation to take my share of the responsibility in the disruption of the institutional church. The situation of disruption now in plain sight makes clear to me that both the institutional church and academic Catholic theology are facing huge challenges, not only from a business point of view: What are the future prospects of academic theology in a deeply uncertain future for the Catholic Church? But the challenges are also in terms of mission: What is the role of academic theology in this situation?

As an Italian academic who came to the USA in 2008 after spending long periods of research and work in other countries, I am aware that the problem of the role of academic theology in the Catholic disruption is everywhere. I also think it has particular features in the USA. The network of Catholic institutions of higher education in the USA has no parallel in the world. This means also a particular responsibility of Catholic theologians in the USA *and* non-Catholic theologians working in Catholic colleges and universities in the USA.

As a church historian, I am not blind to the structural reasons that led to the present relationship between theologians and leadership of the institutional church, especially in the USA. However, now it is worth asking if the mutual detachment and estrangement between academic theology and the institutional church is sustainable and responsible.

For what can we, as academic theologians, possibly do? It is my wish that we begin as soon as possible a deep rethinking of what it means to be academic Catholic theologians in this situation of ecclesial disruption. Because it is not going to go away anytime soon and academic theology will not be spared.

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Courtesy : National Catholic Reporter

Mary and Human Liberation Revisited

Shirley Lal Wijesinghe

Mary and Human Liberation caused a controversy involving the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and Tissa Balasuriya ¹. It may be interesting to study the theological underpinnings of the controversy. The present exercise is limited to the study of a few creative insights about Mary in this work. It is a collection of articles and as a result there are repetitions. Furthermore, the author does not distinguish clearly between the Historical Mary and the Marcan, Matthean, Lucan and Johannine theologies of Mary ². The book has a tendency to sermonise and does not pay much attention to modern exegesis. Balasuriya's intention of writing *Mary and Human Liberation* is to make Marian theology and Marian *pastorale* relevant to the majority of world's population struggling for a dignified livelihood:

“As the world is one of injustice, Mary's message of justice and liberation is relevant for the poor and the rich, for the victims of injustice as well as those in oppressor situations. Marian spirituality can be an inspiration for the profound conversion that is required among all in our world of hunger in the midst of plenty, of war and threats of war, of the exploitation of persons and of nature, and of large scale death and destruction caused by human selfishness and unconcern for others.” ³

“Mary as seen in the Gospels is a loving and lovable personality who is presentable and acceptable in our context as one of the mediators between humans and God. Her example is also eloquent in its silent but courageous participation in the life witness of her extraordinary Son. It is this Mary that must be known, loved and invoked in our context as well as the universal Church.” ⁴

“She would also be a mother that is concerned about a chance of life for all her children, as the ‘Mirror of Justice’ that would want a fair sharing of the world's resources among all.” ⁵

He further clarifies his intention: the book is meant to “motivate us towards the new ministries required in our times - commitment to justice, inter-religious dialogue, action for peace, the liberation of women, the care for nature” ⁶ and hopes these would deepen Marian devotion

¹ [Originally published in *Vagdevi: Journal of Religious Reflection* (NS) 13 (July 2019) pp.28-39].

² T. BALASURIYA, *Mary and Human Liberation* (Logos 29/1-2; Colombo 1990) 120

³ T. BALASURIYA, *Mary*, v.

⁴ T. BALASURIYA, *Mary*, 108-109.

⁵ T. BALASURIYA, *Mary*, 109

⁶ T. BALASURIYA, *Mary*, v

(novenas, group reflections, *pastorale* in Marian shrines) bringing about a renewal of the Christian community.⁷

The genre or the nature of the book is not particularly academic: “We have not burdened it with many references.”⁸ In other words, the author is not too concerned with the *status quaestionis* of the subject matter treated in the book. He had decided to publish it because of the positive responses to his ideas that he had received in Sri Lanka, Republic of Ireland, India, Australia, Hong Kong and UK.⁹ The book is meant for a *wider reaction*: “I shall be grateful for any comments on this book, be they favourable or otherwise.”¹⁰

In other words, the ideas found in this book may not be conclusive theological stances of the author. These indicate that it is important to take into consideration the theological stands present in *Mary and Human Liberation* as a subject for further dialogue. Many questions raised on Dogmas of Roman Catholic Church point to the faith-struggles of the present generation of Catholics world over. Balasuriya sees Marian Dogmas as well as the presentation of Mary in the Roman Catholic Tradition as *inadequate* to understand the historical person of Mary and her relevance to the present context.

One has to be cautious here about judging his work because of his constant complaint that his ideas found in the book were misinterpreted and secondly he is not there to engage in a dialogue.¹¹ Lest I be unjust in this regard, I shall limit myself to highlight some of the important insights about his views on Mary. He presents Mary of Nazareth, Mary the Mother of Jesus, the spouse of Joseph as a *heroine*. These insights may not be historically or exegetically verifiable but could be considered as historical possibilities. After all, the gospel writers were engaged in presenting theologies and were not so much concerned about writing on “Jesus of History” or “Mary of History”. Many insights on the heroic aspects of speculated “Mary of History” found in the book are not impossibilities. Hence, they could be considered as “realistic creative thoughts” which could inspire many in and outside the Roman Catholic Church for exemplary righteous living.

Solidarity with Jesus’ Concerns

⁷ T. BALASURIYA, *Mary*, v.

⁸ T. BALASURIYA, *Mary*, vi.

⁹ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, v-vi.

¹⁰ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, vi.

¹¹ His excommunication hurt him deeply. It was perhaps because he considered himself very much a Roman Catholic and was convinced of his religious and priestly vocation in the Roman Catholic tradition. The dedication of the book *Mary and Human Liberation* “to ... the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, also my Mother since 1945” witnesses to his convictions.

The author speculates that already before his public ministry, Jesus was concerned about the problems of his day and that Mary may have been in solidarity with Jesus' concerns:

“The character of Jesus would have naturally attracted people to him. People must have come often to Jesus and Mary and discussed various issues, even before he engaged himself more fully in his public life. We can thus think of the life style that Mary lived in her house with Jesus, how his openness would have meant the openness of her own house to all types of persons of good and bad repute.”¹²

The book presents Mary as having gone through a process to understand and accept the vision and mission of Jesus:

“Thus even in the very early stages of his life she would have had to undergo a process of education in relating to the type of people that gathered round Jesus.”¹³

The author speaks also of a second possibility that Mary may have intuitively understood the vision and mission of Jesus:

“Mary would also have had the problem of trying to understand the attitudes of Jesus towards the religious practices and leaders of the day. She probably had to go through a process of understanding the deeper meaning of the type of religious teaching of Jesus. He emphasized the religion of authenticity, and sincerity. We may presume Mary did not need such a process; that she too intuitively agreed with the teaching and approaches of Jesus.”¹⁴

Then he speculates of a third possibility that Jesus would have formulated his vision and embarked on his mission because of the formation that he received from his mother:

“The so called ‘hidden life’ of Jesus about which we know little would have been a period when the thinking of Jesus would have been developed. He would certainly have discussed them with his mother, who perhaps helped to evolve them. Mary herself may have even led Jesus to this life style.”¹⁵

¹² T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 128.

¹³ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 128.

¹⁴ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 130.

¹⁵ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 129.

“She would most probably have **participated in the very evolution of this message**. The mother and son must have often spoken of these things. It is even possible that Mary herself helped the young Jesus to understand the meaning of life. She may have told him of the unkind and oppressive nature of the unjust society in which he was born ... Mary would certainly have had a share in the elaboration of the **programme** of Jesus’ teaching. ¹⁶

His sensitivity towards people would have been learnt in the home of Joseph and Mary. Mary would certainly have had a share in the elaboration of the **programme** of Jesus’ teaching. He would have discussed with her the **risks** involved. This would be normal between mother and son, and more so in an ideal family as the holy family would have been.” ¹⁷

Strength, Courage and Determination

Balasuriya highlights many aspects of Mary’s pain and suffering. These point to her strength, courage, and determination to face hard realities of life as a woman, wife and a mother, as well as her commitment to the cause of her son Jesus as the cause of God. Mary’s sufferings and her courage and forbearance may have had social concerns as she was living “at a time of imperial rule, of exploitation of the poor, of women, of her race by the Romans. It was a **time of intense** social upheaval and even conflict in her country.”¹⁸ He discusses at length the painful aspects related to the incidents narrated in the gospels, particularly those recorded in the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke, ¹⁹ and passion narratives of the Synoptics and John. ²⁰ He also dwells on the sufferings of Historical Mary as a mother who was anxious about her son living in the shadow of death:

“In an ordinary human family, as we think the holy family was, Mary would have had a lot of **worries**. She would have been concerned about him: ‘Was he wise and **prudent**?’ ‘Was he getting into unnecessary trouble?’ ‘Where will all this lead to?’ would have been her constant preoccupation during the last three years of Jesus’ life. If Jesus was the only child, Mary’s concern would have been even more intense.” ²¹

After the execution of John the Baptist, Mary would have been very much concerned about the safety of Jesus:

¹⁶ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 132, cf. also 152-158. The idea developed by Balasuriya is congruent with Luke 2,52: “And Jesus increased (Gk *proekopten*) in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men.”

¹⁷ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 132.

¹⁸ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 120.

¹⁹ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 120-127.

²⁰ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 141-146.

²¹ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 132-133.

“When John was beheaded, Jesus came out ... Jesus would naturally have discussed this with Mary who would have participated in this difficult decision of her son. Jesus would have said that he had to go ahead. He would have discussed with her about violence and peaceful methods – issues which were very important at that time. Mary too would have watched what was happening in her society and to her loved ones.”²²

Balasuriya underlines Mary’s loneliness, an aspect of suffering rarely considered:

Generally oriental parents look forward to spending their old age with their children and grandchildren. In the case of Mary, she had to sacrifice her son for the liberation of others. In the process she was left alone. The feeling of being alone in the world is a terrible suffering for all people. Perhaps it is greater for an aging woman who begins to realize physically her own helplessness.”²³

Role of Mary in the Early Church

The gospel writers underline the leadership of Peter in the Early Church. What was the role of Mary in the early Christian community? Acts 1,14 mentions her presence among the disciples but does not accord a leadership role to her: “All these with one accord devoted themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren”. Balasuriya ‘accords’ a greater leadership role to Mary in the early Christian community:

“**After the death of Jesus** when the small group of disciples were in great anxiety and difficulty, not knowing what their future would be, Mary was with them ... Mary was with them undoubtedly, a central personality – one who was consoled by them; and they were strengthened by her deep conviction of the goodness and correctness of her crucified son.”²⁴

“We can reflect on the perseverance, courage, determination and fidelity to Jesus’ teaching that would have animated this group around Mary ... She would have seen the apostles and disciples going out proclaiming the message of Jesus and getting into difficulties due to that. Mary would certainly have been painfully aware of the killing of Stephen. Here was the mother of Jesus staying firm with the small group despite the threats, arrests and the killings.”²⁵

²² T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 130

²³ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 144

²⁴ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 148.

²⁵ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 148.

According to Acts 4,32-35 the believers shared life (they were of one heart and soul) and possessions. Commenting on the shared life of the believers, Balasuriya states: “Mary knew this approach to economic and social life. She would have been a principal participant in it, for this is how the earliest disciples of Jesus understood his message and life style.”²⁶ In this sense, Balasuriya considers **the early Christian community as an extension of the life style of the Holy Family in Nazareth.**²⁷ According to him, Holy Family - Jesus, Mary and Joseph – would have accommodated many others in their entourage. The formation of the early Christian community was a continuation of such fellowship.²⁸ Historically speaking, the early Christian community was formed because of the experience of the resurrection. It was a continuation of earthly Jesus’ solidarity with them, now renewed by Risen Christ. What is new in the insight of Balasuriya is that hosted by Mary, such fellowship would have taken place at her home both before as well as after Easter.²⁹ “Her own house would have been a place where Jesus would have begun such a practice.”³⁰ Balasuriya considers the role of Mary in the early Christian community as a *locus theologicus*.³¹

Motherhood of Mary and the Magnificat

The Magnificat is central to Balasuriya’s reflections on Mary. He considers it as an announcement of a threefold revolution – cultural, political and economic. Scattering the proud in the imagination of their hearts is cultural, putting down the mighty from their thrones is political and filling the hungry with good things is economic.³² According to him Magnificat “gives a distinct social content to holiness”,³³ resonates revolutionary prophets of the OT, bears a radical message, announces a total reversal of values and structures,³⁴ and shows how social

²⁶ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 160.

²⁷ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 160-161, 172

²⁸ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 160-161

²⁹ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 160-161. “Mary was very much perhaps a mother in this situation. She would have been keeping the group together. In Jesus’ life time, her home would have been a place where many discussions took place concerning their thinking and action. They would have gathered together to mourn the death of John the Baptist”: T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 161. “In the early community of Jesus if there was anyone who was close, intimate, participating and sacrificing with Jesus, it was Mary ... In this group John the Baptist was beheaded, Jesus was crucified, Stephen was stoned to death and later on the other disciples. Mary, as long as she lived, would have been one who was central to and steadying of the group.” T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 170.

³⁰ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 172

³¹ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 160.

³² T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 184-185.

³³ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 185

³⁴ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 122

radicality could be reconciled with personal service, and a revolutionary message with interpersonal love. ³⁵ He highlights the prophetic significance of Mary's canticle: "Here she prays in the prophetic tradition ... In the context of the Old Testament prophecies she proclaims the liberative message of salvation promised by God to his people." ³⁶

Commenting on the motherhood of Mary, he points to a new direction in evolving a Mariology relevant to the present global, national and local contexts of inequality, oppression and exploitation as implied in Mary's Magnificat - an important dimension rather neglected in Marian spirituality ³⁷

"She would be very sad if some of her children exploit the others and deprive them of the means of subsistence. She would struggle with all her might to change a situation in which millions of her children die due to starvation because some of the others take too much out of the common stock. A universal Mother would want peace among her children. She would regret the building up of armaments by different groups of her children to destroy each other. She would oppose local and international corruption that leads to the resources of the poor people being deposited in banks by persons and companies that exploit and rob them." ³⁸

The author reads Acts 4,32-35 in the light of the theological concepts of the universal motherhood and royalty of Mary. He also relates theology of Acts 4,32-35 with the theology of the Magnificat. Mary being the *queen of the world, queen of humanity and the mother of humankind* "Marian Spirituality must involve an approach that the goods of the earth are for all." ³⁹

³⁵ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 122.

³⁶ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 121-122.

³⁷ Throughout centuries Marian Spirituality has hardly been developed in any significant manner to oppose the evils, and injustices of feudal society, of capitalism, of imperialist colonialism and male domination. Where there has been a coincidence of interests between a whole people and the Christian leaderships, Marian shrines have been places where the oppressed peoples met and prayed for their liberation – as in Sri Lanka during the Dutch persecution of Catholics in the 17th and 18th centuries, in Ireland under the British, and in Eastern Europe under Communist rule. This dimension of Mariology as socially liberating is emerging only in recent times with the growth of overall conscience of the inter-relation between social justice and Christian holiness. Holiness in the Marian spirituality has missed this dimension as seen from the absence in almost all the religious congregations that have had a Marian spirituality during the past few centuries. They have had social service and charity towards the neighbor as one of their objectives. But social justice that critically analysed social relations and wanted a radical transformation of mentalities and social structures has not been part of their Marian spirituality": T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 115-116.:

³⁸ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 115.

³⁹ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 182; "The primitive communism of the early Christian community must be reconsidered in our situation and times. The goods of the earth are not for the particular nations or populations that possess them at present. They are not merely for big transnational companies which can dominate and exploit peoples. The

On Doctrine

The long section dedicated to a study of original sin lacks scientific rigour, and the same could be said about the chapter on Marian doctrines. Given the nature of the book – I presume – they are meant to be read as reflections for rethinking and for the purpose of opening a dialogue on the questions raised. Speaking about the doctrine of original sin Balasuriya states:

“We have no difficulty in original sin in the sense of a human proneness to evil that we all experience, nor with the concept of the collective sinfulness of a society or an environment that has a corrupting influence on persons. What we question is the hypothesis of original sin as propounded in traditional theology according to which human beings are born in a situation of helpless alienation from God due to the originating original sin of the first parents.”⁴⁰

Balasuriya seems careful about the choice of terminology – ‘*what we question*’. In that sense, there is no indication of a denial of the doctrine of original sin in his statement. Vis-à-vis the doctrine of Immaculate Conception, he says “We have no difficulty in accepting it”, but continues “Our problem is rather with the concept that the rest of humanity is stained or sinful at conception.”⁴¹

The latter refers to the doctrine of original sin, and once again it is a question of a problem posed. Hence, there are no indications of a denial of the doctrine as such.⁴² The study of the International Theological Commission on the question of the fate of un-baptised infants entitled “The Hope of Salvation for Infants who die without being Baptised” (14th April 2007) is instructive in this regard⁴³:

mere accumulation of capital should not give them the right to buy more and more lands and assets and use them for their profit maximization. On the contrary it is necessary to bring about changes in the political and economic order that would see to it ‘that there is no one in need’ and that in a meaningful sense ‘everything is held in common’ (Acts 4,32-35)”: T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 182.

⁴⁰ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 66.

⁴¹ T. Balasuriya, *Mary*, 90.

⁴² Tissa Balasuriya’s statement of reconciliation reads: “I realize that serious ambiguities and doctrinal errors were perceived in my writings and therefore provoked negative reactions from other parties, affected relationships and led to an unfortunate polarization in the ecclesial community. I truly regret the harm this has caused.” It also reads “the meaning of dogmatic formulas remains always true and unchangeable though capable of being expressed more clearly and better understood.” <http://www.ewtn.com/library/issues/ortissa.htm> (accessed on 03.02.2019).

⁴³ “The International Theological Commission has studied the question of the fate of un-baptised infants, bearing in mind the principle of the ‘hierarchy of truths’ and the other theological principles of the universal salvific will of God, the unicity and insuperability of the mediation of Christ, the sacramentality of the Church in the order of salvation, and the reality of Original Sin. In the contemporary context of cultural relativism and religious pluralism the number of non-baptized infants has grown considerably, and therefore the reflection on the possibility of

“Our conclusion is that the many factors that we have considered above give serious theological and liturgical grounds for hope that unbaptised infants who die will be saved and enjoy the Beatific Vision. We emphasise that these are reasons for prayerful *hope*, rather than grounds for sure knowledge. There is much that simply has not been revealed to us (cf. Jn 16:12). We live by faith and hope in the God of mercy and love who has been revealed to us in Christ, and the Spirit moves us to pray in constant thankfulness and joy (cf. 1 Thess 5:18).”⁴⁴

A detailed study of the recent scholarship on *original sin* and an analysis of the official ecclesiastical teachings of the last decades of the twentieth century on the *salvation of non-Christians* such as the affirmation of Lumen Gentium 16 could have provided greater clarity to some of the arguments of the book.

“Those also can attain to everlasting salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and, moved by grace, strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience. Nor does divine providence deny the help necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God, but who strive to live a good life, thanks to His grace” (LG 16).

Far from being exhaustive, our study of *Mary and Human Liberation* was limited mainly to some of the ideas of Tissa Balasuriya about the “Historical Mary”. These highlight the possible contribution of Mary’s maternal formation towards the evolution of Jesus’ thought as well as her possible leadership role in the nascent Early Church. The book is an attempt to evolve a Mariology relevant to present contexts and to make Marian *pastorale* meaningful to the believers.

SOME COUNSELS ON FAITH AND RELIGION FOR OUR PRESENT GENERATION

salvation for these infants has become urgent. The Church is conscious that this salvation is attainable only in Christ through the Spirit. But the Church, as mother and teacher, cannot fail to reflect upon the fate of all men, created in the image of God, and in a more particular way on the fate of the weakest members of the human family and those who are not yet able to use their reason and freedom.”

http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20070419_unbaptised-infants_en.html (accessed on 01.02.2019).

⁴⁴ http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/cti_documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20070419_unbaptised-infants_en.html (accessed on 01.02.2019).

It's no secret that today we're witnessing a massive decline in church attendance and, seemingly, a parallel loss of interest in religion. The former mindset, within which we worried, sometimes obsessively, about sin, church-going, and heaven and hell no longer holds sway for millions of people. As one parent, worried about the religious state of his children, shared with me recently, "our old religious concerns never ever darken their minds." What's to be said in the face of this?

Admittedly, I may not be the person best-suited to offer that advice. I'm over 70 years old, a spiritual writer whose main focus of research and teaching right now is on the spirituality of aging, and I'm a Roman Catholic priest, a religious insider, who can be perceived as simply a salesman for religion and the churches. But, despite that, here are some counsels on faith and religion for today's generation.

First: Search honestly. God's first concern is not whether you're going to church or not, but whether you are staying honest in your search for truth and meaning. When the Apostle, Thomas, doubts the reality of the resurrection, Jesus doesn't scold him, but simply asks him to stretch out his hand and continuing searching, trusting that if he searches honestly he will eventually find the truth. The same is true for us. All we have to do is be honest, to not lie, to acknowledge truth as it meets us. In John's Gospel, Jesus sets out only one condition to come to God: Be honest and never refuse to acknowledge what's true, no matter how inconvenient. But the key is to be honest! If we're honest we will eventually find meaning and that will lead us where we need to go – perhaps even to a church door somewhere. But even if it doesn't, God will find us. The mystery of Christ is bigger than we imagine.

Second: Listen to what's deepest inside you. Soul is a precious commodity. Make sure you honor yours. Honor the voice inside your soul. Deeper than the many enticing voices you hear in world inviting you in every direction is a voice inside you which, like an insatiable thirst, reminds you always of the truth of this prayer from Saint Augustine: You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Stay in touch with that voice. You will hear it in your restlessness and it will, in the words of Karl Rahner, teach you something that's initially is hard to bear but eventually sets you free: In the torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable, we eventually learn that here in this life there is no finished symphony.

Third: Beware the crowd! In the Gospels the word "crowd" is almost always pejorative. For good reason: Crowds don't have a mind and the energy of a crowd is often dangerous. So beware of what Milan Kundera calls "the great march", namely, the propensity to be led by ideology, group-think, the latest trend, the popular person or thing, the false feeling of being right because the majority of people feel that way, and the social pressures coming from both the right and the left. Be true to yourself. Be the lonely prophet who's not afraid to be alone on the outside. Dream. Be idealistic. Protect your soul. Don't give it away cheaply.

Fourth: Don't confuse faith with the churches – but don't write off the churches too quickly. When they ask those without religious affiliation today why they aren't religious invariably their answer is: "I just don't believe it anymore." But what's the "it" which they no longer believe? What they don't believe anymore isn't in fact the truth about God, faith, and religion, but rather what they've heard about God, faith, and religion. Sort that out and you will find that you do have faith. Moreover, don't write off the

churches too quickly. They have real faults; you're not wrong about that, but they're still the best GPS available to help you find your way to meaning. They're a roadmap drawn up by millions of explorers who have walked the road before you. You can ignore them, but then be alert to God's gentle voice often saying: "Recalculating". God will get you home, but the churches can help. Don't forget about the poor. When you touch the poor, you're touching God and, as Jesus says, at the judgment day we will be judged by how we served the poor. Give yourself away in some form of altruism, knowing, as Jesus puts it, that it's not those who say Lord, Lord, who go to heaven but those who serve others. In your search, you need to get a letter of reference from the poor.

Fifth: Look among your contemporaries for a patron to inspire you. Jean Vanier, Henri Nouwen, Thomas Merton, Dorothy Day, Oscar Romero, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Simone Weil, Etty Hillesum, and Dag Hammarskjold, among others – they've all navigated your issues.

Ron Rolheiser, OMI

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"Crisis of faith in the West is the visible fruit of the self-seeking clericalism of their pastors as well as their bookish theology which is ineffective and spiritually sterile" (Aloysius Pieris, SJ.)

"BUT IT SHALL NOT BE SO AMONG YOU",

(A Conference given by **Fr. Emmanuel Fernando, OMI** to the priests of the diocese of Anuradhapura, on the Day of their Recollection, Jan., 28-29, 2019)

My dear friends, I chose to reflect with you on the homily of Pope Francis to the new Cardinals on 28th June 2018 because there is enough material in that homily for us to reflect prayerfully. He told them during the Papal Mass in the Vatican Basilica, **"But it shall not be so among you."** When I read this homily, I could feel the great spiritual and pastoral concern Pope Francis is having right now due to what is happening in the Church, even in the Vatican. I also read what he had told the young people at the Synod 2018 in the Vatican City, "If you want to live as a Christian, live the beatitudes, not worldliness or clericalism, the worst perversions in the Church." We, priests, are also Christians, and hence this call of the Pope to the young people also touches our hearts.

"They (the Apostles) were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them" (Mk 10:32). He walks ahead of them and he keeps going. And he tells them forcefully: "But it shall not be so among you; whoever would be great among you must be your servant" (Mk 10:43).

Pope Francis says Jesus is careful to walk ahead of his disciples. Jerusalem represents the defining and decisive moment of his life. All of us know that at important and crucial times in

life, the heart can speak and reveal the intentions and tensions within us. These turning points in life challenge us; they bring out questions and desires not always evident to our human hearts. This is what is presented, with great simplicity and realism, in the Gospel passage we have just heard.

At the most troubling announcement of the Lord's passion, the Evangelist does not shrink from disclosing secrets present in the hearts of the disciples: their quest of honours, jealousy, envy, intrigue, accommodation and compromise. This kind of thinking not only wears and eats away at their relationship, but also imprisons them in useless and petty discussions. Yet Jesus is not concerned with this: he walks ahead of them and he keeps going.

And he tells them forcefully: "But it shall not be so among you; whoever would be great among you must be your servant" (Mk 10:43). In this way, the Lord tries to refocus the eyes and hearts of his disciples, so that there will be no fruitless and self-referential discussions in the community. What does it profit us to gain the whole world if we are corroded within? What does it profit us to gain the whole world if we are living in a stifling atmosphere of intrigues (carrying on underhand plot) that dry up our hearts and impede our mission? Here, as someone has observed, we might think of all those palace intrigues that take place, even in curial offices.

But it shall not be so among you". The Lord's response is above all an encouragement and a challenge to his disciples to recoup their better part, lest their hearts be spoiled and imprisoned by a worldly mentality blind to what is really important. "But it shall not be so among you". The voice of the Lord saves the community from undue introspection and directs its vision, resources, aspirations and heart to the only thing that counts: the mission.

Jesus teaches us that conversion, change of heart and Church reform is and ever shall be in a missionary key, which demands an end to looking out for and protecting our own interests, in order to look out for and protect those of the Father.

Conversion from our sins and from selfishness will never be an end in itself, but is always a means of growing in fidelity and willingness to embrace the mission. At the moment of truth, especially when we see the distress of our brothers and sisters, we will be completely prepared to accompany and embrace them, one and all. In this way, we avoid becoming effective "roadblocks", whether because of our short-sightedness or our useless wrangling about who is most important.

When we forget the mission, when we lose sight of the real faces of our brothers and sisters, our life gets locked up in the pursuit of our own interests and securities. Resentment then begins to grow, together with sadness and revulsion. Gradually we have less and less room for others, for the Church community, for the poor, for hearing the Lord's voice. Joy fades and the heart withers (cf. *Evangelii Gaudium*, 2).

"But it shall not be so among you". Jesus goes on to say. "*Whoever would be first among you must be slave of all*" (Mk 10:43.44). This is the Beatitude and the Magnificat that we are called to sing daily. It is the Lord's invitation not to forget that the Church's authority grows with this ability to defend the dignity of others, to anoint them and to heal their wounds and their frequently dashed hopes. It means remembering that we are here because we have been asked "to preach good news to the poor...to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Lk 4:18-19).

Pope Francis addresses the Cardinals: “Dear brother Cardinals and new Cardinals! In our journey towards Jerusalem, the Lord walks ahead of us, to keep reminding us that the only credible form of authority is born of sitting at the feet of others in order to serve Christ. **It is the authority that comes from never forgetting that Jesus, before bowing his head on the cross, did not hesitate to bow down and wash the feet of the disciples.** This is the highest honour that we can receive, the greatest promotion that can be awarded us: **to serve Christ in God’s faithful people.** In those who are hungry, neglected, imprisoned, sick, suffering, addicted to drugs, cast aside. In real people, each with his or her own life story and experiences, hopes and disappointments, hurts and wounds. Only in this way, can the authority of the Shepherd have the flavour of Gospel and not appear as “a noisy gong or a clanging symbol” (1 Cor 13:1). None of us must feel “superior” to anyone. None of us should look down at others from above. The only time we can look at a person in this way is when we are helping them to stand up.” – *emphasis added*

Pope Francis is sad that clerical ambition for power has damaged the whole Church’s authority. It is the superiority complex that is associated with one’s clerical dress and this attitude does not enable an ordained minister to serve others with love. On the contrary it dehumanizes.

I would like now to share with you a part of the spiritual testament of Saint John XXIII, quoted by Pope Francis to the new Cardinals. Progressing in his own journey, Saint John XXIII could say: “Born poor, but of humble and respectable folk, I am particularly happy to die poor, having distributed, in accordance with the various needs and circumstances of my simple and modest life in the service of the poor and of Holy Church which has nurtured me, whatever came into my hands – and it was very little – during the years of my priesthood and episcopate. Appearances of wealth have frequently disguised thorns of frustrating poverty, which prevented me from giving to others as generously as I would have wished. I thank God for this grace of poverty to which I vowed fidelity in my youth; poverty of spirit, as a priest of the Sacred Heart, and material poverty, which has strengthened me in my resolve never to ask for anything – money, positions or favours – never, either for myself, or for my relations and friends” (29 June 1954).

Credibility of the bishops among the young people has sunk to an all-time low. Mgr. Carlo Maria Vigano, Vatican Nuncio to USA and his grouse against Pope Francis for not decorating him with a Cardinal hat!

Speaking on the Young People at the Synod of Bishops this year (2019), Pope Francis said: “*It is therefore necessary, on the one hand, to decisively overcome the scourge of clericalism.* Listening and leaving aside stereotypes are powerful antidotes to the risk of clericalism, to which an assembly such as this is inevitably exposed, despite our intentions. 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. *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 condition so that it is not repeated.

Clericalism: its nature and its roots

“The lament of Pope Francis and all faithful Catholics is that **clerical ambition for power** has damaged the **whole Church’s authority**.Clericalism is, and has always been, a constant threat to the Church’s mission.....The answer that suggests itself to us is that clericalism springs from a *distorted image of ministers and their ministry* that has crept into our catechesis.....*Images of power and prestige* eclipsing a Shepherd’s office of humble service are

the cause and the conveyer of clericalism” (Fr. Aloysius Pieris,SJ, Vagdevi 25, New Series, Vol.13, no 1January 2019,p 2).

OBLATE CHARISM IN THE FACE OF MODERN CHALLENGES

Introduction

The new priest, Eugène de Mazenod, fired with zeal for reviving the lost faith and restoring the decadent morality of the society of his day, immediately following the disasters of the People’s French Revolution, began by launching parish missions, caring for the youth, prisoners and fisher-folk. He found human dignity of the rural and urban poor in a despicable and degraded state and fired people to a new self-awareness of their dignity as children of God worthy of respect and due honor. This was an effort to restore human dignity. He also saw the importance of the reform of the clergy most of whom had even apostasized with some even fleeing the country leaving their faithful all forlorn. Hence, the opportunities to run seminaries were eventually accepted since committed priests were needed for the renewal of the Church. He went all out to face squarely the challenges that confronted the society and the Church and made them his own intimate and priestly pastoral concerns.

I - The Modern Scenario

The Oblate charism has survived through the last 200 years ever since it had its humble beginnings in the abandoned Carmelite monastery in the village-hamlet of Aix-en-Provence in southern France. It had stood its ground of evangelizing the poor and taking on difficult missions in far-out continents notwithstanding the uncertainties and instability events that affected the 19th and the 20th century. The last fifty years or so, many complex situations have arisen in the world at large and hence affecting the missionary Oblate apostolate in countries where they are now engaged. The political changes in Africa, Asia and South America, the socio-cultural changes in the western world including North America and Canada, the oft volatile nature of convulsions in the Middle-East and the general tendency towards secularization in western societies and trends towards religious fundamentalism in many other parts of the world, creates a veritable volcano of historical eruptions never seen before in the history of mankind. The incredible march of highly sophisticated modern sciences and technology coupled with dictatorship of relativism and allurements towards secularism and materialism are proving to be powerful challenges to the spiritual message of religions and indeed to the Christian message proclaimed by the Church. Militant atheism too and various modes of Marxist ideologies have left their mark in certain countries as well. People of today are easily lured to pleasure, comfort and a-moral life-styles. Religious leadership seems marginalized. Social media and all other mass media communications have engulfed all corners of the world. Both good and evil travel along these paths and are channeled to users on a massive global scale. People leaving their homelands and migrating to lands foreign to their culture, human trafficking, exploitation of children and women, tendency of many countries to attain nuclear supremacy, political dictatorships, failed states, bribery and corruption in seats of authority and abuse of power in many sectors have created many social upheavals and international tensions in our age.

In the context of these modern phenomena we can ask as to where the Oblates with their evangelizing Charism stand in the service of the Church and modern society, in particular the poor, the marginalized

and the down-trodden: the poor in their many new faces today. We can be content that Oblates as a Congregation have kept abreast of some of these changes and taken cognition of their impact on our missionary, apostolic and religious lives as seen in the documentation that has flowed from the assemblies of the General Chapters of the Seventees onwards. The latest edition of our CCRR lays down working principles for the necessary renewal and adaptation. It has a first pivotal section on Charism giving the most important areas of our identity, life-style and mission, followed by reference to our evangelical way of a vowed life in apostolic community. There is a clear teaching that we are missionaries and hence trail-blazers in the area of evangelization which means bringing the power of the Gospel and its values to bear on the life of our audiences. This proclamation has to be matched by our way of life built on those very same values. Formation in the Oblate ideals and administration of our structures are to be inspired by these same ideals and values. They are in the very essence of the concept of Oblate life and work and are not negotiable.

II – The Oblate Response

1. To be at the service of the local churches in various countries, with preference given to the un-churched and the poor, opting always to respond to the most urgent needs of the Church everywhere are basic elements of our identity. As missionaries we do not go the beaten track but explore new and avenues and initiative to launch the Good News of the Gospel. In the light of the classical preface penned by our Founder in 1925, we leave nothing un-dared to extend the rule of Christ, the Redeemer and thus destroy the powers of sin and evil in modern society, in whatever form it threatens modern man/ woman. It may be a materialistic outlook on life, a pleasure-seeking hedonism that tempts people to live in a way that takes them away from any spirituality or a world of consumerism that treats people as objects that can be thrown away, when useless for productive work: the throw-away culture as it is referred to today. Victims of social injustice, those denied decent working conditions, the unemployed and the underpaid, forces that render and increase the poor and their poverty, ideologies that threaten the sacredness of life and violate the sanctuary of the family are some of these new avenues where evil seems to have its day in contemporary civilization. The Oblates who are missionaries to the poor must serve to build a culture of life and a civilization of love, thus fighting a culture of competition and violence, a culture of death and dehumanization. We must assist people to safeguard their human dignity and respect in a highly volatile technocratic world, where technology instead of being at the service of man, enslaves and victimizes him.
2. As ministers of the Proclamation of the Word of God, a new challenge confronts us as preachers, namely Christian Fundamentalism that distorts the Word of God and abuses the texts of the Bible. This phenomenon reaches ever wider circles of audiences through the channels of mass communication, thus impacting thousands of people who can be gullible to such wrong type of evangelism. Hence the ministry of preaching has become a great challenge to the Catholic Church. We as evangelizers have to be part of a powerful response to save the Word of God.
3. The situation has turned full circle after our 200-year battle with the world with apostasy of faith, loss of all religiosity and with it spirituality, loss of the sense of sin, allurements to loose and pleasure-seeking way of life, going into blind alleys of false freedom and worldly joys. Among the most distressing are the phenomena of divorce and easy breakdown of marriages, the young inundated by drugs, the attack on defenseless life through abortion and loose sexual morality in its

various heinous and despicable forms. There is addition the rising of the new faces of the poor through migration of peoples, lack of decent employment and under-employment, bribery and corruption in the seats of power and powerful economic institutions. Mammon seems to rule the day in many insidious ways. Workers, daily laborers, farmers, those in the not so powerful ranks in the state and the private sector find it difficult to stem the tide of the ever-rising cost of living. The impact of the multi-national corporations is creating clear unjust economic situations for many engaged in small-business enterprises. The labor market is being rudely exploited by those who wield power in the handling of money and capital. The eternal social question of the relation between capital and labor, instead of being in close relationship beneficial to all partners involved such as between employers and the employees, is to day in total disarray. No economic system, either socialistic or capitalistic seems able to reconcile this conflict and bring it to a reconciling position. In many developing countries the gap between the rich and the poor is ever widening with the tendency to violent protests and demonstrations by those who feel are the helpless victims of this situation of social disintegration.

Hence we today talk of not just personal sins and individual faults but of social sin and structural injustice that are institutions by themselves. Bribery and corruption are such realities as are abuse of political power through dictatorships and destruction of fundamental human rights. The contemporary oblate mission to the poor and the oppressed necessarily include the ministry for Justice and Peace. Hence, oblates are bound to get involved in these highly volatile issues that are fraught with much danger and risk. Examples of such commitments are being heard from various oblate units across the world including the third-world countries. This naturally embraces a different life-style that make us identify powerfully with the poor outside of the institutional structure of the official Church and going to the margins beyond it. The spirituality of the Option for the Poor emerges here. The rampant forms of injustice that engulf the poor of today who are laborers, migrants and children, women etc, makes this evangelical ministry all the more urgent if we believe that the God of the Bible and his manifestation in the poor Jesus of Nazareth happens also to be a God of Justice and fidelity to the poor and the exiles. Through thick and thin, guiding through a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, this mobile God was a part of the journey of political, cultural and spiritual liberation for the people of God in exile as the Book of Exodus reveals. In the New Testament story, it is Jesus present in the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the sick and the prisoners that we are called to serve in a privileged manner. For an international congregation such as ours, we have to take this battle inter-provincially and between continents we serve in and even enter international fora to engage in this activity in a global scale so that our oblate voices in favor of the poor are heard even in such secular institutions. Ministry for justice and peace is today is considered a very relevant form of evangelization for promoting the Kingdom of God in a flagrantly secular, materialistic, empirical and scientific world-culture.

4. Facing new forms of spiritualities. Modern day people who still thirst for spiritual and transcendental experiences look for ways and means outside the historical churches to look for that experience. The official liturgies and the traditional prayer and meditation forms do not seem to respond to this deep-seated hunger of modern man who is pummeled by secularity. All pioneers of modern evangelization have to become instruments in facilitating this spiritual urge. There is a tendency in the secular west to look for eastern methods of meditation and solitude to achieve peace of mind,

emotional quietude and mental tranquility. They seek oases of silence and solitude far away from the noise and buzz of our urban surroundings. Monasteries that provide this atmosphere are on the increase. At times they are multi-religious and inter-religious. How are Oblates whose prayer should be that the Kingdom of God come through us and in use face this new challenge of prayer and spirituality? It appears that in the west vocations are on the increase in contemplative religious orders which are given to prayer, meditation, solitude and monastic way of life and work.

Conclusion

As a missionary Congregation the Church expects us to blaze new trails of spirituality and evangelization that can face contemporary challenges in modern day culture and civilization. This pioneering role that make us take creative initiatives is an urgent task that faces all missionary congregations throughout the world. We are confronted with the spiritual hunger and spiritual poverty of masses, not just a group like the youth to whom we provide education, vocational guidance and character formation. We will fail in our missionary duty to Church if we run away from the challenge of facing the strong secular trends of modern-day society. Even amidst the secular, religious language can still be used and religious symbols invented to help man preserve his transcendent orientation that surpasses his worldly, secular and temporary concerns and obligations. Ultimately it is the dictates of the moral law and ethical aspects that should sway over all human and social pre-occupations.

BEING WITH THE POOR AND THE OPPRESSED IN INDONESIA

Edwin Tarchizius Sulispriyanto, OMI

(Oblate Brother Edwin Tarchizius Sulispriyanto, OMI from Indonesia who visited Sri Lanka in 2019 speaks about his becoming a Christian, an Oblate Brother and his missionary outlook)

How I became a Catholic

I became a Catholic because my father who was a Muslim admired and appreciated the quality of Catholic education and my father and my mother sent me to a Jesuit School (St. Canisius' School) in Surakarta. The Jesuits educated me and introduced me to Jesus Christ and I was baptized in 1994.

Why I became an Oblate Brother

I became an Oblate because they are called experts in difficult missions. An Oblate is God's friend and a friend knows what God's desires for him. I came to know that the Oblates are experts in difficult missions through Fr. Charlie Burrows, OMI in Cilacap, Central Java. Fr. Charlie Burrows was / is still working for the poorest of the poor, especially for the prisoners, farmers, fishermen and also for ecology.

From being a Christian, I became an Oblate because the Oblates help people to act with dignity. He is also a follower of Jesus Christ and he is called to act like a Christian, the salt of the earth and light of the world. An Oblate is able also to interact with everyone, without considering people's traditional faiths.

Being an Oblate Brother is a special gift from God because he is sent directly to the world, to human beings, while the priest is ordained for Church ministry. As an Oblate Brother, I can reach out to both Christians and also to people belonging to other faiths.

The poor and the oppressed evangelise me

I must say that my life is with the poor, especially the oppressed ones who really evangelise me, transforming my life into a joyful one. They also make me also joyful with the transformation taking place in their lives of the poor and the oppressed. They and I begin to see the gift of wisdom and knowledge which are embodied in our hearts and minds. Such encounters make me to be open to the Spirit of God's wisdom and knowledge active in their lives. Such meetings also make the poor and me to become also conscious of our hidden skills for human growth. That is why the poor and the oppressed are blessed.

The Oblates and their ministries in Indonesia

The Oblates came to Indonesia in 1972. They came from Australia, France and Italy. The French and the Italian Oblates who had been working in Laos had been expelled from that country and they came to Indonesia.

Speaking of the significant achievements of the Oblates in Indonesia, I must say that the French Oblates were noted for formation and rural ministry in West Borneo. The Italian Oblates were engaged in parish and health ministries in East Borneo while the Australian Oblates were qualified in education, development projects and prison ministry in Purwakerto diocese, Java.

The Oblate Province of Indonesia is first and foremost directed to transforming the quality of life of the Oblates, namely life-witnessing. As for the people, they try to promote the cultivation of Panchaseela (faith in one God, humanity, unity in diversity, being led by wisdom, justice and peace). The Panchaseela is manifested in the Oblate formation and ministry.

We have 96 schools spread out in several dioceses. They are: Kindergarten, Elementary schools, Junior High School, Senior High School, Vocational High School, a Maritime Academy and Non-formal Training courses. These schools are open to all, irrespective of their faiths. We also employ qualified teachers belonging to other faiths. The Catholic students in our schools form only about 2 %.

The Oblates have developed computer based management which is helping the poor to save time and energy effectively and thereby sustain themselves. The clearest indicator of this sustainability is on water and waste management, for example changing brackish water into drinking water. The Oblates, like the

ordinary poor people, are learning to develop their potential to help the poor. They are now teachers in schools, nurses in poor houses, farmers in rural areas, transforming plastic waste into petrol, scientists in their ministry to develop harmony with nature and are building networks with the youth to combat poverty. Today, science and faith have combined for the Oblate mission. The Oblates are called to care for human beings and mother earth.

Oblate Formation and Training

We form at the parish level groups called “Samuel-Eli” groups (after the names of the prophets Samuel and Eli) to promote vocation to religious life, not only to the Oblate way of life. The choice of the name, “Samuel-Eli” group because the call to serve as priests and Religious must begin with listening to the voice of God as the prophets Samuel and Elie did. They are our examples. For the candidates willing to become Oblates, we provide formation and training in an Association named, “Sons and Daughters” of St. Eugene de Mazenod. After having participated in this formation and training, the boys can decide to become Oblates (priest or Brother) and the girls can decide to become Oblate Sisters (Las Oblatas).

Number of Oblates in Indonesia

37 Oblates (6 foreigners with Indonesian passport);

43 Juniorists;

11 Pre-Novices;

4 Novices (1 for priesthood and 3 for Brotherhood)

16 Scholastics;

7 Oblate Brothers

RECALLING THE MEMORY OF THE GREAT OBLATE MISSIONARIES IN BANGLADESH

Bishop Bejoy N. D’Cruze, OMI

We were fortunate to have very fine missionaries whose lives and activities were very inspiring, attractive and encouraging. They set a good model for the local Oblates. Some of us came in touch with these pioneers especially **Fr. Henry Van Hoof, Fr. Andrew Charvet, Fr. Emil Moraes, Fr. Rex Kulas and Fr. Angelo Martyn**. Their exemplary lives, wholehearted commitment and passion for mission were amazing and incomparable. They created a big impact on our mission and lives. With love and gratitude we cherish our memory of living together, sharing life and mission activities. Their lives, good guidance and instruction will always work as our fundamental guidelines and point of reference. Out of these missionaries the first two died since quite a few years. Still we feel their presence even though they are not physically present with us anymore.

Here I would like to recall some of our memories and virtues of Fr. Emil Moraes, Fr. Rex Kulas and Fr. Angelo Martyn.

As a Seminarian, I came to know **Fr. Emil Moraes** who was a very spiritual person and a man of prayer. Everyday he used to spend a certain amount of time in prayer and meditation. He used to prepare homilies well and nourished our spiritual hunger. His faith and trust in God was very profound. In a short time he came to be known as a good retreat preacher. He conducted many annual retreats for the members of many Congregations and Institutions. He was in the formation for a long time too. He proved himself to be a good father, guide and formator. He not only taught and formed the seminarians but he himself lived as model for the seminarians. He always demanded maximum from them. As a person he was a kind and generous priest. He loved to help others especially the poor. In fact he was a good friend of the poor. He was always kind and understanding to their sufferings, difficulties and struggles. He also lived a very simple life. Modern life style, comfort and luxury never attracted him. He helped many children for their education, many sick to get medical treatment and also different categories of poor people who came to him and never left with empty hands. He was also a man of discipline, lived a decent and neat and clean life.

He also led the Oblate Delegation of Bangladesh for many year as a loving and popular Superior. After Fr. Henry Van Hoof, he consolidated the foundation and opened new missions and initiated many activities. He bought land, built the Formation Houses, Parishes, Schools and other Institutions. He was a man of vision and established this Delegation on solid ground and set a clear direction to follow. Present Delegation is standing on his contribution. Our future generation would be able to appreciate him more for what he did for us. He also loved to eat delicious Bengali dishes.

Fr. Rex Kulas was very different. A very good part of his life was spent in giving education, teaching and formation. He was a good teacher and a man of academic sphere. He was a very dutiful, responsible and silent worker. He always took his duty very seriously, always prepared his lessons well, showed a great love and concern for his students and he always accompanied his students individually. He was really a master in English and grammar. Teaching was his passion. He loved his profession. Power and position never allured him. He was such a humble person who could easily work under junior priests. He was a good piano player and singer and loved to teach his students too. He was also man of disciple and prayer.

Fr. Angelo Martyn was the first Rector of the Oblate Scholasticate which we began at Monipuripara and later shifted to Nayangar. He initiated the Oblate formation in Bangladesh. He is a good teacher who taught us also philosophy at the Major Seminary. He is a man of humour and joy. He always brings joy and laughter wherever he goes. He is a man of great simplicity. He maintains a very frugal life style. He worked in formation, parishes and as Superior of the Delegation. He worked as a spiritual director and counselor for many, especially for the Sisters, Seminarians and priests. Fr. Angelo is a man of prayer and a dedicated missionary. As he leaves Bangladesh, the Oblate Delegation would miss the presence of foreign

Oblates in Bangladesh. Through their presence we were in regular contact with the Province and Sri Lanka.

(The foreign Oblate Missionaries in Bangladesh formed the local Oblates, one of them becoming a Bishop (Bishop Bejoy N. D'Cruze), and elevated the Oblate Mission in Bangladesh to the level of a new Diocese in Bangladesh with **Bishop Bejoy N. D' Cruze, OMI** as its Ordinary. **The Sri Lankan Oblates, Fr. Angelo Martyn, OMI** served for 40 years in Bangladesh from December 13, 1978, **Fr. Emil Moraes, OMI** for 32 years from January 11, 1981 and **Fr. Rex Kulas, OMI** for 10 years from June 13, 1993.Ed).

fojk j;sldk l;sldjf;ys újdyh ms<sn| foajO³uh

fÊ' tî' ksYdks fl!Y,Hd

iNd b.ekaüi hdj;ald,Sk lsÍu fojk j;sldk l;sldjf;a m%Odk wruqKla úh' b.ekaüi hdj;ald,Sk lsÍu hkq weoys,s fjkia lsÍula fkdj kQ;khg iß,k wkaõka ls;=kq weoys,a, f;areï lr oSuhs' újdyh .súiqula hkak fojk j;sldk l;sldjf;ys meyeos,s f,iu bosßm;a lrk ,os' bka woyia jkafka fojk j;sldk l;sldj;g fmr újdyh ms<sn| ls%ia;shdks ixl,amh .súiqula yd iinkaO fkdjQjlao@ tki fojk j;sldk l;sldj;g fmr b.ekaüij, újdyh .súiqulahes i|yka fkdjqfha o@ ;jÿrg;a meyeos,s l<fyd;a fojk j;sldk l;sldj;g fmr újdyh ms<sn| b.ekaüij, .súiqfi ixl,amh fldfy;au olakg fkd,efío@ fuu lreK ms<sn|j 1917 iNd kS;sh" XI jk mshqia mdma;=ud úiska 1930 m< lrk ,o ffjjdysl mdßY=oaO;ajh (*Casti Connubii*), hk úYajf,aLkh" iy kQ;k f,dalfha Y=oaO jQ iNdj (GS) kue;s m%ldYh weiqßka idlÉPd lruq'1

1917 iNd kS;s ix.%yh

1917 m< lrk ,o iNd kS;s ix.%yfha i|ykej wkaoug újdyh fldka;%d;a;=jls' tu fldka;%d;a;=j il%fika;=uh jk w;r tys .=Kdx. tal;ajh iy iaØridrNdjh (unity and indissolubility) fõ' tu iNd kS;s ix.%yhg wkqj fldka;%d;a;=j iy il%fika;=j w;r tal;ajhla we;' újdyfha mru ksIagdj fyj;a wruqK ore M, iy wkd.; mrmqf¾ wOHdmkh hs' tys fojk wruqK tlfkldg iyh ùu yd ,sx.sl;aj keUqrg (concupiscence)úi÷uls' újdyh ms<sn| Y=' wf.dia;Skq;=udf.a b.ekaüu wkqj oreM, yd úYajdijka;lu yd il%fika;=j újdyhl wvx.= hym;a oE fyda wdYs¾jdo fõ' fuu ;s%úO .=Kdx. ms<sn|j idlÉPdfõ oS t;=ud jvd jeo.;a .=Kdx.h l=ulaoehs i|yka fkdldrhs' wgjk ishjiys úiQ fiùfha bisfoda¾;=udg (St. Isidore of Seville)wkqj újdy úh hq;af;a ore M," tlfkldg iyh ùu yd ,sx.sl;aj keUqrej ksidh'2

oy;=ka jk Y;j¾Ifha úiQ Y=' f;dauia welajhskdia;=udg wkqj újdyfha wruqKq oajhls' tys m%Odk wruqK orejka iys lsÍu yd yodjvd .ekSu jk w;r fojk wruqK tlfkldg tosfkod cSú;fha oS úYajdijka; ùuhs' fuu iajNdúl

wruqKqj,g wu;rj ls%ia;shdks újdyhg wre;la we;' tki ls%ia;shdks újdyh u`.ska ls%ia;=ka jykafia yd iNdj w;r we;s tal;ajh ixfla;j;a lsíuhs' tneúka il%fika;=j újdyfha hy.=Khls (the sacrament is a good of marriage).3

ffjjdysl mdßY=oaO;ajh

1930 XI jk mshqia mdma;=uka úiska m< lrk ,o ffjjdysl mdßY=oaO;ajh (CC) úYajf,aLkfha i|yka we;ei woyia kQ;k f,dalfha Y='iNdj hk m%ldYkfhys b.ekaüi j,g ;=vqÿka neö úYdrofhda fmkajd fo;s' ffjjdysl mdßY=oaO;ajh (CC) úYajf,aLkfhys .súiqula hk wre; we;s *foedus* hk ,;ska jpkh Ndú; fõ' ffjjdysl mdßY=oaO;ajh úYajf,aLkhg (CC) wkqj újdyfha hy.=K oreM," úYajdijka;lu yd il%fika;=jhs' tys uq,a fldgig wkqj újdyfha m%:u wruqK orejka iys lsíu yd Tjqkaf.a wOHdmkh jk w;r" fojk wruqK wfkHdakH fm%auh" wdOdrh iy ,sx.sl;aj keUqrej ixis÷úuhs' úYajf,aLkh (CC) 10g wkqj újdyfha wdYs¾jdo" oreM," úYajdijka;lu yd il%fika;=j hk oE Y=' wf.dia;Skq;=udf.a ,shú,sj,ska Wmqgd f.k we;' fuu wdYs¾jdoj, iimQ¾K;ajh we;af;a újdy nkaOkfha iaòridrNdjfhka u;=jk újdyfha il%fika;=uh iaJNdjhhs' ls%ia;=ka jykafia úiska újdyfha fldka;%d;a;=j lem lrkq ,eíu" jrm%idofha ,l=Kls'4 ffjjdysl mdßY=oaO;ajh (CC) 32g wkqj újdy nkaOkfha iaòridr nfõ fyda i|sh fkydels ;;a;ajfha iimQ¾K;ajh foaj kS;shla ñi ñksia kS;shla fkdfo'5 ls%ia;=ka jykafia yd iNdj w;r we;s mßmQ¾K ne|Su ls%ia;shdks újdyfha rEmlhhs'6 újdyhla hkq wfkHdakH fm%auh iy cSú; fnod .ekSuhs' th orejka ms<sis| .ekSu yd wOHdmkhg iSud fkdù wfkHdakH iimQ¾K;ajh o wvx.= jQjls'7 ffjjdysl mdßY=oaO;ajh (CC) úYajf,aLkfha újdyhla hkq *foedus* f,i ye|skaüu kQ;k f,dalfha Y=oaOjQ iNdj (GS) m%ldYkfhya újdyhla hkq .súiqula f,i ye|skaüug ;=vqÿKs'8

újdy nkaOkh\$ fldka;%d;a;=j i|sh fkydelalla nj uf;ö 19"6 Wmqgd olajñka XI mshqia mdma;=ud wjOdrKh lrhs'9 Y=oaOjQ f;dauia welajhskdia;=ud Wmqgd olajñka újdyhla hkq .súiqulahehs (*pactio coniugalis* / marriage pact) ffjjdysl mdßY=oaO;ajh (CC) olajhs' tfy;a *pactio coniugalis* hkak marriage pact fyda ffjjdysl .súiqu f,i o mßj¾;kh l< yelsh' ,;ska NdIdfõ *foedus* hkak bx.S%is NdIdfjka marriage contract/ bond/ pact f,i mrsj¾;kh lrkq ,en we;s w;r tu ,;ska uQ,hu fojk j;sldk l;sldjf;a kQ;k f,dalfha Y=oaO jQ iNdj (GS) 48ys .súiqula f,i mßj¾;kh lrkq ,en we;' fjkia l< fkydels fm!oa.,sl leue;af;ys fyda tl`.;djfhys újdy .súiqu (marriage covenant of irrevocable personal consent) hkak kQ;k f,dalfha Y=oaO jQ iNdj (GS) 48ys i|yka *foedere coniugii seu irrevocabili consensu personali instauratur* hkafkys mßj¾;khls'10

ffjjdysl mdßY=oaO;ajh (CC) úYajf,aLkfhys iaJdñ mqreIhd yd Nd¾hdj w;r ffjjdysl iinkaO;djfha iaJNdjh cSú; iyNd.S;ajhla (*vitae communio*) f,i olajd we;s w;r tu fhÿfuys bx.S%is mßj¾;kh -blending life~ f,i bosßm;a lrkq ,en we;' tfy;a kQ;k f,dalfha

Y=oaO jQ iNdj (GS) m%ldYkfhys "vitae communio" hkak mqoa., iyNd.S;ajhla "communion of persons" f,i mβj¾;kh lrkq ,en we;' "vitae communio" hk fhýfuys ksjeros mβj¾;kh úh hq;af;a "communion of life" fyj;a cSú; iyNd.S;ajhhs'11

fldka;%d;a=j yd .súiqu

isxy, NdIdfjka .súiqu hehs y÷kajkq ,nkafka fyafn%õ nhsn,fha Ndú; lr we;s -nÍ;a~ hk jok fõ' -nÍ;a~ hkak fimagqjdcaska; .%Sla nhsn,fha oshdf;afla (*diathēkē*) f,i mβj¾;kh fõ' fcfrdi;=udf.a ,;ska mβj¾;khfys - nÍ;a~ hkak *foedus* iy *pactio* hk ,;ska joka j,ska mβj¾;kh lrkq ,en we;'12 tmSi 5" 21-32 ls%ia;shdks újdyfha il%fika;=uh iaajNdjh ms<sn| Y=oaOjQ ,shú,s moku f,i ms<s.efka'13

fī ms<sn`o fÊiq ksldhsl fmda,a t*a' md,au¾ msh;=ud i`oyka lrkqfha weoys,sjka;hska fofokl= w;r újdyh iNdj iu`. l%sia;=ka jykafiaf.a .súiqfuys ixfla;hla yd il%fika;=jla njh'14 l%sia;shdks újdyh .súiqula f,i uq,skau i`oyka lr we;af;a l%sj' 4 jk ishjfia úiQ ,lagdkaishqia ^Lactantius& kue;s .=rejrhdh'15 fodñksldk ksldhsl tājâ ials,fnlaiā msh;=ud mjikafka yHq (Hugh of St. Victor) hk f,aLlhdg wkqj újdyh uQ,sl jYfhka fma%ufha .súiqula jk w;r tal;ajh iy úYajdijka;lu Bg wh;a njhs'16 tfukau újdyh hkq foaj wKla o th iimQ¾K jkafka fofokl= wdOH;añlj tla wfhl= ùu u.ska njhs' 12 jk ishjfiiys úiQ iNd kS;S{fhda újdyh fldka;%d;a=jla f,i ye`oska jQy' tfy;a uyd we,anÜ;=ud iy f;dauia welajhskdia;=ud tu jHjydrh ms<sn| jeä leue;a;la fkdoelajQy' miqj *af,dfrkaia uka;%K iNdj u.ska újdyh i|sh fkydels fldka;%d;a=jla f,i y÷kajkq ,eih' .súiqula hkq i|sh fkydels iinkaO;djhls' fomd¾Yjhla úiska fldka;%d;a=jlg t<öfuka wk;=rej fomd¾Yjfha leue;a; wkqj fldka;%d;a=fjka bj;a úh yelsh' .súiqula i|sh fkydels h:d¾:hla jk w;r Bg wúYajdijka; ùu úYajdih lvlsíuls' iinkaO;djhla jk .súiqu Y=oaOjQ h:d¾:hls' .súiqula hkak NdKav yd fiajd iinkaO fldka;%d;a=j,g jvd Wiia ;,hlg wh;a jqjls'17

kQ;k f,dalfha Y=' iNdj hk m%ldYkfha újdy ixl,amh

tmSi 5"25 moki lr .ksñka fojk j;sldk l;sldj; újdyh (*fodeus*) .súiqula f,i w¾: ksrEmkh lrhs' *LG/DV* iy *GS* hk f,aLkj, iNdj foaj ck;dj neõ wjOdrKh flf¾' fojk j;sldk l;sldj;g wkqj fouhka jykafia yd BY%dfh,h w;r we;s iinkaO;djh o l%sia;=ka jykafia yd iNdj w;r we;s iinkaO;djh o újdy hqj,la w;r we;s iinkaO;djh o .súiquls' fojk j;sldk l;sldj;f;ys újdyh ms<sn| uq,a flgqimf;ys újdy .súiqula ms<sn|j i|ykla fkdfo' kQ;k f,dalfha Y=oaOjQ iNdj hk m%ldYkfha i|yka újdyh ms<sn| b.ekaüi mshjr lsysmhla Tiafia ixfYdaOkh jQ neõ jd¾;d fõ'18

fojk j;sldk l;sldjff;ys m%:u ieisjdrh u.ska iQodki lrk ,o újdyh ms<sn| flgqimf;ys (On Chastity, Virginity, Matrimony and the Family) újdy .súiqula ms<sn| i|ykla fkdue;' tu flgqim;g wkqj újdyh iajNdúl h:d%:hla fukau il%fika;=jls' th ñksia j%hdf.a meje;au i|yd wjeis jQ foaj jrm%idofha udOHhls' fuu flgqim; kS;suh rduqjlska bÈßm;a lrk ,oaols' fuu flgqimf;a wka;%.;h frdaudkq .=rel=,jd\$" oeä idim%odhsl tfukau újdyfha wjidk wruqKg iSud jQ f,aLkhla neõ fcdaima rÜisx.% ^miqlid,Sk fidf<diajnk fnkälau mdma;=ud& mjid we;'19

by; i|yka mrsos kQ;k f,dalfha Y=oaOjQ iNdj hk f,aLkfhys újdyh ms<sn| b.ekaüi l;sldjff;ys fojk" f;jk yd isöjk ieisjdrj, ixFYdaOkh ù wkqu; lr.;a oEh' újdyh hkq içh fkydels .súiqula hehs m%:ujrg i|yka lrk ,oafoa 1963 ud%:= 25 Èk ilia lrk ,o flgqimf;ys" tkí fojk j;sldk l;sldjff;ys m<uq ieish yd fojk ieish w;r ilia lrk ,o flgqimf;ysh' ls%ia;shdks mjq, ls%ia;=ka jykafia yd iNdj w;r we;s m%;srEmh (Image) fukau tu .súiqug iyNd.sùula neõ 1964 fmrjdB - cq,s w;r iimdokh lrk ,o iQßla - "föka f,aLkfhys i|ykaúK' tu f,aLkh fojk j;sldk l;sldjff;ys f;jk ieisjdrfha \$ idlÉPdjjg Ndckhg lrk ,os'20

újdyh hkq .súiqula hehs ikd: lsíug jeo.;a jQ lreKq rdYshla iqßla - "föka f,aLkfha Wmf,aLkfhys i|yka lr ;snQ kuq;a tajd l;sldjff;ys idlÉPdjjg Ndckh fkdùh' kQ;k f,dalfha Y=oaOjQ iNdj m%ldYkfhys újdy .súiqu ms<sn| jeo.;a lreKq rdYshla wka;%.; ù we;' újdyh hkq fou÷ka úiska Tjqka jykafiaf.a kS;shg hg;a l< ffjjdysl .súiquls' th iajdñmqreIhd ia;%sh iy ore oeßhkaf.a wNsjDoaêh m;d fofofkl= fm%aufhka iy úYajdijka;lñka tla lrk ,oaols' tu f,aLkfhys újdyh .súiqula (foedus) f,i y÷kajkq ,nhs' th fldka;%d;a;=jla fkdö'21

kQ;k f,dalfha Y=oaO jQ iNdj (GS) f,aLkfhys i|yka újdyh ms<sn| j.ka;s újrKh lrñka YS,O%uh ms<sn| foajO%u úYdrofhla jQ n%kdâ fyaßx (Bernard Häring) mjikafka fojk j;sldk l;sldj;g wkqj újdyh hkq" ls%ia;=ka jykafia yd iNdj w;r we;s .súiqu fuka .súiqula hkqhs' w;S;fha \$ újdyh mjq,a folla w;r .kqfokqjla f,i i,lk ,o neúka" tu NdIdj iNd Ñka;khg o we;=<;a úh' újdyh hkq iajdñmqreIhd yd Nd%hdj w;r fm%aufha .súiqula hkak wjOdrKh fkdùh' kQ;k f,dalfha Y=oaO jQ iNdj (GS) f,aLkfha újdyh hkak .súiqula hehs. bÈßm;a lrkq ,eíu u.ska ñksid iy ia;%sh w;r we;s iinkaO;dj foaj iinkaO;dfjka /flk neõ .uH fö'22

1917 m< lrk ,o iNd kS;sfhys ffjjdysl iinkaO;dj fldka;%d;a;=jla f,i i|yka lrkq ,enQ kuqý újdyh hkq fldka;%d;a;=jlg tyd .sh iinkaO;djhla hehs bka woyia jQ neõ lsj yelsh' tfia ks.ukh l< yelafla tu iNd kS;sfhys fldka;%d;a;=j yd il%fika;=j w;r iinkaO;dj wjOdrKh lrkq ,eíu yd újdyfha wruqKq Bg we;=<;a lr ;síu h' újdyh hkq fm%auh u.ska iajdñmqreIhd yd ia;%sh w;r b;d ióm iinkaO;djhla f.dvk.k mjq,la we;s

lsíug újD; jQ h:d¾:hla neð kQ;k f,dalfha Y=oaO jQ iNdj (GS) i|yka lrhs'
idim%odhsl Ñka;kh wkqj újdyfha wdYs¾jdo jk oreM," úYajdijka;lu iy
il%fika;=uh .=Kdx.h újdyfha wruqKqjk oreM, iy wfkHdakH iyfhda.s;djg
jvd jeo.;ah'23 tfy;a kQ;k f,dalfha Y=oaO jQ iNdj (GS) u.ska újdyfha
wdYs¾jdo iy wruqKq fjka fkdflgd tajd tla h:d¾:hla f,i f;areí lrkq ,en
we; '
újdyh .súiqula f,i bÈßm;a lrkq ,eíu" nhsn,Sh fukau udkisl úoHd;aul yd
tfâbl foajO¾ufha ;;ald,Sk kj Ñka;kfhka újdy iinkaO;dj yd mjq, wre;a
.ekaùula úh' tf,i újdyh wre;a msß foaj le|ùula f,i bÈßm;a úK' th
Y=oaO;ajh yd .e,ùu lrd f.k hk foaj le|ùula fukau wdYs¾jdohls'

w. igyka (End Notes)

1 fuu ,smsh uq,a jrg l%sixid 3\$1 ^cqks 2015& 72-80 m<úK'

fuh Thérèse BUCK úiska rÑ; Gaudium et Spes and Marriage: A Conjugal Covenant, *The Australasian Catholic Record* 89/4 (2012) 444-457 weiqfrka ilik ,oaols'

2 T. BUCK, 444-445.

3 T. BUCK, 445, note 4.

4 T. BUCK, 445-446.

5 ffjjdysl mdßY=oaO;ajh/*Casti connubii*, 35 o n, kak'

6 ffjjdysl mdßY=oaO;ajh/*Casti connubii*, 35-37; tmSi 5"32 o n, kak'

7 ffjjdysl mdßY=oaO;ajh/*Casti connubii*, 24, 37'

8 *Gaudium et spes*, 48-52.

9 T. BUCK, 445-446. ks.ukh

10 T. BUCK, 445-446.

11 T. BUCK, 447-448.

12 T. BUCK, 448.

13 T. BUCK, 449.

14 P.A. PALMER, "Christian Marriage: Contract or Covenant". *Theological Studies* 33 (1972) 617-665, 624 quoted by T. BUCK, 449, Note 28.

15 Cf. P.A. PALMER, 626-627.

16 E. SCHILLEBEECKX, *Marriage: Human Reality and Saving Mystery* (London 1988) 320-321.

17 T. BUCK, 451.

18 T. BUCK, 452.

19 J. RATZINGER, *Theological Highlights of Vatican II* (NY 1966) 148.

20 T. BUCK, 452-453.

21 GS 48, 50.

22 B. Haring, "Marriage and Family", *Vatican II: An Interfaith Appraisal* (ed. J.H. Miller) (Notre Dame 1966) 440.

23 "In this perspective the traditional understanding of the goods (children, fidelity and sacrament) and ends (children and mutual assistance) are placed not in a hierarchy or in opposition but are rather harmonized in a personalist perspective as essential to marriage and to integral human fulfilment." T. BUCK, 455. Cf. GS 48-50.

ADVICE TO AUTHORITIES ON LITURGY

“ Provided that the fundamental unity of the Roman rite is preserved, room is to be left, even when the books used in the liturgy are revised, for legitimate variations and adaptations to meet the needs of different gatherings, areas and peoples, especially in mission territories. Due weight should be given to this consideration in drawing up ritual forms or official instructions” (Vatican 11, S.C, 38).

The Church is tired, in the Europe of well-being and in America

Jesuit Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini died on Aug., 31, 2012 at the age of 85. Two weeks earlier, he had given an interview to his fellow Jesuit Fr. George Sporschill with whom he had had collaborated on a book titled *Nocturnal Conversations in Jerusalem*, and an Italian friend named Federica Radice Fossati Confalonieri.

To a question: “How do you see the situation of the Church?”

Cardinal Martini replied: “The Church is tired, in the Europe of well-being and in America. Our culture has become old, our churches and our religious houses are big and empty, the bureaucratic apparatus of the church grows, our rites and our dress are pompous. Do these things, however, express what we are today?... Well-being weighs on us. We find ourselves like the rich young man who went away sad when Jesus called him to be his disciple. I know that we can't let everything go easily. At least, however, we can seek people who are free and closest to their neighbour. Like Archbishop Romero and the Jesuit martyrs of El Salvador. Where are the heroes among us who can inspire us? By no means do we have to limit them by the boundaries of the institution.”

By John L. Allen Jr.



Pope Francis prays for the victims of Easter Sunday bomb blast in Sri Lanka

