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As a journal of theology and pastoral life, *Quaerens* is committed to the noble mission of deepening the modern-day Christian’s understanding and praxis of the faith, of fostering an atmosphere of dialogue with cultures and religions throughout the world in general and throughout Asia in particular, and of promoting a scholarly theological discourse that addresses the specific pastoral needs and questions of our time.

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# Clerical Abuse: A Canonical Reflection

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Reginaldo M. Mananzan, SJ, JCD

## **Abstract**

*The author explores the theological basis of the call as well as the anthropological realities of those called by the Lord to be his servants and ministers. The dynamic interplay of the theological and the anthropological makes the church servants both sinners and saints.*

*While on the one hand there have been guidelines and protocols from bishops and Superiors of Consecrated Life against sexual abuses, there are also cultural, juridical and canonical reasons that mitigate the open and aggressive addressing of these sexual abuses. In the end, the author suggests that an “effective means to cure the sacred dignity of the victims” (p.16) be put in place—Now.*

## **Introduction**

When Pope Francis visited Ireland on August 25 and 26, 2018, one cannot ignore the dire contrast from Pope Saint John Paul II’s own visit some forty years ago, that is, the absence of an excited multitude and an unabashed magnificence. One big culprit

for such shrinking was the damaging if not sickening clerical child abuse scandal and other clerical sexual crimes hurting the Catholic Church everywhere. Despite Pope Francis' apologies for these unchecked abuses, the lukewarm welcome persisted among the many traditional Irish Catholics coupled with organized protests. The truth, however, is that sexual abuse by Catholic clergy has been widespread but it was only in the late 1980s that the bold public denouncement began – a matter which is not often easy until now to discuss openly.<sup>1</sup> Two areas can be delineated: victims who have now grown older and are seeking justice; and the church authorities who knew about the abuses but did not do effective as well as fair measures to remedy the injustices incurred. Papal apologies were made.<sup>2</sup> It could be asked what went wrong with the Catholic clergy and where have the Catholic authority failed in facing such damaging delinquency.

### Clerics Are Human

In the Gospel of Luke, the call of Peter gives a dramatic but also a surprising twist in the mind of Jesus when it comes to choosing an apostle (cf. Lk. 5:1-11): It was obvious how Peter got so disgraced when he doubted the Lord's command to try one more time and throw the net for a catch of fish because he has been doing it all night long without success. Peter's reaction after

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<sup>1</sup>This was especially true in United States, Canada and Australia. Later on Europe and Latin America would follow. {Confer: *Catholic Church sexual abuse cases*, from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia). In the Philippines, we have truly few articles and publications on clerical abuse compared to those places.

<sup>2</sup> *In a 2001 apology, John Paul II called sexual abuse within the Church "a profound contradiction of the teaching and witness of Jesus Christ". Benedict XVI apologized, met with victims, and spoke of his "shame" at the evil of abuse, calling for perpetrators to be brought to justice, and denouncing mishandling by church authorities. In 2018, Pope Francis began by accusing victims of fabricating allegations, but by April was apologizing for his "tragic error" and by August was expressing "shame and sorrow" for the tragic history.... Ibid.*

realizing his mistake was: “Leave me, Lord, I am a sinful man.” Undaunted, the Lord, nevertheless, asked Peter to follow Him.

Pope Francis’ papal motto which he kept from his original episcopal one states: *miserando atque eligendo*.<sup>3</sup> The source of this was from Venerable Bede’s homily on the feast of St. Matthew: *Vidit ergo Jesus publicanum, et quia miserando atque eligendo vidit, ait illi, ‘Sequere me’*.<sup>4</sup> The call of Peter as well as that of Matthew have close similarity, namely, both were sinners and yet were called to follow Christ as His apostles.

At the Thirty-Second General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (December 2, 1974 – March 7, 1975), the Fathers asked what is it to be a Jesuit and came up with the following answer: “It is to know that one is a sinner, yet called to be a companion of Jesus as Ignatius was.”<sup>5</sup> Pope Francis, a Jesuit, undoubtedly had this description of a Jesuit in mind when he decided to choose his motto at his episcopal ordination in 1991. What is perceptible in the calls of Peter and Matthew is the fact that being a sinner was not a drawback for Christ to call them to an important mission, namely, to become His apostles. Pope Francis unmistakably was sensing the same thing when he was chosen to be a bishop and then as pope – a sinner yet chosen.

While addressing the Festival of Families in Philadelphia, Pope Francis boldly stated:

There is no perfect family. We do not have perfect parents, we are not perfect, we do not marry a perfect person nor have perfect children. We have complaints from each other. We disappoint each other. So there is no healthy marriage or healthy family without the exercise of forgiveness. Forgiveness is vital to our emotional health and spiritual survival. Without forgiveness the

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<sup>3</sup> Translation: “by having mercy and by choosing”

<sup>4</sup> Translation: “Jesus therefore sees the tax collector, and since he sees by having mercy and by choosing, he says to him, ‘follow me’.” Venerable Bede, Homily 21 (CCL 122, 149-151).

<sup>5</sup> Society of Jesus, *Thirty First and Thirty Second General Congregations*, (Saint Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1977) p.401.

family becomes an arena of conflict and a stronghold of hurt. Without forgiveness, the family becomes ill. Forgiveness is the asepsis of the soul, the cleansing of the mind and the liberation of the heart. Whoever does not forgive does not have peace in the soul nor communion with God. Hurt is poison that intoxicates and kills. Keeping heartache in the heart is a self-destructive gesture. It's autophagy. Those who do not forgive are physically, emotionally and spiritually ill.<sup>6</sup>

From the above, it will not be incorrect to make a little *jurisprudence* when reflecting on the many erring clergy, particularly, those involved in various sexual abuses—be it with minors or with vulnerable adults.<sup>7</sup> Clerics are human and, hence, imperfect. As there are no perfect parents, there are no perfect priests. A person's humanity is, in fact, defined by his imperfection or his being a creature.<sup>8</sup> The Psalms speak of this imperfect state: “What is man that you should be mindful of him. You have made him little less than the angels...” (Psa 8:5-6a) or “But I am like a worm instead of a man. People make fun of

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<sup>6</sup> Address to Festival of Families, Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Philadelphia, Sept. 27, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> The phrase, “vulnerable adult,” is not found in the Code of Canon Law. This, however, was understood earlier to refer to a person who habitually lacks the use of reason – hence, is to be considered equivalent to a minor when it comes to allegations of clerical sexual abuse. This understanding came about after the publication of the *delicta graviora* (graver crimes) laws in the *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, updating the April 2001 *motu proprio* Apostolic Letter *Sacramentorum sanctitatis tutela* of Pope Benedict XVI. Recently, the phrase “vulnerable adult” has been reckoned to include “dependent adults” – namely, older than eighteen-year old persons, with proper use of reason, but who have become vulnerable to sexual abuse due to their inability to resist because of their “helpless” state – like a priest to his bishop or an adult seminarian to his priest formator/benefactor and the like – thus, a kind of non-consensual sexual conduct that is still a legitimate offense on the part of the aggressor.

<sup>8</sup> In Genesis 1, 26, it is evident that man is a creature of God – that is, while God is all-perfect, man is His product and, hence, less perfect being a created one.



me and hate me” (Psa 22:6 ). While a person is created in the image of God, having mind and will, being human, these can be used against God – like Adam and Eve in their disobedience to the Lord God who created them, and, thus, caused their banishment from His domain (cf. Gen 3). Saint Paul would share the same experience of imperfection:

We know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold into slavery to sin. What I do, I do not understand. For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I concur that the law is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that good does not dwell in me, that is, in my flesh. The willing is ready at hand, but doing the good is not. For I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want. Now if (I) do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. So, then, I discover the principle that when I want to do right, evil is at hand. For I take delight in the law of God, in my inner self, but I see in my members another principle at war with the law of my mind, taking me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Miserable one that I am! Who will deliver me from this mortal body? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, I myself, with my mind, serve the law of God but, with my flesh, the law of sin. (Rom 7:14-25)

A similar situation may be cited when the Catholic Church was accused to be remiss regarding the *Shoah*<sup>9</sup> – namely, German Catholic Bishops, even the then Pope Pius XII were noticeably quiet regarding the whole heinous wrongdoing. It could not be denied that there were Church officials, like the future Pope John XXIII, who would be doing the risky act of helping Jews to escape being caught and sent to slaughter, but still many question the majority of the higher authorities for not doing anything for the helpless Jews. Regarding urgings that an adequate investigation

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<sup>9</sup> *Shoah* is the Hebrew term used to describe the mass murder of Jews under the German Nazi regime from 1941 to 1945. Oxford Dictionary: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/shoah>.

should be made on such allegation about this negligence, Pope Francis has this to say:

... opening the archives relating to the Shoah seems perfect to me. They should open them and clarify everything. Then it can be seen if they could have done something, to what extent it could have been done, and if we were wrong in something we will be able to say: “We were wrong in this.” We do not have to be afraid of that. The objective has to be the truth. When one starts to hide the truth, one eliminates the Bible. One believes in God, but only to a point. One is not being fair, we are sinners and unable to stop sinning, even though it is also true that God does not want it like that; He loves us with His mercy, but if I do not recognize that I am a sinner, His mercy does not get to me, it does not reach me. We must know the truth and go to those archives.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, the words of Pope Francis can be applied to the truth about the clerical sexual abuse which was once largely hidden and, thus, allowed to continue to wreak horrendous havoc. Nevertheless, it can be asked, how come it took so long for the Church’s highest officials to face the truth or to be open about such clerical sexual abuses—be they heterosexual, homosexual or the heinous acts of pedophilia.

### **Historical Anecdote**

At this point, it will be interesting to look at a most noted historical clerical sexual abuse in the past and how it had affected negatively the faith and the faithful at that time. This is the story of Pope Alexander VI whose papacy is quite accurately described by the following:

Rodrigo Borgia, elected to the papal throne under  
the name of Alexander VI (1492-1593), possessed a

<sup>10</sup> Jorge Mario Bergoglio-Abraham Skorka, *On Heaven and Earth – Pope Francis on Faith, Family, and the Church in the Twenty-First Century*, Trans. Alejandro Bermudez and Howard Goodman (New York: Image, 1995) pp. 183-184.

vigorous intellect, but was more a worldly than spiritual prince. Though the faults charged against him have been greatly exaggerated, he was certainly an unworthy successor of Peter. However, he accomplished some valuable public service. He regulated the missionary work in the New World, exercised a severe censorship regarding vicious publications, subdued the rebellious nobles within the States of the Church, reformed jurisprudence, labored in the interest of peace and security, and promoted commerce.... In him was seen the verification of the divine promise that hell shall not prevail against the Church ....<sup>11</sup>

Pope Alexander VI before and after being elected as Pope had mistresses and have fathered, at least, eleven children – making him easily as one of the most scandalous popes of his generation and even in the history of papacy. Intelligent and attractive, Pope Alexander VI, coming from a noble family and even a nephew of Pope Calixtus III (1455–1458), obviously relished the adulation of women.<sup>12</sup> His lifestyle was on par with the worldly monarchs of his time. His ways of conducting himself was not any different from them as well. Obviously, his personal life and conduct truly ran counter to whatever Jesus taught and whatever Peter himself set as an example on what his successor should be.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, Pope Alexander VI was elected to be the successor of Peter.

However, despite his valuable accomplishments for the Church, Pope Alexander VI's personal life—especially his having fathered various children from mistresses—remain something that offended the ordinary Catholics. Any cleric, since the time of the apostles must emulate Christ. Alexander VI obviously did not fit with that demand.

Still, as noted earlier, what Pope Alexander VI lived through is a clear proof of the promise Jesus made to His Church, namely, that the gates of the underworld can never overpower it (Mat 16: 18). Can the same thing be said regarding the ongoing

<sup>11</sup> Hermann Wedewer and Joseph McSorley, *A Short History of the Catholic Church* (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1916), pp.125-126.

<sup>12</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope\\_Alexander\\_VI](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Alexander_VI)

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Mark 10:35-45 and Titus 1: 5-9

sexual abuses of clergy which continues to plague our Church today?

### **The Local Scene**

What has been bugging the foreign countries mentioned above regarding the bringing into the open the clerical sexual abuses,<sup>14</sup> has, in fact, found some notable entry into the Philippine scene.<sup>15</sup> Bishops and Superiors of Consecrated Life have positively responded to it by publishing guidelines and protocols for their members. Due remedies and remunerations have been extended to victims. Nevertheless, compared to the severity of the effects of these sexual abuses with other countries—especially in the First World and the Latin American Catholic countries, the Philippine church may not be as heavily tarnished if not deeply affected.

First of all, the reason for such lack of concern is because, perhaps, there are still no thorough investigations and survey of all the victims—as the American, Canadian, Australian and even Irish Churches have done. A lot of the Filipino victims still continue to remain silent, largely perhaps, unlike in those countries cited, due to ignorance of the fact that these have the right to claim justice to repair the injuries they went through—if ever such injustices were recognized.

Second, it is also possible that, unlike again in the countries referred to earlier, the environment in the Philippine Catholic Church is still in the remote past when the clergy or the consecrated persons are considered as holy persons from God and they should be tolerated for whatever faults they have—leaving them into the hands of the Lord who, first of all, called them to their particular state of life. For aren't these men personally

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. footnote No. 1 above.

<sup>15</sup> A book, *Altar of Secrets : Sex, Politics, and Money in the Philippine Catholic Church*, written by veteran journalist Aries Rufo (Manila: Journalism for Nation Building Foundation, 2013), must be the first book which openly talked about clerical abuse – like sired children, squandered money offerings, and power play for positions. Isolated articles on similar matter are also brought out sporadically in major national publications.

called by Lord, the way He called the Apostles. A great number of Filipino Catholics still behave this way. Nevertheless, despite the big silence of victims of clerical sexual abuse in the Philippine Church, injustice and injury have been made and these may not be ignored.

### **Church Leaders and Canon Law**

From the data that various countries made regarding the existence of sexual abuse committed by clergy, it is noticeable that these were already being brought into open during the papacy of St. John Paul II. Similarly, as in the papacy of Pope Pius XII during the mass murder of the Jews, it can be asked why was the Pontiff rather quiet about this horrifying happening of clerical sexual abuse. It could be said, however, that not only St. John Paul II but the whole governance in the Catholic Church as well tended to be quiet—giving the impression of tolerating what is supposed to be absolutely intolerable especially because it involved the divinely “called” persons as culprits.

The first reason that can easily be pinpointed is a clear guideline from canon law, namely, canon 220: “No one is permitted to harm illegitimately the good reputation which a person possesses nor to injure the right of any person to his or her own privacy.”<sup>16</sup> This canon clearly protects two rights of any person, namely, the right of good name as well as the right to protect one’s privacy.<sup>17</sup> It is even implied from the divine law of *not bearing false witness against your neighbor*.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Canon 220 of the 1983 Code has a precedent from Canon 2355 of the 1917 Code: “If someone, not by [physical acts] but by words or writings, or in any other way, imposes on another and wounds his good reputation, not only can he be coerced according to the norm of Canons 1618 and 1938 to offer satisfaction for the repair of the damage, but he can also be punished by suitable penalties, not excluding, if the case involves clerics, suspension or removal from office or benefice.

<sup>17</sup> Such rights are, in fact, already mentioned in Vatican II document of *Gaudium et spes*, 26.

<sup>18</sup> This is also listed as the 9<sup>th</sup> of the 10 commandments. Cf. Exodus 20:2-17.

Now, as regards the offending clergy, a very possible motivation for not putting into the open their sexual offenses may be to keep the good name of the Church as well as of the individual cleric. Canon law further provides different canons to protect, indeed, such good name: To begin with, there is canon 1717, §2 which strictly urges caution to be taken so that during the investigation the good name of the accused may not in any way be damaged. Then there is canon 1341 which strongly recommends “pastoral solicitude” for the Ordinary<sup>19</sup> when dealing with erring clerics:

The Ordinary is to start a juridical or an administrative procedure for the imposition or the declaration of penalties only when he perceives that neither by fraternal correction or reproof, not by any methods of pastoral care, can the scandal be sufficiently repaired, justice restored and the offender reformed.<sup>20</sup>

Since, offenses of sexual abuse are particularly scandal-stimulators if not destructive of a cleric’s good name as well as that of the Church, it is obviously understandable why Ordinaries or Religious Superiors become more guarded if not secretive in handling such abuses. There are other canons which shelter the good name of the person:

For example, canon 1335 does not require an individual to reveal the presence of a *latae sententiae*<sup>21</sup> censure when one of the faithful requests a sacrament, sacramental, or act of governance. Canon 1352, §2 provides certain conditions under which an undeclared *latae sententiae* penalty is suspended to preclude “grave scandal or infamy.” Canon 1455, §3 gives judges in specific cases the freedom to bind participants

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<sup>19</sup> The term “ordinary” refers here to the “highest levels of office-holders in the church” which includes the Pope, the diocesan bishops and the equivalents as well as the major superiors of clerical religious communities of pontifical right. Cf. James A. Coriden, *An Introduction to Canon Law*, Revised Edition, (New York: Paulist Press, 2004), p. 165.

<sup>20</sup> Canon 1341

<sup>21</sup> This means an *automatic penalty*. Cf. Canon 1314.

to observe secrecy if the danger of damaging the reputation of others is present.<sup>22</sup>

The above canons clearly vouch for the protection of the erring person's reputation—including the erring clergy. Consequently, the desire to protect the cleric's name must certainly be at the back of the mind of the Popes as well as the other Ordinaries and Religious Superiors when confronted from the very beginning regarding their erring clerics' acts of sexual abuse. There was much care that no publicity is made both for the interest of the erring cleric and that of the Diocese or the Consecrated Institute—avoiding at all cost any downside effect on them which would only cause grave harm among the faithful.

Finally, it can be pointed out that the “unusual” way that diocesan Bishops handled the case of the sexually abusive clerics must have been influenced by canon law itself when it instructs Bishops to be solicitous for their priests—namely, that diocesan Bishops are obligated by law to give special care and attention towards their respective clergy.<sup>23</sup> When the diocesan Bishops, like in the United States, allegedly destroyed documents of child sexual abuse or transferred erring priests across state or international borders or secretly confined them to treatment centers, they must have certainly in mind the good name of the priests as well as the good name of the Church. In other words, the injury and the injustice caused to the victims of clerical abuse became the secondary concern in favor of the “good” of the clergy and the Church.<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately, however, the good of

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<sup>22</sup> John P. Beal, James A. Coriden, Thomas J. Green, Eds. *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law* (New York: Paulist Press, 2000), pp. 277-278.

<sup>23</sup> Canon 384 says that the diocesan Bishop “is to have a special concern for the priests... to defend their rights.” This canon echoes the following Vatican II's teachings from *Lumen gentium* 28, *Christus Dominus* 16, and *Presbyterorum ordinis* 20-21. Such can also be applicable for the Major Superiors of Clerical Institutes as their Constitutions normally instruct – like those of the Jesuits (Cf. St. Ignatius of Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus* (St. Louis: The Institute of the Jesuit Sources, 1970), pp. 309-310.

<sup>24</sup> Recently, however, the United States Department of Justice

the victims were often entirely neglected by the diocesan Bishops –even by the Papacy which only became directly responsive to the demand for openness to the clerical sexual crimes made and the corresponding appropriate justice for the victims with the election of Pope Benedict and Pope Francis.<sup>25</sup> And the pain and struggle continues as has been noticed by one American Catholic Magazine:

But while the reforms ... have helped prevent further abuse, they have not repaired the devastating breach of trust caused by years of obstruction, denial and negligence on the part of leaders of the institutional church, especially bishops and superiors of religious communities, who returned abusers to ministry repeatedly, while doing little or nothing to care for their victims or protect those who were vulnerable. This crisis in the church continues – most painfully for the survivors of abuse whose stories have not been heard and whose wounds have not been sufficiently cared for. They have even seen some of the bishops who failed to protect them promoted through the ecclesial ranks.<sup>26</sup>

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has sent a request to every Catholic Diocese in the United States not to destroy documents related to the handling of child sexual abuse – opening a far more extensive federal investigation into the Church. [From an email sent by [justiceforpriests2020@gmail.com](mailto:justiceforpriests2020@gmail.com) to [rexmara@yahoo.com](mailto:rexmara@yahoo.com)]

<sup>25</sup> A clear case was that of Fr. Marcial Maciel Dellogado, LC who “was the founding leader of the Legion of Christ, based in Mexico, and its general director from 1941 to January 2005. The sexual scandal was related to accusations since the 1970s that the prominent Mexican Roman Catholic priest had sexually abused many minors and fathered a total of six children by three different women... Maciel was the “highest ranking priest ever disciplined because of sexual abuse allegations.” The exceptional influence of Fr. Maciel enabled him to elude appropriate justice for his victim for such a long time – considering that official accusations began already as early as 1970. Cf. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual\\_scandal\\_of\\_Marcial\\_Maciel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_scandal_of_Marcial_Maciel).

<sup>26</sup> Editorial, *America – Jesuit Review of Faith and Culture*, September 3, 2018, p.8.



## **Conclusion**

Nevertheless, considering human nature, it is alleged that clerical sexual abuse will continue and the major challenge will not only be how to uphold the security of the erring cleric as well as the reputation of the institutional Church as has been done mostly in the past, but also now how to put up effective means to cure the sacred dignity of the victims.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, clerical sexual abuses could persist due to human frailty as history has shown. Its current face in the sexual molestation of minors and vulnerable adults—be it heterosexual or homosexual—must be the worst one of all times. And as bishops and religious superiors are seriously addressing such catastrophic issue of clerical sexual abuse, one can take consolation with the truth that despite this, the gates of the underworld can never overpower the Church founded by Jesus Christ (Mat 16:18).

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*



# Health Care Ministry and Health Care Workers in the New Evangelization according to Pope John Paul II

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Fray John Louis S. Ricamora, OSA

## Abstract

*The study explores Pope John Paul II's notion on health care in the Church's thrust of new evangelization and health care workers as new evangelizers and ministers of the sick. In developing the theme, issues like the concept of respecting human life and the dignity of the person forming the foundation of Pope John Paul II's anthropology are treated. The person in need of care is treated and his or her rights are also highlighted. Attention to these are areas of evangelization.*

*The second major theme focuses on how health care workers can become new evangelizers of life, of the Christian faith, of hope, of love, of communion and solidarity, and most importantly as a minister of the sick still in lieu of the thoughts and ideas of Pope John Paul II. Health care workers are moved to love*

*and care for the sick person primarily because of the faith he has received in Baptism. Baptism not only makes the individual a child of God, a sharer of divine nature, but also makes him the temple of the Holy Spirit which moves him to participate in the mission of Christ, that is, to proclaim the Good News to all.*

## **Introduction**

The 2011 Philippine Health System Review has no actual statistics of active health care workers in the Philippines. However, there was a study done in 2008 by the Pharmaceutical and Health Care Association of the Philippines (PHAP) which attempted to estimate the number of active doctors by specialization. In the mid-1990s to mid-2000s, there was an increase in number of enrollees in health care programs, especially in nursing and in the rehabilitation sciences, namely physical, occupational, and speech therapy, due to strong demand overseas. The sudden surge of enrollees in the health care industry continued for four years, and by 2007, nursing graduates in the Philippines numbered approximately 80,000. The result was an oversupply of registered nurses in the country. Only a few actively practiced their profession either locally or overseas, while others opted to engage in lines of work not related to health care because they were unable to find employment, or were looking for better remuneration.

The researcher has been a registered nurse by profession since 2007, and was exposed to different private and public health care settings, wherein he saw that the health care delivery system in private and public institutions varies. During the course of the researcher's nursing profession, he encountered distinct types of patients "in every phase of development, from conception until death; and in every condition, whether healthy or sick, whole or handicapped, rich or poor."

Prior to his entry into the religious life, the researcher once thought that he could no longer practice his profession once he

entered the religious Order. But in fact, the researcher functioned as an infirmarian of the Augustinian Community, from the time he began his religious formation up to the present. Primarily, he attends to the nursing and medical health care needs of his brothers in the Community.

In the health care setting, health care workers pertain to those who have a direct or indirect relationship with the patient, namely, doctors, nurses, midwives, volunteers, administrative staff, chaplain, and other medical and ancillary staff. The profession of health care workers, or better yet, “ministers of life”, calls for them to be guardians and servants of life. This means that all of their health care activities for the patient from assessment, diagnosis, planning, implementation, and evaluation ought to be directed toward the defense of physical life and a holistic restoration of the patient’s well-being, inclusive of his mental, emotional, social, and spiritual needs. Thus, health care workers ought to be aware of their ethico-religious roles to aid and assist their patients from illness to wellness.

The task of the health care workers is a very important “service to life” for it is “a form of Christian witnessing” — a witnessing of one’s life, faith, hope, and love of God. It is a participation in and an imitation of the healing ministry of Christ. The Sacred Scriptures presents 20 health miracles performed by our Lord Jesus Christ. He healed the leper, the paralytic, the cripple, the woman suffering from hemorrhage, the deaf-mute, the blind, and even restored the dead to life. Our Lord Jesus Christ not only healed the physical ailments of the person but also the totality of the person’s well-being consequently leading to his own conversion. Healing was not possible if Christ had not entered into a relationship with the sick or suffering person with which the suffering person responded with great faith. Thus, it is through this relationship that Christ is one and in communion with the sick and the suffering.

In the modern world, through the advancement of technology, some of the health care workers tend to lose their therapeutic use of self or their capacity to render tender loving care upon their patients. For instance, just by clicking a button

on a medical device, the computer does everything. Moreover, some might see their roles as mere routine in an eight-hour duty shift from endorsement to endorsement. Others would see the patient as a mere case number or a clinical case that needs to be cured. Others would be wrongly motivated not to give enough quality care because of unjust compensation. Others would be untherapeutic towards their patients probably because of what the health care worker is going through either due to personal or familial reasons. These are some of the challenges of the health care ministry which must be dealt with so as not to compromise the quality of health care services rendered to the patient. Hence, there is a big disparity between care given humanely and that which is technological or mechanical.

The challenge now for all health care workers is to make health care humane and to have this “transcendent vision of man” which focuses on respecting the dignity of the sick person as a human being created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Genesis 1:26), and with the eyes of faith, see the face of Christ in the sick or suffering person. Humanizing health care requires that the health care professional ought to have a heart, apart from professional competence and adequacy of facilities. Great charity, patience, and self-giving are also required to humanize places of suffering. Thus, the person of the health care worker is important in the healing process of the patient for it is through him that the sick may feel the loving and healing presence of Christ.

In this paper, the researcher attempts to analyze the roles of health care workers as new evangelizers and ministers of the sick according to the ideals of Pope John Paul II. The inspiration comes from the fact that this is an area of the health care profession that is mostly left out while solely focusing on the medical and technical side of caring. In fact, caring for the sick is the primary task of every health care worker while looking at it from the ethical (human) and religious (Christian) perspectives in order to have a holistic and integral approach to health care. Hence, all activities of the health care worker at the patient’s bedside becomes a form of Christian witnessing in the service to life which is a part of the new evangelization agenda being called forth by the Church.

## **Pope John Paul II's Notion of Health Care in the Church's thrust of New Evangelization**

Pope John Paul II provides a wide variety of sources with regard to health care and new evangelization, namely, the Apostolic Letter *Salvifici Doloris* (1984) on the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering; the Apostolic Letter “*Motu Proprio*” *Dolentium Hominum* (1985) on Establishing Pontifical Commission for the Apostolate of Health Care Workers; his 13 messages for the annual celebration of the World Day of the Sick from 1993 until 2005; the *Charter for Health Care Workers* (1995); and other authoritative documents of the Church. Although he did not issue any specific papal document with regard to health care *per se*, his ideas on health care and new evangelization revolve around the activities of the health care worker as a kind of “service to life” in response to the new evangelization thrust being called forth during his long pontificate and up to the present.

### **Respecting Human Life and the Dignity of the Person**

The concept of respecting human life and the dignity of the person is the anthropological foundation of Pope John Paul II. The Roman Pontiff solemnly proclaims, “Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God, and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can, in any circumstance, claim for himself the right to destroy directly an innocent human being.”<sup>1</sup> Human life is “a primary and fundamental good of the person.”<sup>2</sup> It is a gift from God. Thus, according to Coughlin, Pope John Paul II’s theological foundation of the dignity of the human person can be seen in the light of the themes of creation, redemption, and consummation.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, §53.

<sup>2</sup> *Charter for Health Care Workers*, §1.

<sup>3</sup> Coughlin, “Pope John Paul II and the Dignity of the Human Being”

In the two creation narratives, Pope John Paul II discussed, on the one hand, the mystery of man as created in the image of God endowed with creativity and the capacity to choose, think, and act on the divine creativity, that is, to be fertile and multiply (cf. Gen 1:22), which is something that is integral to his human nature. On the other hand, it deals with man's self-awareness and understanding in choosing between good and evil which resulted to the fall of our first parents from original innocence to original sin. In other words, man's capacity to participate in the divine creativity and to use his potencies such as the intellect, freedom, and the will on the goodness and evil of the act, are part of his inherent dignity.

The encyclical letter *Redemptor Hominis* (1979) of Pope John Paul II speaks about the human dimension of the redemptive action of Christ as a clear manifestation of the love of God for mankind which elevated the dignity of the human person:

*Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it. This, as has already been said, is why Christ the Redeemer "fully reveals man to himself". If we may use the expression, this is the human dimension of the mystery of the Redemption. In this dimension man finds again the greatness, dignity and value that belong to his humanity. In the mystery of the Redemption man becomes newly "expressed" and, in a way, is newly created. He is newly created!<sup>4</sup>*

The love of God is the principal cause for man's inherent dignity. His life would be inconceivable and meaningless if man had not experienced or encountered love in his life. Thus, Christ revealed the love of the Father in His Incarnation, public ministry, passion, death, and resurrection.

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<sup>4</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (4 March 1979) §10, at the Holy See, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_enc\\_04031979\\_redemptor-hominis.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis.html)



The eschatological theme of the Scriptures emphasizes Mary's *fiat* to the loving plan of God for humanity being fulfilled in the person of Christ specifically in His life and works. Thus, for Coughlin, Mary and her Son Jesus Christ already represent the fullness of human dignity which will come to fruition and consummation at the end of time.<sup>5</sup>

Hence, "the dignity of the person is the most precious possession of an individual"<sup>6</sup> for he is born and created in the image and likeness of God. Health care workers, then, must be aware of this inherent dignity of the human person, a unity of body and soul. Thus, all health care policies ought to be founded on respect for the dignity of the human person<sup>7</sup> or else it is not binding.

In addition to the discussion of life and the dignity of the human person, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: "Life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to us by God. We must take reasonable care of them, taking into account the needs of others and the common good."<sup>8</sup> For Pope John Paul II, human life is a "penultimate" good<sup>9</sup> in which the totality and the good of the person is sought from its beginning to its natural end. This is why contraception, abortion, euthanasia, and the like are grave violations and sins against human life. All health care goals ought to be directed for the well-being of the patient and not that which could harm him or her in the process.

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<sup>5</sup> Coughlin, "Pope John Paul II and the Dignity of the Human Being"

<sup>6</sup> *Christifideles Laici*, §37.

<sup>7</sup> Charter for Health Care Workers, §6.

<sup>8</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church: Definitive Edition Based on the Latin "Editio Typica"*. (Manila: Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, 1994), 2288.

<sup>9</sup> John Paul II, Message of the Holy Father for the World Day of the Sick for the Year 2000: Contemplate the Face of Christ in the Sick (6 August 1999) §6, at Castel Gandolfo, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/sick/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_19990806\\_world-day-of-the-sick-2000.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/sick/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19990806_world-day-of-the-sick-2000.html)

### **On Health, Illness and Suffering**

The Constitution of the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1946 defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”<sup>10</sup> However, this definition seems to be limiting and does not say anything about the spiritual welfare of the person. Over the years, this definition has been expanded to include a fourth dimension and that is the spiritual aspect of the individual. Thus, in the 1997 review of the WHO Constitution, the preamble was modified and health is now defined as “a dynamic state of complete physical, mental, **spiritual** and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”<sup>11</sup>

When a person is struck down with a mild or debilitating illness, not only does it affect him in the physical but also in his mental, emotional, social and spiritual aspects. In caring for the sick and suffering, the health care worker ought to see the person in a holistic manner, that is, a person who is composed of body and soul and who is in constant contact with his or her environment. He ought to have this mentality of seeing beyond what he objectively and subjectively observes from the sick person. Thus, with this kind of understanding, the health care worker respects the inviolability of life and the inherent dignity of the person as a created being of God.

Pope John Paul II points this out in his message for the World Day of the Sick in 2000:

This vision of health, based on an anthropology that respects the whole person, far from being identified with the mere absence of illness, strives to achieve a fuller harmony and healthy balance on the physical, psychological, spiritual and social level. In this perspective, the person himself is called to mobilize all

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<sup>10</sup> *Constitution of the World Health Organization* (New York: International Health Conference, 1946) 984, accessed 1 November 2017, [http://www.who.int/bulletin/archives/80\(12\)981.pdf](http://www.who.int/bulletin/archives/80(12)981.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> M.H. Khayat, “Spirituality in the Definition of Health the World Health Organization’s Point of View,” at [http://www.medizin-ethik.ch/publik/spirituality\\_definition\\_health.htm#14](http://www.medizin-ethik.ch/publik/spirituality_definition_health.htm#14).

his available energies to fulfill his own vocation and for the good of others.<sup>12</sup>

The second sentence of the message implicitly speaks of the importance of being healthy. With a sound mind, body, and spirit, a healthy person is able to fulfill his own profession, vocation, and mission in life, and also serve for the common good. According to Monge, “the first requisite to becoming a health care professional is to possess good health.”<sup>13</sup> As the famous adage would say: “you cannot give what you do not have.” A sickly or distraught health care worker cannot be of help in the healing process of the patient if he himself needs healing. That is why it is very important that health care workers must take good care of their bodies and must undergo an ongoing human and psycho-spiritual formation aside from the seminars or training workshops being offered by health care institutions to enhance or hone their knowledge, skills, and attitude of caring. But most importantly, health care workers must take into consideration the totality of the person and not only what can be perceived by the senses in order to effectively help the sick person move from illness to wellness.

Pope John Paul II was no stranger to sickness and suffering for he himself experienced it so many times up until his demise. Makhalemele, in his study entitled *The Theology of Sickness and Suffering according to John Paul II: A Contribution towards Pastoral Care of the Sick*, enumerates the events in the life of the Pontiff when he experienced such sufferings:

At the age of eighteen, Karol Wojtyla was hit by a train that left him unconscious with a shoulder dislocated. In 1992, the Pope had colon surgery, involving removal of noncancerous tumor. The next year he fell and dislocated a shoulder. In 1994, he suffered a broken femur in another fall. An appendectomy followed in 1996. During these years, moreover, a Parkinson-like

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<sup>12</sup> John Paul II, Message of the Holy Father for the World Day of the Sick for the Year 2000: Contemplate the Face of Christ in the Sick, §13.

<sup>13</sup> Monge, *Ethical Practices in Health and Disease*, 193.

condition, if not the disease itself, began to reveal its visible effects.<sup>14</sup>

Consequently, all throughout his Pontificate, he wrote and spoke about illness and sufferings on a number of occasions. For instance, in his *Motu Proprio Dolentium Hominum* (1985) he writes, “Illness and suffering are not experiences which concern only man’s physical substance, but man in his entirety and in his somatic-spiritual unity.”<sup>15</sup>

On the far side of the health continuum, the opposite of health is illness or disease whether physical, psycho-emotional, spiritual or social. This happens when one or all of the dimensions of the individual person have an imbalance not only affecting a part of him, but as a whole person.

An individual experiencing any form of sickness or suffering especially those which are debilitating can really affect the person as a whole, and perhaps shake his faith. Because of this test of faith, the person tends to question why he is suffering. Why is he given this kind of illness? This is the time when the person feels vulnerable. With this kind of experience, the person will have a negative view of his condition especially if his questions are left unanswered. For instance, the person having a terminal illness would think much about his condition and its outcome. Or, he could also think that God has abandoned him in time of crisis, thus leading him to be psycho-emotionally and spiritually distraught.

Pope John Paul II in his message during the Fifth World Day of the Sick exhorts those who are afflicted with physical and spiritual illnesses:

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<sup>14</sup> Nicodemus T. Makhamele, “The Theology of Sickness and Suffering according to John Paul II: A Contribution towards Pastoral Care of the Sick,” *Oblate School of Theology*: <https://ost.edu/theology-sickness-suffering-according-john-paul-ii-contribution-towards-pastoral-care-sick/>

<sup>15</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Letter “*Motu Proprio*” on Establishing Pontifical Commission for the Apostolate of Health Care Workers *Dolentium Hominum* (11 February 1985), §2, *L’Osservatore Romano* 875, no. 9 (1985), 1.

Do not yield to the temptation to regard pain as an experience which is only negative, to the point of doubting God's goodness. In the suffering Christ every sick person finds the meaning of his or her afflictions. Suffering and illness belong to the condition of man, a fragile, limited creature, marked by original sin from birth on. In Christ, who died and rose again, however, humanity discovers a new dimension to its suffering: instead of a failure, it reveals itself to be the occasion for offering witness to faith and love.<sup>16</sup>

Hence, illness, if viewed as an end in itself, will be a negative experience on the part of the sick person. However, if it is viewed as a beginning or an opportunity for the love of God to be experienced, then, it will become a meaningful experience. The sick person will be able to understand the Christian meaning of human suffering and realize why he is experiencing such.

What happens physically to the person affects his whole being including his spiritual dimension. The word "suffering" is said to be "essential to the nature of man."<sup>17</sup> In other words, it is already part of the very fabric of the human person to experience any form of suffering. Man can suffer in different ways which affect the totality of his whole being. It can either be physical, emotional, mental, social, or spiritual suffering. Physically, a person suffers because of mild or debilitating forms of illnesses and diseases. Emotionally, it can be the result of relationship problems either personal or familial. Mentally, it might be caused by some chemical imbalances in the brain which affect the person's thinking, behavior, and attitude toward certain situations. Sociologically, it may be due to social injustices, unrests, and wars. Lastly, a person can suffer spiritually due to a disturbed

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<sup>16</sup> John Paul II, Message for the Fifth World Day of the Sick (18 October 1996), at The Holy See, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/sick/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_16101996\\_world-day-of-the-sick-1997.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/sick/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_16101996_world-day-of-the-sick-1997.html)

<sup>17</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Letter on the Christian Meaning of Human Suffering *Salvifici Doloris* (11 February 1984), §2, at the Holy See, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_letters/1984/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_11021984\\_salvifici-doloris.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1984/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_11021984_salvifici-doloris.html).

or severed relationship with God. Thus, according to Pope John Paul II, “illness and suffering are not experiences which concern only man’s physical substance, but man in his entirety and in his somatic-spiritual unity.”<sup>18</sup>

According to Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Letter *Salvifici Doloris* (1984), the meaning of suffering can be understood supernaturally and humanly speaking. “It is *supernatural* because it is rooted in the divine mystery of the Redemption of the world, and it is likewise deeply *human*, because in it the person discovers himself, his own humanity, his own dignity, his own mission.”<sup>19</sup> Man’s suffering ought not to be seen only as it is but with the eyes of faith in relation to the passion, death and resurrection of Christ. It is through faith of this great mystery that the sick person will be able to understand the profound Christian meaning of human suffering.

Pope John Paul II reminds hospital patients of the redemptive value of suffering through the cross of Christ. Thus, the pontiff exhorts,

The cross of Christ is the supreme sign of God’s love through which each person can say with Saint Paul: “He has loved me and given himself up for me!” (Galatians 2:20). May this profession of faith be a cause of consolation and trust for everyone, but especially for those whom God calls to unite themselves to the cross of his Son through the many sufferings which afflict the body and spirit of a person. And you, dear patients, are among these!<sup>20</sup>

In other words, uniting and sharing the sick person’s pain and suffering to that of Christ’s passion and death on the cross has a salvific effect. The passion, death, and resurrection of Christ is not only an event in history or a mystery to be reflected upon but requires the believer to assent and to adhere to it. Pope John Paul II points out two sides on the mystery and message of the cross:

<sup>18</sup> *Dolentium Hominum*, §2.

<sup>19</sup> *Salvifici Doloris*, §31.

<sup>20</sup> “Mystery and message of the cross,” *L’Osservatore Romano*, no. 11 (18 March 1991) §1, 3.

On the one hand, it declares the undeniable reality of suffering and death, denounces the wickedness and misery which characterize personal existence and human events; on the other hand, it proclaims victory over evil and death, and therefore the love of God who pardons, redeems, and restores to life.<sup>21</sup>

The Paschal Mystery, then, sanctifies human suffering and transforms it into a redeeming force.<sup>22</sup> Thus, Pope John Paul II asserts that “the light of faith makes the harsh experience of suffering better understood and thus more knowingly accepted.”<sup>23</sup>

The cross of Jesus Christ is God’s answer to the unending question of man concerning to the meaning of suffering,<sup>24</sup> a question which is only answered by faith, hope and love. These theological virtues are concretely expressed in the prophetic witnessing of the health care worker’s profession, vocation, and mission in the form of his loving and healing presence at the patient’s bedside wherein everybody, namely, the health care worker, the patient and his significant others,<sup>25</sup> can participate in Christ’s paschal mystery and discern about his own life and its meaning, about the reason for evil, suffering and death.<sup>26</sup>

Hence, the Christian faith that is being evangelized by the health care worker is God’s love for man amidst the experience of pain and suffering through the health care activities being rendered to the patient. God’s love is deeply being manifested in the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ.

<sup>21</sup> “Mystery and message of the cross,” §2.

<sup>22</sup> “The cross sanctifies human suffering,” *L’Osservatore Romano*, no. 7 (19 February 1992) §7, 9.

<sup>23</sup> John Paul II, Address to the Sick following the Mass in Saint Peter’s Basilica for the Ninth World Day of the Sick (11 February 2001) §4, at the Holy See, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2001/february/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20010211\\_giornata-malato.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2001/february/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20010211_giornata-malato.html)

<sup>24</sup> *Salvifici Doloris*, §13.

<sup>25</sup> The significant others pertain to the patient’s relatives and close kin.

<sup>26</sup> “Evangelization and dignity of the suffering,” *L’Osservatore Romano*, no. 36 (6 September 2000), 5.

### **The Health Care Ministry and the New Evangelization according to Pope John Paul II**

Pope John Paul II, in his address to the personnel of the *Fatebenefratelli Hospital* (1981) while quoting his predecessor Pope Pius XII, said that the health care profession is a ministry of life by which the love of God and of Christ, the great Physician of the soul and of the body, is brought to the sick and the suffering person.<sup>27</sup> It is a “therapeutic ministry”<sup>28</sup> in the service to life. In other words, the health care worker acts *in persona Christi*, the great Physician of the soul and body, when he offers to the sick person the love of God in order for him to gain physical and spiritual relief. All of this happens at the patient’s bed side wherein “medical and nursing activity expresses its lofty human and Christian value.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, the encounter between the patient and the health care worker is likened to the encounter of Christ with the sick and suffering people during his three-year public ministry.

In the opening paragraphs of the *Charter for Health Care Workers* (1995), the activities of the health care worker are considered as a form of witnessing, a response to new evangelization, in the service to life and in imitation of Christ, particularly his healing ministry.<sup>30</sup> It is authentic and concrete if everything that the health care worker does is done out of love for the patient, who is the personification of the suffering Christ. Caring for the sick and the suffering is a form of service to life undertaken in a profoundly human and Christian commitment. It is human for it refers to the ethico-moral responsibilities of the

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<sup>27</sup> John Paul II, Address to the Personnel of the Fatebenefratelli Hospital (5 April 1981), at The Holy See, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1981/april/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19810405\\_fatebenefratelli.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1981/april/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19810405_fatebenefratelli.html)

<sup>28</sup> John Paul II, Address to the Italian Catholic Doctors Association (28 December 1978), at The Holy See, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1978/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19781228\\_medici-cattolici-ital.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1978/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19781228_medici-cattolici-ital.html)

<sup>29</sup> Charter for Health Care Workers, §1.

<sup>30</sup> Charter for Health Care Workers, prologue.



health care worker, and at the same time, it is Christian because it deals with the religious or spiritual dimension of caring. Moreover, it calls for “dedicated service with generous openness to the profound value of the person, to respect for human dignity, and to defense of life, from its beginning to its natural close.”<sup>31</sup>

Concretely, respecting human life and the dignity of the person is best expressed by acknowledging and respecting the rights of the patient. Thus, all health care workers ought to follow and take into heart the patient’s bill of rights: (1) right to medical treatment; (2) right to information; (3) right to choices; (4) right to privacy; (5) right to complaint; (6) right to health education; and, (7) right to a healthy and safe environment.<sup>32</sup>

### **Right to Medical Treatment**

The first right of the patient to medical treatment finds its undeniable foundation on the inherent dignity of the person as created in the image and likeness of God. Pope John Paul II clearly teaches that human dignity is a gift of divine love and life, a dignity which nobody can take away from the person except the Author of life; a dignity which constitutes the foundation of equality, participation and solidarity of all people among themselves.<sup>33</sup> Each individual who goes to a health care institution seeking medical help must be treated with utmost care, consideration, respect and dignity, regardless of his socio-economic status. Undoubtedly, emphasis is given to the poor, the unserved and underserved, who also possess this fundamental right to receive quality care from the health care worker regardless of whether they can pay or not their hospital expenditures.

However, there is the sad reality of dualism on how rich and poor patients are being treated in health care institutions. For instance, whenever a rich patient comes in seeking medical help,

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<sup>31</sup> John Paul II, Message for the First Annual World Day of the Sick, §13.

<sup>32</sup> Minglanilla District Hospital Operational Manual 2009, “Patient Bill of Rights”

<sup>33</sup> *Christifideles Laici*, §37.

the tendency for some health care workers, if not all, is to give that patient quality care and treatment, either because they are afraid of being sued, or simply because the patient is capable of paying. On the other hand, if a poor patient seeks medical help, he is treated otherwise. In both privately owned and government run health care institutions, clearly, there is inequality as to how health care is being delivered and how patients are treated.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) in 18 June 1993 issued resolutions with regard to a Comprehensive Health Care Reform. They formulated four key priorities: (1) priority concern for the poor or universal access; (2) respect for human life and human dignity; (3) pursuing the common good and preserving pluralism; and, (4) restraining costs.<sup>34</sup> The researcher will delve into the first two key priorities.

Primarily, according to USCCB, genuine health care reform happens when it focuses on “the basic health needs of the poor (i.e., those who are unable through private resources, employer support, or public aid to provide payment for health care services, or those unable to gain access to health care because of limited resources, inadequate education, or discrimination).”<sup>35</sup> In the first key priority, universal access to health care is of utmost importance to all sick persons especially to the poor, in order to improve health care. Whether it is a poor or rich person going to a health institution, each one should receive equal medical treatment. The United States Bishops gave a probable solution as to how this universal access to health care can be done:

We do not support a two-tiered health system since separate health care coverage for the poor usually results in poor health care. Linking the health care of poor and working-class families to the health care

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<sup>34</sup>United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “A Framework for Comprehensive Health Care Reform: Protecting Human Life, Promoting Human Dignity, Pursuing the Common Good,” 18 June 1993: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/health-care/upload/health-care-comprehensive-care.pdf>

<sup>35</sup>United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, “A Framework for Comprehensive Health Care Reform”

of those with greater resources is probably the best assurance of comprehensive benefits and quality care.<sup>36</sup>

In other words, primary health care ought to be affordable, available, and accessible to all especially the poor.

The second key priority speaks of respecting human life and human dignity from beginning to natural end. Abortion, euthanasia, and assisted suicide are clear violations of human life and the inherent dignity of the person because it turns man into a mere object which can easily be discarded when no longer deemed useful. During the 15<sup>th</sup> International Health Care Congress (2000), Pope John Paul II reminded the participants about the importance of medicine in the attainment of man's happiness: "Only by serving man's total well-being can medicine contribute to his progress and happiness, and not become an instrument of manipulation and death."<sup>37</sup> Thus, all health care services ought to be given and rendered regardless of the difference in age, income, illness, or condition in life of the patient.<sup>38</sup> Health care workers ought to be ministers of life and not manipulators of life because it is the patient's "right to be born, to live and to die in a worthy manner."<sup>39</sup>

### **Right to Information**

The patient has the right to be informed of everything that has something to do with his health condition and so do the people involved in his care, diagnosis and/or treatment. This right also entails that the health care professional must possess certain knowledge and skills about the illness of the person as well as

<sup>36</sup>United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "A Framework for Comprehensive Health Care Reform"

<sup>37</sup> John Paul II, Address to the 15<sup>th</sup> International Health-Care Congress (17 November 2000), at the Holy See, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2000/oct-dec/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20001117\\_pc-health.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2000/oct-dec/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20001117_pc-health.html)

<sup>38</sup>United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, "A Framework for Comprehensive Health Care Reform"

<sup>39</sup> John Paul II, Address to the 15<sup>th</sup> International Health-Care Congress.

the rationale of the medical, surgical, and/or nursing interventions being done to him. In times of illness and suffering, the patient feels vulnerable and has the need to be reassured always. It is now the role of the health care worker to inform, educate, and teach the patient on how to deal with his health condition, thus, giving him an active role in exercising his right to choose out of concern for his own health. In other words, the information given to the patient ought to encourage him to be actively involved in his care rather than being a passive recipient of the treatment.

### **Right to Choices**

According to Pope John Paul II, “the person is not at all a ‘thing’ or an ‘object’ to be used, but primarily a responsible ‘subject’, one endowed with conscience and freedom, called to live responsibly in society and history, and oriented toward spiritual and religious values.”<sup>40</sup> Not only is he a composite of body and soul but also is endowed with conscience and freedom. For instance, he has the freedom to accept or refuse any medical or surgical treatment or take part in any medical research program. He has the right to a second medical and/or surgical opinion, and, the right to choose a doctor and/or health care personnel in accordance to medical/surgical needs. These rights of the sick person to choose allow him to take an active role in his care. He is not only a passive recipient of health care but also a “responsible subject” for his own care. However, before the patient decides, he must be “properly informed about the processes involved, in order to be in a position to consent or decline in a free and conscientious manner.”<sup>41</sup> He must be informed of the health benefits, risks and consequences of the care that will be given unto him. Moreover, he must be effectively informed by using terms and languages which are easily understandable to him. This is no time for the health care worker to impress the patient and the significant others

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<sup>40</sup> *Christifideles Laici*, §5.

<sup>41</sup> John Paul II, Address to the 18<sup>th</sup> International Congress of the Transplantation Society (29 August 2000), at The Holy See, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2000/jul-sep/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20000829\\_transplants.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2000/jul-sep/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20000829_transplants.html)

with so much medical jargons. What the patient needs is basic information which will aid him to decide for his own care.

John F. Crosby, in his book entitled *John Paul II's Contribution to Catholic Bioethics*, shows how Pope John Paul II gave a distinction of how a patient could become an “object of treatment” and a “subject of his illness.” As an “object of treatment,”

If as a patient suffering from a certain illness I experience my body only as an object-body, then I cannot remain the subject of the illness; I become depersonalized as patient in the sense that my illness no longer fully belongs to me as person. The treatment undertaken by the physician does not seem to me fully to touch me as a person but rather to stop at some point outside of myself. This estrangement of me from my body is reinforced if the physician, too, thinks of my body only as an object-body.<sup>42</sup>

In here, the patient primarily sees himself as an object of treatment which is corroborated by the attitude of the health care worker towards him. As long as the patient does not own his sickness and suffering as part of himself, then, he will always consider himself as an object of treatment. In turn, the health care worker will also be tempted to treat him as a mere clinical case to be solved.

As a “subject of his illness”.

But if as a patient suffering from the same illness I experience my body also as lived body, if I know how to dwell in my body as embodied person, experiencing it and my illness from within, as only as I can experience it, then I can remain what Wojtyla [Pope John Paul II] calls the subject of my illness. The physician can reinforce this subjectivity by always being mindful of dealing with a sick person, always tempering his medical manipulation of my sick body with the consciousness of acting on an embodied person.

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<sup>42</sup> Christopher Tollefsen, ed., *John Paul II's Contribution to Catholic Bioethics* (The Netherlands: Springer, 2004), 166.

Pope John Paul II shows that with a different outlook, the patient could own his illness and suffering and take an active role in his care. The health care worker on his part does not see the patient as a mere case number or an object to apply his medical knowledge but an individual with a profound value and inherent dignity who is capable of deciding with regard to his own care. Thus, for Pope John Paul II, in an address to the participants of the world congress of Catholic doctors (1982), he explicitly emphasized that “the patient, in fact, to whom you dedicate your care and your studies, is not an anonymous individual on which to apply what is the result of your knowledge, but is a responsible person, who must be called to become a participant in the improvement of their health and of achieving healing. He must be able to choose personally and not to have to make decisions and choices of others.”<sup>43</sup>

In lieu of what Pope John Paul II refers to as the “object of treatment” and “subject of illness”, the patient receiving the information about the care being rendered unto him does not receive it passively but is expected and encouraged to take an active role in his care. As in the case of giving consent to a medical treatment after being informed of the pros and cons as well as the health benefits and risks of such medical procedure, then can the patient decide whether to undergo the treatment or not.

### **Right to Privacy**

In connection with the patient’s right to choose or to consent to his care is his right to privacy. Whenever a sick person seeks medical help in a health institution, it is a moment of his life when he is at most vulnerable. Doctors, nurses, and other medical ancillary staff may ask so many questions and details about his life as well as some pertinent data regarding his illness. However, this does not mean that the health care worker has the authority

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<sup>43</sup> John Paul II, Address to the Participants in the World Congress of Catholic Doctors (3 October 1982), at The Holy See, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1982/october/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_19821003\\_medicin-cattolici.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1982/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19821003_medicin-cattolici.html)

and the right to invade the privacy of the patient. Still, consent or permission from the patient is a basic necessity. Whatever objective and subjective data the health care worker was able to gather from his assessment of the patient is not for public perusal. Everything that has transpired in the patient's care must be kept confidential.

For instance, with regard to having patients as a subject in any research endeavors, patients have the right to "refuse to be involved in any professional procedures that make them objects to be examined or discussed for the benefit or convenience of professionals or students rather than for the patient's own therapy."<sup>44</sup> Even though the medical or nursing student assures of the confidentiality of the patient's case, still, if the patient refuses to agree to be part of such research endeavor, the health care worker ought to respect the patient's decision. Again, this is in relation to the patient's inherent dignity as a creature of God.

### **Right to Complain**

In relation to the patient's right to freedom is his right to complain. Of course, the patient will never complain as long as his needs and concerns are being addressed by the health care worker. However, when he feels that his rights are being violated, he has to justly defend what is due him, especially his dignity as a person.

During the course of the patient's hospitalization, the patient has many reasons to complain—from the petty things related to his care, to everything related to his physical condition. However, there are also instances when the complaint does not come from the patient himself but from his significant others. Probably because the patient cannot verbalize his discomfort, and so, on behalf of the patient, the significant others will call the attention of the health care worker. There are also times when family members are more demanding than the patient. Still,

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<sup>44</sup> Benedict M. Ashley, OP and Kevin D. O'Rourke, OP, *Ethics of Health Care* (St. Louis: The Catholic Health Association of the United States, 1986), 36.

regardless of whom the complaint comes from, the health care worker should respond with haste and compassion.

Another example of this right of the patient to complain is conducting satisfaction surveys to patients. Whatever the result of the survey is—whether good or bad—has to be acknowledged by the health care team. Accordingly, necessary actions ought to be taken by the proper authorities so as to improve the delivery of health care in the future.

Hence, every complaint a patient makes must not be taken for granted by health care workers because it signals something important, related to either the patient’s physical condition, or other things which might be related to or helpful for the patient’s recovery.

### **Right to education: Preventive, Promotive, Curative and Rehabilitative**

As what have been said above about the patient’s right to information, the patient has the right to be educated about his health condition and how he is to be cared for. From the first encounter of the patient and the health care worker up to the time when the patient is discharged from the hospital, health education is always part of any plan of action. Here, emphasis is given to the four approaches in primary health care: (1) preventive; (2) promotive; (3) curative; and (4) rehabilitative. All of these approaches do not only dwell on one aspect alone but touches all the dimensions of the person: physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual.

#### ***Preventive and promotive***

These two approaches go hand-in-hand. As the famous adage goes: “Prevention is better than cure.” This premise is still very much true up to now. As long as the person is well informed and educated about the basics of how one cares for oneself, then, the curative and rehabilitative approaches in primary health care may no longer be necessary. Moreover, it spares the individual



from undergoing suffering and discomfort as well as the cost of hospitalization or treatment.<sup>45</sup>

Pangrazzi provides specific examples on how prevention is promoted in the different dimensions of the person.

*Physical level:* Encouraging healthy conduct, good eating habits, physical exercise; avoiding smoking; cultivating a positive relationship with nature, and so on. Prevention is better than cure.

*Mental level:* Educating young people and adults to openness; offering opportunities for education; developing their intelligence, and stimulating their personal creativity.

*Affective level:* Supporting families in the task of transmitting acceptance and love; inviting parents to dialogue and communication with their children; encouraging young people and adults to cultivate friendship and a sense of belonging; teaching about intimacy and caring relationships.

*Social level:* Encouraging participation in building caring communities; developing constructive interaction with people of different ages and backgrounds; promoting opportunities for dignified living conditions; encouraging youth and adults to practice some form of volunteer service on behalf of the needy.

*Spiritual level:* Transmitting religious and spiritual values in the family; keeping the children and the young open to the presence and providence of God in their lives; interiorizing spiritual values (gratitude, sense of sacred, acceptance of others, forgiveness, respect for creation, trust...) that will enable them to give a positive sense to their journey and not to despair in the face of life's trials and tribulations.<sup>46</sup>

Thus, the bottom line for all of these preventive and promotive approaches and measures is the defense of life and the promotion of a health worthy of the human being.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Charter for Health Care Workers, §50.

<sup>46</sup> Pangrazzi, *The Art of Caring for the Sick*, 41.

<sup>47</sup> John Paul II, Message for the World Day of the Sick for the Year 2000, §11-14.

*Curative*

The curative approach involves the implementation of the care plan being made by the health care team. Implementation would range from doing the essential vital signs measurement to the more sophisticated medical, surgical and/or nursing interventions. All of these interventions must “lead to the cure and personal and social reintegration of the patient.”<sup>48</sup> As Pope John Paul II points out, “For Christ, in fact, healing is also this reintegration: just as sickness excludes the human being from the community, so healing must bring him to rediscover his place in the family, in the Church and in society.”<sup>49</sup>

Certainly, in any of the interventions delivered and rendered by the health care worker onto the patient, respect for the profound value of man and his dignity as a human being ought to be given to him for he is created in the image and likeness of God. Thus, Pope John Paul II spoke to the participants of the 19<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care saying:

Medicine is always at the service of life. Even when medical treatment is unable to defeat a serious pathology, all its possibilities are directed to the alleviation of suffering. Working enthusiastically to help the patient in every situation means being aware of the inalienable dignity of every human being, even in the extreme conditions of terminal illness. Christians recognize this devotion as a fundamental dimension of their vocation: indeed, in carrying out this task they know that they are caring for Christ himself (cf. Mt 25: 35-40).<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Charter for Health Care Workers, §62.

<sup>49</sup> John Paul II, Message for the World Day of the Sick for the Year 2000, §9.

<sup>50</sup> John Paul II, Address to the Participants in the 19<sup>th</sup> International Conference of the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care (12 November 2004), at the Holy See, [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2004/november/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20041112\\_pc-hlthwork.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2004/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20041112_pc-hlthwork.html)

### ***Rehabilitative***

Once a sick person is admitted or confined in a hospital, the primary goal of the medical team is to come up and implement interventions which are beneficial to the patient so as to aid him in moving from illness to wellness. Among these are quality and cost-effective care. From the moment of the sick person's admission to the hospital, the health care team simultaneously plans for the rehabilitation phase of the patient. Sickness does not only affect the individual having it but also the significant others who are taking care of him. The challenge now focuses on how to reintegrate the person to his family and to the society, especially those with debilitating illnesses. The team also takes into consideration the patient's post-hospitalization concerns like who will look after him. That is why, after the patient is discharged, the family ought to have access to support groups which will help them in the care of the sick. Thus, according to the *Charter for Health Care Workers* (1995), rehabilitation is "an amalgam of medical, physiotherapeutic, psychological measures and functional exercises, aimed at reviving or improving the psychophysical efficiency of people in some way handicapped in their ability to integrate, to relate and to work productively."<sup>51</sup>

### **Right to a Healthy and Safe Environment**

The environment of the patient refers not only to the physical place where he is being confined to but also to the atmosphere or ambience of his surroundings. A place not so "being overly medicalized"<sup>52</sup> but a place where he can feel and experience the loving and healing presence of Christ. However, in reality, the former seems to be more evident than the latter. For instance, doctors, nurses and other medical ancillary staff come in and out of the patient's room either to perform medical treatments or just to ask a very brief question before leaving. The patient's bedside is supposed to be the most important place in a health care institution wherein the loving presence of Christ ought

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<sup>51</sup> Charter for Health Care Workers, §62.

<sup>52</sup> Charter for Health Care Workers, §117.

to be felt and experienced by the patient through the health care worker-patient relationship. The challenge now in order for the patient's right to a healthy and safe environment to be fulfilled is to humanize places of suffering. Thus, in a discourse of Pope John Paul II to religious health care workers, he emphasizes that, "great charity, patience and self-giving are required in the effort to humanize places of suffering and to assist those who, in a welfare and consumer society, are stricken by illness and the fear of death."<sup>53</sup> In other words, love is the only virtue which can humanize places of suffering.

Hence, all of these patient's rights boil down to the inherent dignity of the person as created in the image and likeness of God. All health care activities must be geared toward respecting the profound value of the person and his inherent dignity. In addition, health care workers ought to be aware that a single violation of one of these rights affects the patient as a whole in his physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions.

### **Caring for the Sick as New Evangelization**

The primary model for all health care workers in caring for the sick and the suffering is found in the Gospel of Luke 10:29-37, the Parable of the Good Samaritan, who stops beside the wounded person and cares for him.

But because he [the scholar of the law] wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged

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<sup>53</sup> "Your mission is to serve the sick and humanize places of suffering," 8.

them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, ‘Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.’ Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’ victim?” He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.” (NAB)

Prior to this parable, it is the story of the same scholar of the law testing Jesus about how one can inherit eternal life. Jesus replied about the two greatest commandments: “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27 NAB). From this, it can be posited that in the health care ministry, a health care worker is called to love God with all his heart, being, strength, and mind in the service to life for the sick and the suffering person. Caring for the sick is not a futile and lifeless endeavor. It is really a vocation, a profession and a mission founded on love. A health care worker has to therapeutically use himself, that is, his whole being, to aid the sick person recover from his illness. Thus, caring for the sick is not only about knowing who our neighbor is but also about loving him through our active presence.

The parable of the Good Samaritan speaks of the unending question of knowing one’s neighbor. However, instead of the priests and Levites who are expected to be models of “neighbors” it turned out to be the Samaritan, the enemies of the Jews, who stopped and cared for the wounded person.

Pangrazzi presents six aspects of the Good Samaritan’s caring witness: (1) awareness – “at the sight”; (2) compassion– “was moved with compassion”; (3) nearness– “he approached the victim”; (4) involvement– “poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them”; (5) commitment or follow-up– “he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him”; (6)

delegation or teamwork—“Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.”<sup>54</sup>

### *Awareness*

Awareness happens immediately when the health care worker recognizes the sick person as somebody seeking medical help by employing his medical knowledge, skills, and attitude. It is with the eyes of faith that the health care worker contemplates on the face of Christ in the sick person. This moves him with love and compassion to do certain acts of charity for the sick person. It is also with the eyes of faith that the person becomes aware of the inherent dignity of the person as created in the image and likeness of God. Concretely, Pope John Paul II’s encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (1995) speaks of combining professional competency and charity in caring for the sick which will allow the health care worker to be aware of the dignity of the person and move him to action.

Volunteer workers have a specific role to play: they make a valuable contribution to the service of life when they combine professional ability and generous, selfless love. The Gospel of life inspires them to lift their feelings of good will towards others to the heights of Christ’s charity; to renew every day, amid hard work and weariness, their awareness of the dignity of every person; to search out people’s needs and, when necessary, to set out on new paths where needs are greater but care and support weaker.<sup>55</sup>

In medical assessment, awareness is the time when the health care worker assesses and diagnoses the sick person, taking into consideration both objective and subjective cues he was able to gather coming from the patient. Objective cues refer to what the senses perceive from the patient’s condition. On the other hand, subjective cues refer to what the patient verbalizes in relation to his health condition. All of these data gathered are used in making a treatment care plan and implementing it. Thus, in the parable,

<sup>54</sup> Pangrazzi, *The Art of Caring for the Sick*, 5.

<sup>55</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, §90.

the Good Samaritan was deeply moved with compassion because he saw that the wounded person, who was left for dead by the robbers, needed help.

### ***Compassion***

According to Pangrazzi, compassion comes from the Latin *cum passio*, that is, to suffer with.<sup>56</sup> This is tantamount to solidarity. Compassion, then, is one of the attitudes or qualities a health care worker ought to have for it entails sensitivity and oneness on the needs and concerns of the sick person. From the moment the health care worker first laid eyes on the sick, he ought to have the “heart”<sup>57</sup> for action to help the sick person from illness to wellness. Health care workers ought to be like the Good Samaritan who was moved with pity at the sight of the wounded person and cared for him. Thus, this is the very basic tenet of health care, which is a helping ministry.

However, with the advances of biotechnology, health care workers may be tempted to lose their sensitivity in responding to the health needs and concerns of the patient due to the easy access to health equipments which provides health care workers the necessary health assessment results instead of using their senses in doing assessment. What is happening right now is that the therapeutic relationship between the patient and the health care worker is being threatened of becoming depersonalized. Instead of looking at the patient in the eye and being moved with compassion for the patient, the health care worker sees the hospital equipment and moves him to action based on what the monitor is prompting him to do, thus, creating an overly medicalized environment for the patient.

Hence, this is one of the challenges for health care workers nowadays, that is, to serve with compassion in an overly medicalized institution; to heal and at the same time to cure the patient.

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<sup>56</sup> Pangrazzi, *The Art of Caring for the Sick*, 7.

<sup>57</sup> *Salvifici Doloris*, §29.

*Nearness*

In caring for the sick, presence is of utmost importance. The helping process necessitates interpersonal relationship between the health care provider and the patient including his significant others. It is no ordinary acquaintance but a special kind of relationship that involves trust and conscience. Trust on the part of the patient who needs and receives care and conscience on the part of the health care provider in giving care to the sick.<sup>58</sup> All of these happen at the patient's bedside wherein all medical and nursing activities finds its Christian value.<sup>59</sup> However, in reality, sometimes health care workers forget this important value of caring, that is, the value of presence at the patient's bedside as if the health care worker is always in a hurry to do the task assigned to him or her, consequently, reducing the sick person from a somebody to a something. The sick person is not a mere individual upon whom the health care worker can apply his knowledge and skills of caring. Thus, the health care worker ought to be like Christ who "went about doing good and healing everyone" (cf. Acts 10:38).

*Involvement*

Involvement refers to the medical and/or nursing interventions employed by health care workers on the sick person. However, there is a caveat for health care workers: the patient must not be seen as somebody to whom he can apply his medical and/or nursing knowledge and skills. Despite the many advancements of technology, health care workers are still called to be actively present in the care of their patients. Patient care must not be entrusted to a machinery or a medical device, as with just by clicking a button then the computer does everything. Every activity of the health care worker is a form of service to life. Active patient care is still the best way to get involved in caring for the sick, for it is through this that the patient experiences Christ's love and mercy for him. Moreover, it is an opportunity for the health

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<sup>58</sup> Charter for Health Care Workers, §2.

<sup>59</sup> Charter for Health Care Workers, §1.



care provider to contemplate the face of Christ on the sick and suffering person.

Advances in medical technology have paved the way for easy and quick assessment results of tests for the patient. Still, nothing can surpass the traditional way of providing care for the sick and the suffering, that is, the active presence of the health care worker at the patient's bedside. Involvement here does not only mean being there when the patient pushes the "nurse call" button and performs certain medical and/or nursing procedures for the patient. Instead, it pertains to that active and compassionate presence of the health care worker who sees the patient with a profound value and inherent dignity as a human being created in the image and likeness of God.

With regard to this needed presence of the health care worker at the patient's bedside, health care workers must not spend most of their time at the nurses' station or doctors' quarters getting overwhelmed with too much paper work and documentation. Sometimes, this is a sad scenario in the health care setting. Health care workers spend less time at the patient's bedside, consequently, depersonalizing the therapeutic relationship between the health care worker and the patient. This is a great challenge for all health care workers humanizing places of suffering from an overly medicalized setting.

Hence, involvement refers to the active presence of the health care worker as *alter Christus* in the healing ministry who not only sees the suffering person but is moved with compassion and is actively involved in health care.

### ***Commitment or Follow-up***

Taking an active role into the healing ministry of Christ entails commitment. A commitment to be "guardians and servants of human life."<sup>60</sup> Caring for the sick does not stop on the interventions done by the health care provider onto the sick person; just like the Good Samaritan who did not simply pass by the wounded person but really went out of his way to help and

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<sup>60</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, §89.

settle the wounded at an inn. Similarly, the health care worker does not stop unless the patient has regained his full strength. The curative phase in primary health care does not stop there; it goes on until the rehabilitative phase where the patient is reintegrated to his family and to the society.

The so-called nursing process begins with assessment, then diagnosis, planning, implementation, and lastly evaluation. This is not a linear process but a cyclical one which means that after assessing, diagnosing, planning the patient's care and implementing it, the evaluation phase does not signal the end of the process but the beginning of another one. In other words, it goes back to assessment in order to check whether the plan of care being implemented has been effective or not. Hence, by following this process, a health care worker is committed to be with the patient from the moment he is admitted and up to the time he is discharged from the health institution.

Moreover, this commitment comes in the form of the promise made by the health care worker in front of God when he or she took the oath of profession, that is, "to do no harm" to the patient. That is why the profession, vocation, and mission of the health care workers is geared toward the prevention of diseases and the promotion of life. This is a lifetime commitment and must not be taken for granted because the health care worker is dealing with life.

This attribute of a health care worker must be grounded on divine love. Hence, if he loves what he is doing and finds meaning in it, then, he will do everything in his power to help the patient move from illness to wellness. But, if he is just doing it for the sake of accomplishing something during an eight-hour duty shift, then it is futile and meaningless.

### ***Delegation or Teamwork***

Caring for the sick and suffering is not only the concern of one individual alone, but it ought to be a concerted effort of "all people of good will"<sup>61</sup> to aid the sick and suffering person

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<sup>61</sup> John Paul II, Message for the First Annual World Day of the

from illness to wellness. All health care workers collaborate, delegate and work as a team either directly or indirectly in order for the patient to have a healthy and safe environment while being confined in the hospital. There is always that check and balance along the process of patient care.

Hence, the parable of the Good Samaritan gives all health care workers an excellent model of being in the service to life in imitation of the first Good Samaritan, Jesus Christ. The activities of the health care worker are already forms of new evangelization. It is a healing ministry of love and of life.

The Church has always considered this service to the sick and the suffering as an integral part of the salvific ministry of the Church in which health care workers share in the pastoral and evangelizing mission of the Church. Doctors, nurses, and other medical and ancillary staff are called by virtue of their own profession to be the living image of Christ and of the Church through their loving witness of the Gospel of life to the sick and the suffering.

### **Health Care Workers as New Evangelizers and Ministers of the Sick according to Pope John Paul II**

Evangelization is a classical reflection during the pontificate of Pope Paul VI in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* which speaks of the essential mission of the Church, that is, to evangelize the Gospel to all men so that they may be reconciled to God and that the memorial of the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ may be perpetuated through the Church. Thus, he writes,

Evangelization is the special grace and vocation of the church. It is her special function. The church exists to preach the gospel, that is to preach and teach the word of God so that through her the gifts of grace

may be given to us, sinners may be reconciled to God, and the sacrifices of the Mass, the memorial of his glorious death and resurrection, may be perpetuated.<sup>62</sup>

According to Jesús Álvarez Gómez, CMF, Pope John Paul II briefly defined evangelization as “proclaiming the Good News of Salvation, announcing Jesus Christ Who is the Good News of God.”<sup>63</sup> Fundamentally, this is the same one and undivided mission of Christ to the Church as before. However, in the post-Conciliar Church, the term “new evangelization” was coined by Pope John Paul II which has been his *leitmotif* during his long pontificate and even continued by his successors. Evangelization now calls for the Gospel to be proclaimed in “a new way this area of human experience [sickness and suffering], in order to encourage its orientation to the overall well-being of the person and the progress of all people in every part of the world.”<sup>64</sup> Similarly, evangelization is no longer limited to the proclamation of the Gospel in the pulpit by priests and religious but it is more on the prophetic witnessing of the Christian faith by all baptized individuals which touches all spheres of human activities. For Fr. James Wehner, “wherever people are, the Church must be present.”<sup>65</sup> Hence, the laity also has a critical role and contribution in the missionary activities of the Church especially in the task of evangelization in the modern world.

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<sup>62</sup> Paul VI, Post-Synodal Exhortation on Evangelization in the Modern World *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, (8 December 1975), §14 (Philippines: Paulines Publishing House, 1982), 716.

<sup>63</sup> Jesús Álvarez Gómez, CMF, *A New Evangelization for the Third Millennium* (Philippines: ICLA Publications and Claretian Publications, 1997), 11.

<sup>64</sup> John Paul II, Message in Preparation for the Ninth World Day of the Sick (22 August 2000) §2, at the Holy See, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/messages/sick/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_20000822\\_world-day-of-the-sick-2001.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/messages/sick/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20000822_world-day-of-the-sick-2001.html)

<sup>65</sup> Fr. James A. Wehner, STD, *What is “New” about the New Evangelization?* (Washington DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2012), PDF.

In the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (1990), Pope John Paul II wrote that the first form of evangelization is witnessing and the first form of witnessing is the very life of the missionary:

The first form of witness is *the very life of the missionary, of the Christian family, and of the ecclesial community*, which reveal a new way of living. The missionary who, despite all his or her human limitations and defects, lives a simple life, taking Christ as the model, is a sign of God and of transcendent realities. But everyone in the Church, striving to imitate the Divine Master, can and must bear this kind of witness; in many cases it is the only possible way of being a missionary.<sup>66</sup>

Thus, the person and the activities of the health care worker is already a form of Christian witnessing to the Gospel of life and to the faith which he received during Baptism. He imitates the healing ministry of Christ, the Divine Physician of body and soul. In a message given by Pope John Paul II addressed to the Jubilee pilgrims last 30 September 2000, he exhorts all who were present with the word:

By virtue of your baptismal consecration, you are called to become co-responsible for the proclamation of the Gospel under the guidance of your Pastors. I therefore invite you to constant spiritual and intellectual formation, so that through you the Church's love, a reflection of God's love, will more easily reach every man and woman.<sup>67</sup>

In here, it is explicitly stated that through the Sacrament of Baptism not only did the baptized become members of Christ's Church but also they become sharers of its evangelizing mission to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God to all nations. The Church, which comprises all baptized Christians, has its primary mission, that is, the proclamation of the Kingdom of

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<sup>66</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical on the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate *Redemptoris Missio* (7 December 1990), §42, *L'Osservatore Romano* 1175, no. 4 (1991), 11.

<sup>67</sup> "You are co-responsible for evangelization," *L'Osservatore Romano*, no. 41 (11 October 2000), 2.

God so that those who believe in Christ may enter into a personal relationship with Him hoping it will lead the individual to his own conversion and adhere to the will of the Father through faith.<sup>68</sup>

In addition to this call of evangelization, Pope John Paul II emphasizes the importance of having to undergo an ongoing spiritual and intellectual formation in order for the health care worker to be effective in rendering the care needed by the patient and also in giving witness to their profession, vocation, and mission as new evangelizers of life, of the Christian faith, of hope, of love as ministers of the sick, and of communion and solidarity.

### **Health Care Workers as New Evangelizers of Life**

Health care workers comprise those who are directly and indirectly involved in caring for the sick such as doctors, nurses, chaplains, administrative staff and other medical ancillary staff. Primarily, the profession, vocation and mission of health care workers is geared towards being guardians and servants of life. Everything that he does is a form of “service to life.”<sup>69</sup> A service which is in imitation of the healing ministry of Christ who went about doing good and healing the sick and suffering (cf. Acts 10:38). It is also a service which is a clear manifestation of the love of the Father for mankind and for one’s neighbor. Thus, the health care worker ought to be a promoter of the culture of life and of love.

Human life receives its profound value and inviolability from God. It is a gift which acknowledges the inherent dignity of the person who is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26) from its beginning to its natural end. Each stage of a person’s life has its own beauty and developmental tasks which must be fulfilled and satisfied in order to have a well-integrated and balanced life.

During the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith explicitly taught in its *Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on*

<sup>68</sup> *Redemptoris Missio*, §44.

<sup>69</sup> Charter for Health Care Workers, §1.

*the Dignity of Procreation replies to certain questions of the day* (1987) that,

Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God, and it remains forever in a special relationship with the Creator, who is its sole end. God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end: no one can, in any circumstance, claim for himself the right to destroy directly an innocent human being.<sup>70</sup>

In other words, human life is an indispensable good given to man as a gift by God, the author of life. Since it comes from God, then, it is sacred and inviolable. No other creature has been given the authority and power to take it away. Instead, man is charged to nourish and nurture it.

In contrast, the emergence of the culture of death has become more prevalent everywhere especially in the health care setting. A culture which allows and approves everything that is against life. Here, life is considered as a mere object ready to be thrown away when no longer needed. With this kind of mentality and attitude, people can become manipulators of life. Even health care workers can be tempted to manipulate life. For instance, simply omitting what is due for the sick person or performing some “shortcuts” in patient care constitutes already a form of manipulation of life. More so, with the advances in technology, just by clicking a button, life ceases. In an address of Pope John Paul II to the Council for Health Care Workers in Rome, he reports,

Oppression, violence, war, drugs, kidnapping, the marginalization of immigrants, abortion and euthanasia are all threats to life that result from human initiative. The totalitarian ideologies that have degraded man by

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<sup>70</sup> Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation* replies to certain questions of the day *Donum Vitae* (22 February 1987) §5, at the Holy See, [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc\\_con\\_cfaith\\_doc\\_19870222\\_respect-for-human-life\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19870222_respect-for-human-life_en.html)

making him an object, trampling upon or evading basic human rights, find a worrying counterpart in certain exploitations of biotechnology that manipulate life in the name of an inordinate ambition for domination which distorts aspirations and hopes and increases anxiety and suffering.<sup>71</sup>

In health care, the most prevalent ethico-moral issues faced by health care workers are contraception, abortion and euthanasia. These are issues that directly affect human life from its beginning to its end—issues which are the result of human initiative and manipulations of biotechnology.

Hence, as guardians and servants of life, health care workers ought to be aware of their important roles in the promotion of the culture of life and love especially when places of suffering are overly medicalized. This culture of life and love is clearly expressed by health care workers by respecting the inviolability of human life as well as the inherent dignity of the person as a creature of God.

### **Respect for the Inviolability of Human Life**

In the beginning, it is clear that God created man, male and female,<sup>72</sup> in His own image and likeness, entrusted with dominion over the earth (cf. Genesis 1:26), willed to be “fruitful and multiply,” “to fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28).

Pope John Paul II’s Post-Synodal Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* (1988) further elaborates that,

In effect the acknowledgment of the personal dignity of every human being demands the respect, the defence and the promotion of the rights of the human person. It is a question of inherent, universal and inviolable rights. No one, no individual, no group, no authority, no State, can change—let alone eliminate—

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<sup>71</sup> “Your mission: to serve health and life,” *L’Osservatore Romano*, no. 12 (25 March 1998) §3, 10.

<sup>72</sup> See Genesis 1:27



them because such rights find their source in God himself.<sup>73</sup>

In other words, human life is inviolable because it comes from God. Man has been given this wonderful gift in order to nourish, nurture, and cultivate it. God never gave man the authority to take away someone's life or even violate it for his own benefit.

In addition, the Pope speaks of the inviolability of human life in his encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (1995) as a gift from God: "Man's life comes from God; it is his gift, his image and imprint, a sharing in his breath of life. God therefore is the sole Lord of this life: man cannot do with it as he wills."<sup>74</sup> It may be a God-given gift entrusted to man that he may have life but still God is the author of life, making life sacred and inviolable.

The sacredness of life gives rise to its inviolability, written from the beginning in man's heart, in his conscience... in the depths of his conscience, man is always reminded of the inviolability of life—his own life and that of others—as something which does not belong to him, because it is the property and gift of God the Creator and Father.<sup>75</sup>

In other words, the life given by God ought not to be seen only for one's own sake but it is always for the sake of others. How a person values his life is also reflective of how he values the lives of others. Thus, "to protect and promote life, to show reverence and love for it, is a task which God entrusts to every man, calling him as his living image to share in his own lordship over the world."<sup>76</sup>

### **Promoting the Dignity of the Human Person**

Pope John Paul II's Post-Synodal Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* (1988) describes the dignity of the person

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<sup>73</sup> *Christifideles Laici*, §37.

<sup>74</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, §39.

<sup>75</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, §40.

<sup>76</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, §42.

as “the most precious possession of an individual.”<sup>77</sup> He adds that, “the value of one person transcends all the material world.”<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, the inherent dignity of the person originates as being “created by God in his image and likeness as well as redeemed by the Most Precious Blood of Christ, the person is called to be a ‘child in the Son’ and a living temple of the Spirit, destined for the eternal life of blessed communion with God.”<sup>79</sup> In connection with caring for the sick, health care workers must not view the patient as an “object of treatment” but rather as a “subject of his illness.”<sup>80</sup> Acknowledging the profound dignity of the person is also tantamount to respecting his rights to medical treatment. When it comes to health care, the patient is not merely a passive recipient of the care being rendered to him but instead he ought to be encouraged to take part in his own care, thereby, allowing him to make right choices and informed consent to any medical treatment.

According to Pope John Paul II in his Encyclical *Evangelium Vitae* (1995), “Human life finds itself most vulnerable when it enters the world and when it leaves the realm of time to embark upon eternity.”<sup>81</sup> In other words, a human person is most vulnerable during its birth and infancy and in old age, where abortion for the unborn child and euthanasia for those whose condition is terminal or those who are elderly become options. From a medical standpoint, an unborn baby, a newborn baby, or a young child is vulnerable to acquire illnesses because his immune system is still developing and adapting to the environment. On the part of the elderly, they are vulnerable due to their decreasing strength and health condition. Thus, the Gospel of life calls for each one to show care and respect for life from its beginning to its natural close.

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<sup>77</sup> *Christifideles Laici*, §37.

<sup>78</sup> *Christifideles Laici*, §37.

<sup>79</sup> *Christifideles Laici*, §37.

<sup>80</sup> Tollefsen, *John Paul II's Contribution to Catholic Bioethics*,

<sup>81</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, §44.

Hence, health care workers act as new evangelizers when they concretely manifest and express their profound respect for human life and promotion of the dignity of the human person.

### **Health Care Workers as New Evangelizers of the Christian Faith**

The Church's thrust of new evangelization calls for each baptized individual and all people of good will to be prophetic witnesses of their faith in the light of the Gospel.

Faith is exercised in two ways: first, on the part of the health care worker, and second, on the part of the sick person and his significant others. On the one hand, with the eyes of faith of the health care worker, he is able to contemplate the face of the suffering Christ in the sick person which moves him to perform acts of charity. It is also through faith that the health care worker acknowledges the profound value and dignity of the person. On the other hand, it is through faith that the sick person and his significant others are able to experience and feel the loving and healing presence of Christ especially in the person of the health care worker.

The call to be prophetic witnesses of the faith is explicitly expressed in the profession, vocation, and mission of all health care workers, that is, in the service to life. All of these three are mutually integrated with each other.<sup>82</sup> Pope John Paul II asserts that "their profession calls for them to be guardians and servants of human life."<sup>83</sup> In other words, the person of the health care worker comes into play with regard to his calling in the service to life for he not only assents to this calling and professes it in front of God but also, he is called to do acts of charity. Thus, all health care activities ought to be directed towards helping the patient move from illness to wellness and not something that could harm him in the process.

The Gospel of Health presents 20 health miracles performed by our Lord Jesus Christ. He healed the leper, the paralytic, the cripple, the woman suffering from hemorrhage,

<sup>82</sup> Charter for Health Care Workers, §4.

<sup>83</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, §89.

the deaf-mute, the blind, and restored the dead to life.<sup>84</sup> All of these miracles happened because of their great faith, Jesus Christ affirms: “your faith has saved you.”<sup>85</sup> Healing does not take place without man’s believing and willing it. Thus, this is how faith works, God reveals Himself to man while man assents to what God has revealed through his will and under God’s grace.

Faith is a gift from God which requires man’s assent or personal adherence to what has been revealed to him. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines faith as “man’s response to God, who reveals himself and gives himself to man, at the same time bringing man a superabundant light as he searches for the ultimate meaning of his life.”<sup>86</sup> In the many healing acts of Christ, it is faith which helped those who have been healed by Him to arrive at their own cure and their own resurrection.<sup>87</sup> In other words, faith is tantamount to conversion. When Christ healed those, who approached Him for healing, He was not only restoring the physical health of the person but the totality of the person, that is, his mental, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions as well. For Pope John Paul II, human life is a penultimate good<sup>88</sup> in which the totality and good of the person is sought from the beginning to its natural end. Thus, in imitation of Christ’s healing ministry, health care workers ought to be holistic in caring for the sick and the suffering.

During the time of Christ, people came and sought Him for healing. It was their great faith that moved them to search for Christ and sought healing. In relation to caring for the sick and the suffering, health care workers ought to understand the great mystery of faith about Christ’s passion, death, and resurrection so that with the eyes of faith, he may be able to understand what

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<sup>84</sup> The Gospel of Health.

<sup>85</sup> Luke 7:50; 18:42

<sup>86</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 26.

<sup>87</sup> The Gospel of Health §5.

<sup>88</sup> John Paul II, Message of the Holy Father for the World Day of the Sick for the Year 2000: Contemplate the Face of Christ in the Sick, §6.

the patient is going through not only on the physical, mental and emotional level but also on the social and spiritual level.

### **Health Care Workers as New Evangelizers of Hope**

Alongside the theological virtues of faith and charity, is the virtue of hope. With medical progress and advances in technology, a sick person is given hope that his illness can possibly be treated. However, a caveat, that with the advances in biotechnology, the health care institution where the patient is receiving care and convalescing may become overly medicalized, thereby, creating a depersonalized environment for the patient.

In times of illness and suffering, a person's faith in God is constantly tried and challenged especially when he feels that he is on the brink of death or when his health condition is beyond what medical science can hope to treat. Initially, the patient can still adapt to the changing situations both internally and externally but in the long run he will feel vulnerable and hopeless. Christian faith reminds us that in times like these, those who are ill and suffering should be more fervent in their prayers and must place their hope and trust in God rather than in medical progress and biotechnology.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* defines hope as a “theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ’s promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the help of the grace of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>89</sup> The Sacraments give the patient this sure hope of salvation with the aid and grace of the Holy Spirit aside from medicine giving physical cure to his health condition. That is why health care workers ought not to neglect the spiritual care needed by the patient.

By virtue of their profession, vocation and mission, health care workers are called to be sources of hope for the sick person in the light of the Gospel. It is through their person and in everything that they do that the sick and the suffering can feel and experience the healing and loving presence of Christ. Concretely, the *Charter*

<sup>89</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1897.

*for Health Care Workers* (1995) explicitly emphasizes that “the principal and symbolic expression of ‘taking care’ is their vigilant and caring presence at the sickbed. It is here that medical and nursing activity expresses its lofty human and Christian value.”<sup>90</sup> It is also in the loving presence at the sickbed that the relationship between the health care worker and the patient is established and nourished.

In the case of a dying patient, the *Charter for Health Care Workers* (1995) emphasizes the importance of the loving presence of the health care worker at the patient’s bedside despite the overly medicalized environment wherein the patient is exposed to.

The most important assistance is “loving presence” at the bedside of the dying person. There is a proper medical-health presence which, though not deceiving him, makes him feel alive, a person among persons, because he is receiving, like every being in need, attention and care. This caring attention gives confidence and hope to the patient and makes him reconciled to death. This is the unique contribution which doctors and nurses, by their being human and Christian—more than by their expertise—can and should make to the dying person, so that rejection becomes acceptance and anguish gives way to hope.<sup>91</sup>

Health care workers ought to remember that the patient is a human being with varied needs not only biophysically but also morally. Medicine might be able to treat the disease that is causing his illness but underneath the physical distress is a human being with a soul and heart. Despite his health condition, the patient remains to be a social being created in the image and likeness of God. That is why the person of the health care worker transcends what medicine can offer. The love, care and attention that the patient receives give hope to the patient.

Hence, with the eyes of faith, the health care worker is able to contemplate the face of Christ in the suffering person by acknowledging his profound value and dignity as a human person.

<sup>90</sup> Charter for Health Care Workers §1.

<sup>91</sup> Charter for Health Care Workers §117.

It is through hope that the sick person sees in the person and activities of the health care worker the Father's healing love and care. Thus, Pope John Paul II exhorts all the sick and health care professionals in his message for the Ninth World Day of the Sick (2000) about the importance of bearing witness to the Gospel of life and hope. He writes,

Dear brothers and sisters, proclaim and bear witness to the Gospel of life and hope with generous dedication. Proclaim that Christ is the comfort of all who are in distress or difficulty; he is the strength of those experiencing moments of fatigue and vulnerability; he is the support of those who work zealously to assure better living and health conditions for everyone.<sup>92</sup>

### **Health Care Workers as New Evangelizers of Love and Ministers of the Sick**

Health care workers are called to be lovers of life. By virtue of their profession, vocation, and mission, they are called to be "ministers of life".<sup>93</sup> A ministry of love which is in imitation of the public ministry of Christ 2,000 years ago. A health care worker must have this mentality and attitude of caring, for his profession is not a mere job but a vocation and a mission to love.

All throughout Christ's public ministry, one can read from the Sacred Scriptures how "he went about doing good and healing all those oppressed by the devil, for God was with him" (Acts 10:38). Thus, Christ is the concrete model for all health care workers who should not be staying most of their time in the nurses' station or doctors' quarters but instead ought to be present and visible at the patient's bedside. The loving presence of the health care worker is very much needed by the patient aside from the medical treatment he can give to the patient. With this simple act of being there with the patient, the health care worker transforms the place of suffering into a place of love and from

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<sup>92</sup> John Paul II, Message in Preparation for the Ninth World Day of the Sick, §6.

<sup>93</sup> Charter for Health Care Workers §prologue.

an overly medicalized environment to a healing and therapeutic environment for the patient.

In health care, love is viewed in two ways: it is a ministry and, at the same time, an act of love of God for the suffering person. On the one hand, as a ministry, health care is a venue for the love of God to be felt by all especially those who are sick and suffering. It is a continuation of the healing ministry of Christ who “went about doing good and healing everyone” (cf. Acts 10:38). On the other hand, it is an act of love for Christ, who is the sick person and at the same time who assumes the suffering person.<sup>94</sup> The parable of the Good Samaritan in the Gospel of Luke gives a clear picture of how love is expressed in both ways: the love of God and the love of neighbor.

Caring for the sick is not only a technical activity by which health care workers exercise their medical and/or nursing knowledge, skills, and attitude of caring but it is about dedication to and love of neighbor.<sup>95</sup> The parable talks about the unending question of knowing one’s neighbor and caring for them. It speaks about going out of one’s comfort zone and ministering to those who need medical help anytime and anywhere. Like the Good Samaritan, the health care worker is called to share God’s love in everything that he does. He is God’s minister of life. Concretely, he ought not to pass by or place a deaf ear to the needs and concerns of the patient. Instead, he is called to “stop to, bend over the person who is crushed, suffering, and alleviate his burdens and difficulties.”<sup>96</sup> In other words, this mission of love entails some sense of sensitivity on the part of the health care worker. A sensitivity or awareness on the varying needs and concerns of the person not only on the physical, mental, emotional, and social dimensions of the person but also his spiritual life, consequently, moving him with compassion and getting involved in the patient’s

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<sup>94</sup> Charter for Health Care Workers, §4.

<sup>95</sup> Charter for Health Care Workers §1.

<sup>96</sup> John Paul II, Message for the 10<sup>th</sup> World Day of the Sick (11 February 2002), at the Holy See, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2002/february/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_spe\\_20020211\\_giornata-malato.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2002/february/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20020211_giornata-malato.html).



care. Thus, health care workers ought to possess certain qualities and virtues which move him to do acts of charity and minister to the sick.

All health care activities require love. Love is the key for all other virtues to be unlocked which moves the health care worker to respond to the call of service to life. Monge enumerates some of the qualities that a health care professional ought to have: (1) the capacity for self-giving; (2) generosity; (3) order; (4) sense of responsibility; (5) loyalty; (6) simplicity and sincerity; (7) optimism; (8) patience and understanding.<sup>97</sup>

### Capacity for Self-Giving

The person of the health care worker influences the effectivity and success the health care and service to the sick person. Without love and his whole self, health care is often dry and lifeless. Love moves the health care worker to give oneself to others. With love, illness is no longer seen as a negative experience but an opportunity “to release love, in order to give birth to works of love towards neighbor.”<sup>98</sup>

For instance, in the case of the dying person, the *Charter for Health Care Workers* (1995) gives a detailed description of how the love of God and the love of one’s neighbor are expressed.

<Charity> means that giving and receptive presence which establishes with the dying person a communion born of attention, comprehension, concern, patience, sharing and selflessness.

Charity sees in the dying person, as in no other, the face of the suffering and dying Christ calling out for love. Charity to the dying person—this “poor one” who is renouncing all the goods of this world—is a privileged expression of love of God in one’s neighbor (cf. Mt 25:31-40).

Loving the dying with Christian charity is helping them to recognize and feel vividly the mysterious

<sup>97</sup> Monge, *Ethical Practices in Health & Disease*, 193-195.

<sup>98</sup> *Salvifici Doloris*, §30.

presence of God at their side: in the charity of a brother the love of God becomes visible.

Charity enables the relationship with the dying person to expand in prayer, that is, in communion with God. In this communion one relates to God as the Father who welcomes his children returning to Him.

To help the dying person to pray and to pray with him means opening up to him the horizons of divine life. It means, at the same time, entering into that “communion of saints” in which all the relationships, which death seems to break irreparably, are re-knit in a new way.<sup>99</sup>

Hence, Christ’s loving and healing presence towards the patient is clearly manifested and expressed through the person and activities of the health care worker. The love of God towards the sick person through the health care worker unlocks all other virtues such as attention, comprehension, concern, patience, sharing and selflessness. Thus, the health care worker’s capacity to give oneself for others has its very foundation on the love of God.

### **Generosity**

Generosity means going beyond what is required. In this sense, the health care worker is called “to work with vigilance, affection, attention for the suffering person, exceeding oneself generously in work, unmindful of the time spent or the schedule.”<sup>100</sup> Health care activity must not be seen as a mere routine that must be finished within the duty shift and a task that must be accomplished within the day. In reality, this quality is challenged especially when there are injustices that are happening in the health care system such as the unjust and untimely distribution of wages for health care workers. Consequently, health care workers tend to count the cost of the services they have rendered. For example, the health care worker has to finish everything before the end of his

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<sup>99</sup> Charter for Health Care Workers §132-133.

<sup>100</sup> Monge, *Ethical Practices in Health & Disease*, 194.

duty shift because he is not paid justly for his overtime services. Love counters this kind of mentality and attitude. A health care worker's profession, vocation, and mission is not about how much he is paid but about how he gives himself generously to those who are sick and suffering. It is not about the productivity or quantity *per se* of the task done about the genuine service to life rendered towards the sick and the suffering.

### **Order**

Order means to “do things on time, without delays, with a hierarchy of values (the sick person is the first priority).”<sup>101</sup> In any intervention performed by the health care worker, he follows a systematic methodology on how to go about it so that it is cost effective for the patient and time-saving on his part. In a real health care setting, sometimes the health care worker is engrossed with all the tasks at hand, such as making the necessary documentations, preparing for the medications to be administered, and other interventions, setting aside the primary fact that the sick person is the reason why health care is done. Aside from the routine tasks usually done by health care workers, there are also the needs and concerns of the patient as well as his significant others, which must be addressed immediately. Sometimes, the patient and his significant others can be a source of nuisance to the health care workers. However, in the order of values, love comes first. Love is the queen of all virtues. Similarly, caring for the sick and suffering is given priority over other health care tasks related to his care. Hence, in doing health care, the sick person is not a mere object of treatment but he is the subject of his illness. A registered nurse cannot say that he cannot attend to the needs of the patient as of the moment because he is busy writing his nurse's notes. That is why, priority is first given to the patient before anything else.

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<sup>101</sup> Monge, *Ethical Practices in Health & Disease*, 194.

### **Sense of Responsibility**

The profession, vocation, and mission of the health care worker come with a big responsibility because unlike any other profession, they deal with life. A single infraction either in a form of negligence or malpractice can affect the patient's health condition. Thus, this quality or attribute refers to the personal accountability of the health care worker for one's actions.

Moreover, it is tantamount to self-giving at the service of the suffering person who is not a mere case number or a clinical case that needs to be solved and treated. The sick person has rights that need to be acknowledged and respected by the health care worker. Furthermore, by virtue of the promises professed by the health care worker before God, they are governed by their respective code of ethics which is always for the good of the patient. Sometimes, violations like malpractice or negligence to the code of ethics or the rights of the patient will be consequential to the revocation of one's license to practice.

Negligence happens when a health care worker fails to exercise or perform a standard of health care that a reasonable person would have done in a similar situation. A health care worker who fails to turn the bedridden patient every two hours causing bedsores or who fails to elevate the side rails of the patient's bed which results to a fall are forms of negligence. On the other hand, malpractice refers to the improper treatment of a patient by a health care worker that results to injury or death. For instance, a surgeon who fails to retrieve all surgical instruments prior to closing the patient is a common malpractice. A nurse who administers wrong medication to another patient. In the actual health care practice, there are many cases in which neglect of duty and malpractice happens. They may come in simple or grave forms which result to injury or death of a patient.

Hence, health care workers ought to be vigilant in the performance of their duties knowing and always aware that he is not dealing with a robot but a living human being who has a profound and inherent dignity as a created being of God.

### **Loyalty**

This quality ought to be reflective of the promises each health care professional vows before God, i.e. “to do no harm” to the sick person. He must seek what is good for the patient and not that which could harm him in the process.

It can also mean that the health care worker must be true to his words and the commitments he makes to the patient. Thus, the priority of all health care workers must be the good of the patient. The task at hand is only secondary. In other words, a health care worker ought to remember that the best interest of the patient is of utmost importance in doing health care and not that which he can do in an eight-hour duty shift.

### **Simplicity and Sincerity**

The health care worker’s words and actions should be clear and without deceit and subterfuge. It is the right of the patient to know everything that has something to do with his care. In times of sickness and suffering, a patient knows very well if a person rendering health care is genuine or not. He knows if a health care worker is really true to his desire to help him move from illness to wellness. In other words, simplicity and sincerity are not merely gauged according to one’s words and actions.

The therapeutic relationship between the patient and the health care worker must grow into becoming a relationship of trust. The patient trusts the conscience of the health care worker especially in carrying out his ethico-religious roles and responsibilities towards the sick person. This kind of relationship is delicate because once a patient feels his rights and dignity have been violated by the person whom he trusts, it is difficult for this trust to be regained.

Hence, all throughout the duration of the patient’s state of illness, the health care worker ought to manifest God’s loving and healing presence through faith, hope, and love of the sick person in line with the Gospel values.

### **Optimism**

This refers to the disposition of the health care worker toward the sick person especially in giving care and in giving information. The quality of optimism is clearly manifested on how the health care worker communicates and relates with the patient. Repeatedly, the patient should not be considered as a mere object of care but must be seen as a human being with rights and inherent dignity coming from God. What happens at the patient's bedside is but a delicate moment of an experience and encounter with the healing love of Christ. Thus, the sick person does not benefit at all from a very "technical" and "mechanical" attitude of the health care worker.

### **Patience and Understanding**

Sick persons demand a lot of time and attention from the health care worker especially when he is experiencing pain. He can go into tantrums or utter foul words towards the health care worker. In addition, the significant others will also demand a hasty response to their call for help and attention for their patient. The health care worker, then, should be empathetic to the patient as well as to the significant others by listening to what they have to say and responding to their needs and queries.

Ultimately, these qualities are God-given qualities for the health care workers so that through their words and deeds, they can be prophetic witnesses of love.

### **Health Care Workers as New Evangelizers of Communion and Solidarity**

In Pope John Paul II's message during the Fourth World Day of the Sick, he urged health care workers to be promoters of communion. He writes,

And you, health-care workers—doctors, pharmacists, nurses, chaplains, men and women religious, administrators and volunteers—and especially you women, pioneers in the medical and spiritual care

of the sick, you must all promote communion among the ill, among their family members and in the ecclesial community. Be at the side of the sick and their families, so that in their suffering they may never feel rejected. The experience of pain will thus become for each of them a school of generous dedication.<sup>102</sup>

In times of illness and suffering, a sick person feels separated or isolated from his family and community, consequently, leading him to feel alone and hopeless. However, with the care given by health care workers and with the support of his significant others, this feeling of loneliness and hopelessness is expunged.

It has been said earlier that the suffering and pain experienced by a sick person, when seen and contemplated in the light of the Gospel specifically in Christ's passion, death, and resurrection, becomes salvific. It is in this way that the sick person is in communion with the suffering Christ. Thus, health care workers are called to see Christ in the sick person and like the Good Samaritan becomes moved with compassion at the sight of the wounded person.

Compassion is not a shallow feeling or emotion. It is an action word which moves the person to do something for the one who is suffering. It is also synonymous with the word solidarity. The health care worker, like the Good Samaritan, at the sight of the sick person needing medical help is moved with compassion and gets involved in the care of the patient. Moreover, compassion also entails nearness to the suffering which means the presence of the health care worker at the patient's sickbed is of utmost importance. Furthermore, compassion towards the patient allows collaboration between those who are directly and indirectly involved in the patient's care. Compassion does not only see the plight of the sick person but moves the person to get involved and care for him. Health care workers can become new evangelizers of communion and solidarity through their active

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<sup>102</sup> John Paul II, Message for the IV World Day of the Sick (11 October 1995) §7, at The Holy See, [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/sick/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_mes\\_11101995\\_world-day-of-the-sick-1996.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/sick/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_11101995_world-day-of-the-sick-1996.html)

witness of compassion towards the sick person and his significant others. Everything that the health care worker does as long as it is done out of love is already a form of service to life.

Ultimately, health care workers can become new evangelizers of life, of Christian faith, of hope, of love, and of communion and solidarity. As new evangelizers of life, the profession, vocation, and mission of health care workers call them to be promoters, advocates, and ministers of life, a penultimate good which comes from the one Author of life. As new evangelizers of the faith, the faith of the health care worker in relation to the passion, death, and resurrection of Christ allows him to contemplate the face of Christ in the suffering person. Through this, he is able to know and understand the Christian meaning of suffering in the light of the Gospel. As new evangelizers of hope, the health care workers' loving and caring attention towards the patient is a sure source of hope for the patient because he feels the loving and caring presence of Christ in the person of the health care worker. As new evangelizers of love, health care workers ought to emulate the example of the Good Samaritan in the Gospel who did not only stop at the sight of the wounded person but also cared for him. But still, health care workers should follow Christ's example, the true interpreter of the Good Samaritan spirit. As new evangelizers of communion and solidarity, health care workers must be active witnesses of compassion towards the sick person and his significant others.

All of these, carry one message alone, that is, Christ's love and mercy towards the sick and the suffering. The person of the health care worker and the sick person are the two key players for evangelization to take place. There must be the evangelizer and the receiver of Good News. The health care activities of the health care worker are the medium for the Gospel of life and love to be transmitted to the sick person. The sick person, being the recipient of Good News, will be able to experience the loving and healing presence of Christ through the health care worker. The dynamics between the health care worker and the sick person happens at the bedside. This is the new context where new evangelization takes



place. The content may be the same but the context and how it is transmitted vary.

### **Final Words**

Pope John Paul II's anthropological foundation emphasizes that human life is a penultimate good which is sacred and inviolable from its beginning to its natural end because it came from God, the author of life. In other words, it is a gift from God. Fundamentally, his inherent dignity is based on the fact that man is created in the image and likeness of God. Thus, nobody has the right to violate such gift and take it away from the person such as in the case of abortion, assisted suicide, and euthanasia. Concretely, respecting the profound value and dignity of the sick person is best expressed by acknowledging and respecting the patient's bill of rights: right to medical treatment, right to information, right to choices, right to privacy, right to complaint, right to health education, and right to a healthy and safe environment.

The Pope envisions health by not identifying it with the mere absence of disease or infirmity but that which strives to achieve a fuller harmony and healthy balance on the physical, psychological, spiritual, and social dimensions of the person. This definition is in line also with that of the World Health Organization (WHO). However, the pope adds that by being healthy, the person is able to fulfill his own profession, vocation and mission in life and also that pertains for the good of others.

On the other side of the health continuum, Pope John Paul II states that illness and suffering not only affects the person physically but also mentally, spiritually, and socially. A person can understand the profound meaning of illness and suffering supernaturally and humanly speaking. Supernaturally, it is connected to the divine mystery of the Redemption of the world, that is, the Father's love for mankind which is fulfilled through Christ's incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection, consequently sanctifying human suffering and transforming it into a redeeming force. Humanly speaking, it is related to his profound value as

a person, his inherent dignity, and his profession, vocation, and mission.

The idea of Pope of John Paul II with regard to health care and the new evangelization refers to Christian witnessing in the service to life which is in imitation of the healing ministry of Christ. It is a ministry of love for God and for one's neighbors, which makes health care workers ministers of God's outpouring love for the sick and the suffering. Thus, health care workers are called by virtue of their profession, vocation, and mission to be "guardians and servants of life"<sup>103</sup>, ministers of the sick or "advocates of the sick"<sup>104</sup>.

The health care worker, according to Pope John Paul II, is the Good Samaritan in the Gospel of Luke 10:29-37, who not only saw and stopped beside the wounded person but also was moved with compassion and cared for him.

Health care workers are new evangelizers of life by respecting the inviolability of human life as well as promoting the inherent dignity of the human person as a creature of God in His image and likeness.

Health care workers are new evangelizers of the Christian Faith by understanding the great mystery of the faith, that is, Christ's passion, death, and resurrection, so that with the eyes of faith, the health care worker may see the face of Christ in the sick or suffering person and perform acts of charity. Thus, with this kind of understanding, the health care worker may be able to understand the Christian meaning of suffering.

Health care workers are new evangelizers of hope through the love, care and attention they give to the sick person. All of these happen at the patient's bedside wherein the active and loving presence of the health care worker towards the sick person is essential. Through this, the patient's environment is transformed from an overly medicalized milieu to a humane one. Thus, the patient is no longer treated as a mere object but someone endowed with profound dignity.

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<sup>103</sup> *Evangelium Vitae*, §89.

<sup>104</sup> Monge, *Ethical Practices in Health and Disease*, prologue.

Health care workers are new evangelizers of love by being a minister of God's outpouring love for the sick and the suffering through their active witness in the service to life. Health care workers, then, ought to imitate the first Good Samaritan, Jesus Christ, who went about doing good and healing the sick and suffering. Thus, health care workers ought to be lovers of life for they give witness to their faith, hope, and love of God to the sick people.



# Temporal Dimension of Christian Hope: Relevance to Modern Society according to Benedict XVI

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Jaime Silvestr Cubeta Parmisiano, OSA

## Abstract

*The Christians of the modern times have to deal with many problems concerning their Christian virtues. One of them is the mutation of hope. The modern society promotes the hope for the coming of the kingdom of man (not the Kingdom of God) through the help of science and technology. Together with this mutation of hope, modern thinkers tend to criticize Christianity as promoters of “escapism” because of its teachings of the “world to come,” of the eschaton. Benedict XVI, a Catholic German theologian and once a Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church (2005-2013), ever cautious of modern ideology, clarifies what Christian hope really is in many of his writings.*

*Since Benedict XVI’s concept of the “temporal” deals with human relationship, his concept of Christian*

*hope also is relational, that is communal. For Benedict XVI Christian hope is not the hope of the individual for himself. It is the hope of a human person to his fellow human person. Human person hopes not only for his salvation but the salvation of his neighbors. In addition, for Benedict XVI, a genuine act of Christian hope is the manifestation of the hoped future in the present. Though Christian hope is essentially a hope of the future, it does not hinder Christians to live in the present. Since the Christians' hope of the future is clear, Christians can live well in the present.*

*The temporal dimension of Benedict XVI's Christian hope is its being a hope for the whole humanity and its being hope that manifests in the present. Christian hope is better understood in view of its interrelatedness with the theological virtues faith and love. This makes Benedict XVI's Christian hope relevant in the modern society. Since modern society promotes individualism, Christians who truly hope for the Kingdom of God can help in establishing genuine human relationship.*

## **Introduction**

The modern world offers many things. It promises development in human beings' lives and answers to their inquiries. Humanity is now in a world where everything seems possible. Human beings claim mastery over the many principles of the universe. With what science has discovered and what technology has created, human beings may live a life that worries not of the future. Modern societies, then, may satisfy the need and desires of the modern human being. With what the modern world can offer, do human beings still need to think of the Kingdom of God?

Paradoxically, even in the age where humanity can promise prosperity, doubts and fear of the future abound. There is news about weapons of mass destruction, of the moral degradation of some modern countries, of dehumanization in many of the "developed" societies in the world, of the ecological imbalance,

and much appalling news all allegedly caused by the abuse and misuse of science and technology for the sake of progress and security.

Christians then have to deal with this modern situation—a situation where a Christian is both assured and threatened by the modern society. Christians surely have to reflect on what kind of end they do hope for. Do Christians hope for progress and development here and now as promised by the modern society? Do Christians hope for Christian eschaton—the kingdom of God? Or is it possible that the hope for the Christian eschaton affects the way of living in the present, and so Christians of the modern time become responsible partakers of the world here and now?

A number of the theologians of the twentieth century have reflected on the Christian teaching of the *eschaton*. Many scholars believe that the Second Vatican Council contributed to the rise of eschatology from the margin to the center of theological discussion. Some scholars also say that because of the threat of the modern period to the Christian teaching on the last things, eschatology must be talked about so that it can be reformulated for the human beings of the modern period. Other scholars believe that there is a need now more than ever to talk about “the kingdom of God,” “the end of time,” and other topics of eschatology, as taught in the Christian faith, because human beings of the modern society think less about these Christian teachings. Modern human beings find it unnecessary to expect of the “things to come” because of the heightened expectation on the “here and now.”

Surely, the trends and teachings of the modern period affect humanity’s perspective of the future and their way of living in the present. It is possible that less talk about “God and his kingdom” leads to less practice of the Christian way of life. The unconcerned attitude on the Christian view of heaven points to modern persons’ indifference to Christian hope. It also holds true that overemphasis or/and misconception of Christian teaching on the *eschaton* and hope also makes them less concerned with people and the world here and now.

Christian hope not only points human being to the ultimate end, the kingdom of God, but also moves them, in the Christian way, to live and become responsible citizens of the world. There is a need, then, to talk about hope that points to the Christian's future and also of the human being's situation here and now. There is a need to discuss a Christian hope that is also concerned with the here and now. There is a need then to talk about the temporal dimension of Christian hope.

Benedict XVI, a German Catholic theologian, can help in answering these emerging problems. Benedict XVI's Christian hope has something to say in the present situation of man. Benedict XVI, ever cautious of the ideologies of the modern period, believes in the need to be suspicious of the influence of the modern mindset to Christian faith. He defended the Christian faith and the teaching of the Church from some dangers of modern philosophy and theology. Because of this, he has been accused of anti-progress tendencies, as an ultra-conservative, and as an enemy of the modern ideology.

Nevertheless, he is not against human development and progress. One can see this in his critique of modern thinking and at the same time his concern for human situation in his discussions on Christian hope. His concept of Christian hope has something to say to the situation of man. It is a concept that must be seen both in the perspective of eschatology and of his social and political thought.

The researcher, thus, believes that there is a need to look into the temporal dimension of Christian hope. In this study, the researcher turns to the theology of Benedict XVI, a known twentieth century theologian and supreme pontiff of the Catholic Church, for answers.

This article presents the temporal dimension of Benedict XVI's Christian hope.



## **Benedict XVI's Perspective of the Modern Society and His Concept of the Temporal**

In order to determine the temporal dimension of Benedict XVI's concept of Christian hope, there is a need to deal with Benedict XVI's concept of the "temporal." The problem here is that Benedict XVI does not have a particular work that specifically discuss and define his concept of the "temporal." Nevertheless, he has plenty of works on modern society that deal with temporal matters. The researcher then will draw from Benedict XVI's perspective of the modern society to expose his possible concept of the "temporal." It must be noted that the researcher has no intention of discussing fully Benedict XVI's political and social thought. This chapter intends to describe the situation of the modern human being and the interrelation of the temporal matters as perceived by Benedict XVI. This chapter also provides a situation where the need for Christian hope rises.

### **Socio-Political Thought of Benedict XVI**

It has to be noted that Benedict XVI is not a political thinker. He is, by training, a theologian. Nevertheless, he has written a number of works that specifically deal with the problems of modern society in a theological perspective.<sup>1</sup> Most of Benedict

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<sup>1</sup> Some of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI's works worth noting as a primary source for his political-social thought are the following. *Values in a Time of Upheaval*, trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006); *Church, Ecumenism, and Politics: New Endeavors in Ecclesiology*, trans. Michael J. Miller et al. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2008); *A Turning Point for Europe?: The Church in the Modern World; Assessment and Forecast*, 2nd ed., trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010); *Europe Today and Tomorrow: Addressing the Fundamental Issues*, Michael J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007); "That Which Holds the World Together: The Pre-political Moral Foundations of a Free State" in *Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion*, trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006); *Without Roots: The West, Relativism, Christianity, Islam*, trans. Michael F. Moore (New York: Basic Books,

XVI's works deal with the fundamental issues in political and social order.<sup>2</sup> Not only that, Benedict XVI, as a theologian with an interesting point to discuss in the fields of politics and social philosophy, attracts a number of scholars.<sup>3</sup> All of these, both the primary and secondary sources of Benedict XVI's political-social thought, provides enough reference to get the gist of his perspective of modern society from which his concept of the "temporal" can be drawn.

In one of his works, Benedict XVI probes some fundamental questions. He asks:

What are in fact the foundations on which we live? What supports our societies and holds them together? How do states discern their moral bases and, consequently, also forces that motivate them to moral conduct—forces without which a state cannot exist? How do we locate ourselves and Europe in the global situation—in the tension between North and South, in the tension between the great cultures of humanity, or in the tension between a technological-secular civilization

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2006); *Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures*, trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Most of the works of Benedict XVI used in this chapter are translated into English language and published by Ignatius Press during his pontificate as Pope Benedict XVI but most of them are originally written in German language under the name Joseph Ratzinger. To avoid confusion, the researcher retains the name Joseph Ratzinger for the works of Benedict XVI written under the name Joseph Ratzinger. On the works written and published during and after his pontificate the researcher will use Benedict XVI as the name of the author.

<sup>3</sup> Some scholars wrote intensively on the contribution of Benedict XVI on social-political discussions. Among the many scholars and their books are Thomas R. Rourke, *The Social-Political Thought of Benedict XVI* (United Kingdom: Lexington Books, 2011); Jim Corkery, S.J., *Joseph Ratzinger's Theological Ideas: Wise Cautions and Legitimate Hopes* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2009) 109--124; Tracey Rowland Ratzinger's *Faith: The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 120--137.

and those ultimate questions to which it can offer no answer?<sup>4</sup>

These questions apparently become the starting point of Benedict XVI's theological reflection on the social-political order. In these questions of Benedict XVI his primary concerns can be observed. He deals, at the very beginning, with the order of modern society and its basis for law and morality. Behind these questions though are the theological anthropology of Benedict XVI and his approach to politics. These two (theological anthropology and approach on politics) must be succinctly discussed so that his social-political order may properly be understood.

### **Benedict XVI's Theological Anthropology: Concept of Person**

Benedict XVI, like the Greek philosophers, highlighted that human beings are social beings. What makes human being a social being is the fact that a human being is a person. Benedict XVI's theological anthropology centers on his discussion on the concept of person.<sup>5</sup> His concept of person does not focus on the concept of individuality; rather he highlights the concept of relation. A person is a relational being, Benedict XVI claims. Furthermore, a person is in relation and in dialogue not only with fellow human beings but more importantly with God. This is the foundation of Benedict XVI's theological anthropology: human being to be fully human must be related to someone and open to relationships.

Human beings are called to be in relationship and in dialogue with God who is also a "relational Being."<sup>6</sup> Human

<sup>4</sup> Ratzinger, *Values in a Time of Upheaval*, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Rourke offers a comprehensive discussion on the concept of person in Benedict XVI's theological anthropology. He believes that in understanding the foundation of Benedict XVI's social thought, there is a need first to understand his theological anthropology which highlights the concept of person. See Rourke, *The Social-Political Thought of Benedict XVI*, 11--32.

<sup>6</sup> Corkery believes that for Benedict XVI human beings are beings of dialogue. Corkery, as he reflects on the theological

being, who is created in God's image and likeness, like his Creator who is a Person, is also a person and so also relational.<sup>7</sup> All of these are because of God, who himself is in relation to his creation and to Himself. How does Benedict XVI relate the concept of person in God to personhood of human being? How does Benedict XVI relate the person to relation?

### ***Person as Relation***

Benedict XVI, in order to understand the real meaning of person, probes its origin and defines person as "the pure relation of being related, nothing else."<sup>8</sup> It must be noted that person, as a concept, Benedict XVI claims, is "a product of Christian theology"<sup>9</sup> and not solely of Greek philosophy. Person, as a term and as a concept, is a result of the encounter of philosophy and biblical faith.

The early Christians, as they still struggled to understand their young faith, asked an important question regarding their Christian faith. What is God? From this question the concept of person arises. The speculations of early Christians led them to the Greek term *prosopon* (in Latin, *persona*) which during this period, still philosophically unimportant.<sup>10</sup>

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anthropology of Benedict XVI, explains "what makes us human is that we are called to be partners of God in a dialogue." See Jim Corkery, "Joseph Ratzinger's Theological Ideas 3: On Being Human," *Doctrine and Life* 56, 7 (September 2006), 8.

<sup>7</sup> Rourke offers explanations on the personhood of human being compared to the Creator. Rourke explains human being may only be person in an "analogous and imperfect way" compare to God but "despite this imperfections, however, even man can be said to be relational to the very core of his being." See Thomas Rourke, "Fundamental Politics: What we must Learn from the Social Thought of Benedict XVI," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 35 (Fall 2008), 435.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, trans. J.R. Foster (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 131.

<sup>9</sup> Ratzinger, *Dogma and Preaching*, part 2, chap 14.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

In dealing with the question: what is God? Benedict XVI names Tertullian (c. 155-220 A.D), an early Christian writer, as an important western theologian that uses the term person as a description of God. Tertullian describes God as one being in three persons.

How does Tertullian understand the term “person”? What is the history that leads to the understanding of the term person common in the time of the early Christian writers and the Church Fathers? Benedict XVI explains that as the early Christians reflected on the nature of God, they discovered a peculiarity in the scripture. They found out that the one God of the Holy Scriptures “speaks in the plural or converses with himself,”<sup>11</sup> Benedict XVI comments. In the book of Genesis, God says, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness” (Gen 1: 26) and “See, the man has become like one of us” (Gen 3: 22,). The Church Fathers interpreted these passages employing an ancient literary device wherein an artist does not simply describe events or settings in the story but also uses dialogue in order to move the story forward. The ancient artists put roles in the story so that they can depict the events dramatically and continue the story through dialogues. Benedict XVI, citing a historian of dogma Carl Andresen, calls the interpretation of the Fathers as prosopographic exegesis, a form of interpretation that shows that the “author created dramatic roles, characters in a dialogue, in order to enliven his poem or narrative.”<sup>12</sup> He adds that the “fact, that God himself is presented in the plural and as speaking with himself, was now treated by the Church Fathers in artistic terms by means of prosopographic exegesis, which thereby acquired a new meaning.”<sup>13</sup> Through prosopographic exegesis, the Church Fathers receive a deeper and new understanding of the scripture.

In the case of God of the Scriptures, the dialogue is not anymore between imaginary characters. They are, using the very words of Benedict XVI, “dialogical realities.”<sup>14</sup> He continues that

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., part 2, chap 14, 1, a.

<sup>12</sup> Ratzinger, *Dogma and Preaching*, part 2, chap 14, 1, a.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

“the literary device of having dramatic roles appear that enliven the presentation with their dialogue reveals to the theologian the One who is performing the real role here, the Logos, the *prosopon*, the Person of the Word, which is no longer merely a role but a person.”<sup>15</sup>

Benedict XVI concludes then that the concept “person” comes out from a reality discovered through prosopographic exegesis: that is God who speaks, a “God who is *in* dialogue.”<sup>16</sup> He continues that “the discovery of the dialogue within God led to the assumption of the presence in God of an ‘I’ and a ‘You’, an element of relationship, of co-existent diversity and affinity, for which the concept of ‘*persona*’ absolutely dictated itself.”<sup>17</sup>

The discovery of a God who speaks also brings a new insight to human thought. The phenomenon of dialogue in God, who is, as substance, One, uplifts the importance of the category *relatio*. In Aristotle’s philosophy, *relatio* is only an accident separated from the substance. With the new insight from the biblical faith discovered through prosopographic exegesis, *relatio* becomes a relevant term in both philosophy and theology. Benedict XVI explains that,

The experience of the God who conducts a dialogue, of the God who is not only *logos* but also *dia-logos*, not only idea and meaning but speech and word in the reciprocal exchanges of conversation—this experience exploded the ancient division of reality into substance, the real thing, and accidents, the merely circumstantial. It now became clear that the dialogue, the *relatio*, stands beside the substance as an equally primordial form of being.<sup>18</sup>

*Relatio* in Christian thought has an important status; it offers a new world view. Benedict XVI succinctly comments that, “the undivided sway of thinking in terms of substance is ended; relation is discovered as an equally valid primordial mode

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 130.

<sup>18</sup> Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 131.

of reality.”<sup>19</sup> Benedict XVI explains that “in God, person means relation. Relation, relatedness, is not something added on to the Person but, rather, *is* the Person himself; here the Person exists by his very nature only *as* relation.”<sup>20</sup> Person is neither a substance nor an accident in the understanding of the Fathers. Person is an act of relation, a pure actuality. He further adds that “‘Person’ in God is the pure relativity of being turned toward each other; it is situated, not on the level of substance—the substance is *one*—but rather on the level of dialogue, of being related to one another.”<sup>21</sup>

The concept of person as relations is clear in the Gospel of John. When Jesus says that He and the Father are one (John 10:30, *NRSV*) yet “can do nothing on his own” (5: 19, *NRSV*), it means, Benedict XVI explains:

They are one precisely because he has nothing of his own, because he does not set himself up alongside the Father as a separate substance but, rather, is oriented toward him in total relativity and represents nothing but relativity toward him, a relatedness that singles out and reserves for itself nothing of its own.<sup>22</sup>

Same principle is applied to the disciples when the Lord said, “apart from me you can do nothing” (Jn 15: 5) and also when Jesus said that “that they [the disciples] may be one as we [Father and Son] are one” (Jn 17:11). When the disciples are *in relation* with Jesus Christ and with fellow disciples only then can they perform their task. Benedict XVI continues that:

It is part of the nature of discipleship also that man does not reserve what is merely his own, does not strive to develop the substance of his self-enclosed ego, but rather enters into pure relativity directed toward the other and toward God and precisely in this way truly comes to himself and comes into the fullness of what is

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

<sup>20</sup> Ratzinger, *Dogma and Preaching*, part 2, chap 14, 1, b.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

his own, because he enters into union with that to which he is related.<sup>23</sup>

Benedict XVI emphasizes that the genuine growth of the human person can be seen not in his self-fulfillment as what modern ideology promotes<sup>24</sup> but in his relationships. The human person in order to be true must allow himself to be open to others and to God. Human being knows everything came from God; even our existence. Only by abiding to the will of God can human being fulfill one's purpose.<sup>25</sup> Human beings are oriented to God who is not "You" but a "We" for there are three Persons in God. The relationship of the Persons of the Trinity is, using the words of Rourke, the spiritual roots of a community of human persons.<sup>26</sup> In the eyes of Benedict XVI, a community is a community of persons not as individuals but as relation.

### **Benedict XVI's Approach on Politics: On Faith and Reason**

Benedict XVI sees politics as an exercise of reason informed by faith. To understand Benedict XVI's political order, there is a need to grasp first his view of reason.

Reason, for Benedict XVI, works within nature which is determined by God who transcends reason. The universe that human reason observes is a "product of God's Reason."<sup>27</sup> It has its autonomy only within the universe of nature.<sup>28</sup> Reason then cannot but be dependent on God since the laboratory of reason, which is nature, abides the will of its Creator.

God of reason, the Logos created everything with reason. The universe follows a rational system for it was created according to the reason of God. It assures that what happens in the universe

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<sup>23</sup> Ratzinger, *Dogma and Preaching*, part 2, chap 14, 1, b.

<sup>24</sup> Rourke, "Fundamental Politics," 436.

<sup>25</sup> Rourke, *The Social-Political Thought of Benedict XVI*, 15.

<sup>26</sup> Rourke, "Fundamental Politics," 435.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 437.

<sup>28</sup> Rourke, *The Social-Political Thought of Benedict XVI*, 33.



is not irrational. There are purposes and ends in the universe. Benedict XVI says:

The world is not, as people used to think then, a chaos of mutually opposed forces; nor is it the dwelling of demonic powers from which human beings must protect themselves.... Rather, all of this comes from one power, from God's eternal Reason, which became—in the power of creation... Thus, insofar as human beings realized that the world came from the Word, they ceased to care about the gods and demons. In addition, the world was freed so that reason might lift itself up to God and so that human beings might approach this God fearlessly.<sup>29</sup>

Since revelation assures humanity that the cosmos is created by God, human beings then are free from the fear of unordered reality and can now focus on its ultimate end that is to their creator.<sup>30</sup> In the theology of Benedict XVI reason leads human being to God.

Furthermore, Benedict XVI emphasizes that creative reason has a special role in the Creation. Again, in support, he recounts the Prologue of the fourth Gospel of John:

In the beginning was the Word [*Logos*], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him not one thing came to being. What has come into being in Him was life, and the life was the light of all people. (Jn 1:1-4)

It shows all the more that creation is indeed the product of creative reason, of the *Logos*.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *In the Beginning . . . : The Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*, trans. Boniface Ramsey (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), 5.

<sup>30</sup> Rourke, *The Social-Political Thought of Benedict XVI*, 35.

<sup>31</sup> Rourke, "Fundamental Politics," 437.

Benedict XVI posits that faith neither hinders reason of its purpose, nor dilutes its purity. Faith even enlightens humanity.<sup>32</sup> Benedict XVI explains:

Faith is reasonable. The reasonableness of creation derives from God's Reason, and there is no other really convincing explanation.... The reasonableness of the universe provides us with access to God's Reason, and the Bible is and continues to be the true Enlightenment, which has given the world over to human reason, because it opened reason to God's truth and love.<sup>33</sup>

Faith is not non-reason. Faith guarantees that the search for the truth is possible. Faith even commits itself to the truth.<sup>34</sup>

All of these are in response to the claims of modern thinkers who deny God's rightful place in anything rational. Many of the thinkers of the modern time believe that revelation and faith only dilute humanity's reason. In denying revelation, reason becomes ungrounded, turns into something irrational, and eventually destroys its foundation.<sup>35</sup> The absence of God in human activity makes man vulnerable to the temptation of self-destruction.<sup>36</sup> This is evident in how modern persons manage the society, in the kind of laws they passed, and in many ways. The peoples who wrote the law that defended the well-being of person are the same person who believe of the legitimacy of abortion.

### **On Politics**

In one of his works, Benedict XVI discusses the aims of politics and the consequences of the involvement of Christianity in politics. Apparently, there are two main political tasks. It is either transformation of the world or preservation of the world's order. Modern society, so it seems, directs its political activity to the "improvement of the world." What does improvement of

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<sup>32</sup> Rourke, *The Social-Political Thought of Benedict XVI*, 35.

<sup>33</sup> Ratzinger, *In the Beginning*, 17--18.

<sup>34</sup> Rourke, *The Social-Political Thought of Benedict XVI*, 35.

<sup>35</sup> Rourke, "Fundamental Politics," 437.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 438.

the world mean? What kind of transformation does the politics of modern society desires? In what way should Christian teaching and tradition intervene?

Benedict XVI talks about the fundamental orientation of the politics of modern society and determines how Christianity can help the political order. He started by describing how the early Christians lived out their new found faith in a Roman world. The Roman Empire believes, according to Benedict XVI, that “the preservation of the ordered structure of the empire against all dangers from within and without had to necessarily be regarded as the most important task of all, because this empire embodied a sphere of peace and law in which it was possible for people to live in security and dignity.”<sup>37</sup>

The early Christians believed that the Roman Empire, indeed, could provide security and peace and so they live in accordance to the rational demands of the state. They lived always mindful of the words of Jesus, “Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God” (Mt. 22: 21). They obeyed the laws of the state and lived uprightly because it is God that they obeyed in the authorities. Peter told them “be subject to every human institution for the Lord’s sake, whether it be to the king as supreme or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the approval of those who do good” (1 Pet 2: 13-14). Paul said the same thing. In his letter to the church of Rome, he said “let every person be subordinate to the higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been established by God” (Rom. 13: 1). Authorities then must be seen as established according to God’s will, as Benedict XVI concludes, “this makes resistance to worldly authority a resistance to something God has ordained.”<sup>38</sup> The early Christians observed the law of the state and subjected themselves to temporal authorities because of God. They put themselves “subject not only because of the wrath but also because of conscience” (Rom. 13: 5).

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<sup>37</sup> Ratzinger, *Values in a Time of Upheaval*, 11.

<sup>38</sup> Ratzinger, *Values in a Time of Upheaval*, 19.

Even though Christians obeyed the law and lived under authorities of the Empire, the early Christians knew the limit of the temporal authorities. Benedict XVI comments that even though the early Christians “insist strongly on the divine origin of the legal ordering of the state, they are far from divinizing the state itself. It is precisely because they see the limits on the state, which is not God and may not behave as if it were God, that they acknowledge its ordering function and its ethical character.”<sup>39</sup>

Benedict XVI continues that “Christians were by no means fearful, gullible people who were taken in by the authorities and did not know that there can be a right to resistance and even a conscientious duty to resist.”<sup>40</sup> Obedience to the temporal authority stops when the authorities steps outside their boundaries. Benedict XVI explains:

Since the Roman emperor is the guarantor of the law, he has a claim to obedience, though of course Jesus at once specifies the boundaries of the sphere in which one is obliged to obey to God. If the emperor exalts himself to a divine position, he has gone beyond his proper limits and obedience would then amount to a denial to God.<sup>41</sup>

When the state asked to be divinized, the once obedient Christians refused to do so. The refusal of the Christians to worship the emperor formed the grim but also glorious period of Christian persecution. Despite the persecution, the Christians still recognized the authority of the state, Benedict XVI explains that “although the Christians were being persecuted, they did not have a negative view of the state in principle, but rather they still recognized in it the state qua state and did what was in their power to build it up as a state; they did not try to destroy it.”<sup>42</sup>

They remain faithful to the state because they recognized that the state has an important role—it has a profane role. Benedict XVI explains that it is in “its [state’s] profane character that the

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenism, and Politics*, part 3, chap. 7.2.

<sup>41</sup> Ratzinger, *Values in a Time of Upheaval*, 19.

<sup>42</sup> Ratzinger, *Church, Ecumenism, and Politics*, part 3, chap. 7.2.

state must be represented; it is required by the fact that man is essentially a social and political being. This idea has its basis in the essence of man and hence is in keeping with Creation.”<sup>43</sup>

The state has its limitation. It has its own place in the order. The main task of the state as written in the New Testament is “to ensure peace at home and abroad.”<sup>44</sup> The state must provide a suitable space for her citizens to be able to live a fulfilled life. The task then of politics is to usher in this state. Benedict XVI explains that “although politics does not bring about the kingdom of God, it must be concerned for the right kingdom of human beings, that is, it must create the precondition for peace at home and abroad and for the rule of law that will permit everyone to ‘lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way’ (1 Tim. 2:2).”<sup>45</sup> Politics, as a practice of reason, ought to look for moral principles as foundation of the laws that would bring justice and peace.

### **The Concept of the Temporal and the Modern Situation of Human Person**

Benedict XVI, passingly, mentions the word “temporal” in his reflection on the Second Vatican Council document, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*. Benedict XVI, a *peritus* (theology consultant) during the Second Vatican Council, reflects on the meaning of the “modern world” referred by the document. He commented that the center of discussion of the whole document lies in the understanding of the term “world.” He explains,

The idea of “world” became connected with the notion of historicity: world exists only as a temporal world; hence the time in which one happens to live is the authentic sign of God. Therefore, anyone who wants to read God’s signs must get involved with today; temporality as an open entity is, to this way of

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<sup>43</sup> Ratzinger, *Values in a Time of Upheaval*, 20.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>45</sup> Ratzinger, *Values in a Time of Upheaval*, 23.

thinking, simultaneously the expression for the fact we find the world, not as something already existing, but rather only as an entity to be created, and this is just what defines man: the fact that he is called into time and thus into creativity.<sup>46</sup>

Here, Benedict XVI equates the “world” with “temporal.” He then offers a number of possible meanings to “world.” One interesting definition of Benedict XVI’s world and his possible understanding of the “temporal,” is “the totality of those human behaviors in which man is related to the shaping of his earthly forms of existence.”<sup>47</sup> The “world” that *Gaudium et spes* deals is not simply the given reality outside the human person but also a reality where the human person participates, where one, using the word of the Benedict XVI, shapes this reality. The “world” is not simply a world but a world that is full of human imprints and stamps. Benedict XVI explains that

“World” necessarily includes man in it; it is not something that one could separate neatly from man and set in opposition to him. Rather, it implies a certain complex of human behaviors insofar as they are related to the extrahuman reality that is ordered to man.<sup>48</sup>

What Benedict XVI refers as the “world” is humanity’s expression, human person’s way of acting in a reality of a particular period. This clarifies *Gaudium et spes*, according to Benedict XVI, meaning of the modern world. The modern “world” is human behavior in relation to human reality of the modern period. What then is the characteristic of the “modern” world or modern situation of a human person? What make this situation “modern”?

Benedict XVI provides common characteristics of the modern world. He says that human person experiences the unity of the world and the essential worldliness of the world, and the

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<sup>46</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Dogma and Preaching: Applying Christian Doctrine to Christian Life*, unabridged edition, ed. and trans., Michael J. Miller, trans., Matthew J. O’Connell (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2011), EPUB, part 2, chap 13.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, part 2, chap 13, 1, 3.

<sup>48</sup> Ratzinger, *Dogma and Preaching*, part 2, chap 13, 1, 3.

malleability of the world as the common feature of the modern world.<sup>49</sup>

The modern period also is a period of “demythologization.” Benedict XVI wonderfully mentions, “The earth was discovered as earth, as the one world of the one human race.”<sup>50</sup> The world is seen not anymore of mysterious places as depicted in many of the mythologies. The world is a world of human race that even the space up in the sky is not anymore the heavens, where mythical beings live but simply a part of the world. The world suddenly shrinks and humanity realizes that indeed the world is simply the world. Humanity experiences the worldliness of the world.

Another feature of modern period is that the world can also be shaped according the human’s will. This is an offshoot of the worldliness of the world. Since the modern world is a world of human being, human being then can form the world. Humanity deals not anymore of the world created by God by a world formed by human hands. Benedict XVI explains that

In fact it is self-evident that man’s situation has become different, when he no longer finds the in-itself character of nature anywhere but rather encounters only himself on all sides, when he no longer deals immediately with the *ars Dei* [handiwork of God] but only with man’s technology, which has become for him the space that he inhabits.<sup>51</sup>

Benedict XVI now presents the core characteristic of the modern period, which is the absence of God in the world. Humanity deposes God with human will. Values that rely on the presence of the benevolent creator become obsolete in the “modern” world. This can be seen vividly in the changes of human relation to work, culture and science, and even human community.

Benedict XVI has noticed that in the modern world human being relates to work differently. There is a change of perspective. He explains \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>49</sup> Ratzinger, *Dogma and Preaching*, part 2, chap 13, 2.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, part 2, chap 13, 2, a.

<sup>51</sup> Ratzinger, *Dogma and Preaching*, part 2, chap 13, 2, b.

Whereas antiquity mused about the real ideal of complete liberation from earthly care so as to have “leisure for the truth,” and whereas being occupied with worldly matters seemed to the ancients to be a burden and a distraction from what is essential, modern man regards service to the world almost with a sort of religious fervor. He has no tolerance for flight from the world and little for leisure; he sees man’s positive potential as the ability to change the world, to exhaust its possibilities, and to enhance its inhabitability.<sup>52</sup>

Human being gives more importance now to the world and what one can do for it. This endeavor stops short only in the world and nothing is mentioned of the beyond. The world and the world’s future matters more to the future of man or better yet the future of the world is tantamount to the future of man.

Another change that Benedict XVI consider peculiarly modern is modern person’s fascination of science. If the great thinkers of the past considered science as a means to reach what is more, what is really important—wisdom, modern person finds science more than enough. One does not need anything else than science and whatever is unscientific is undesirable.

Benedict XVI adds another behavior that changed in the modern period, which is the change in relation to human communities. He notes,

Our attitude toward human community has also changed. Antiquity and the Middle Ages tried to cope with the question of the other person’s need by means of *caritas*, through a momentary alleviation of need that nevertheless changes nothing about the overall situation as such, which was considered irreparable anyway in a world that was bound for destruction. Today, in contrast, we find an almost fanatical insistence on justice, on the establishment of conditions and ordinances that guarantee to each what is his due, so that he no longer needs “alms”. Accordingly, to the modern observer the charity of yore appears in a rather dubious light;

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, part 2, chap 13, 2, b, 1.



he actually sees it as an attempt to do without justice, which is the prerequisite for real charity.<sup>53</sup>

Benedict XVI sees that human persons of the modern period focus on the merits of human person and of the world. God is not included in this scene. The main clamor of the modern world is human being for the human world. This human persons' modern situation and Benedict XVI sees it clearly in the crisis of Europe.

### **The Crisis of Europe: God's Absence in the Political Sphere**

Modern human beings, for Benedict XVI, live in a difficult society. Modern human beings, Benedict XVI comments, live "in a period of great dangers and of great opportunities both for man and for the world."<sup>54</sup> The luxury and privileges that science and technology bring in their lives make them anxious, as Benedict XVI says: "same technical skill which offers such opportunities to humanity offers also fresh opportunities to him who is anti-humane."<sup>55</sup> The life led by reason that the modern persons boast of has the tendency to degrade human dignity. The principle of liberty that they claim actually makes them more of a prisoner. Modern persons, even with the developments around them, regress all the more. All of these happen during the modern period when science supplanted morality. Benedict XVI sees all of these in the way modern man lives in the modern society, especially in Europe.

It must be noted that when Benedict XVI discusses socio-political issues, he talks about the socio-political concerns of Europe. It does not mean though that Benedict XVI's thought does not have a worldwide perspective. In his mind, global problems have "European roots."<sup>56</sup> What does he mean of the

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<sup>53</sup> Ratzinger, *Dogma and Preaching*, part 2, chap 13, 2, b, 3.

<sup>54</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures*, trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), 25.

<sup>55</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Faith and the Future* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1971), 84.

<sup>56</sup> James V. Schall, S.J., a scholar on political-social thought,

crisis of Europe? How does this crisis affect his perspective of the modern society?

The crisis of Europe begins when a culture started to have great influence in many aspects of social life in Europe. This culture promotes that God be deposed from public awareness. This is technological culture that science produced. Europe begins to lose its Christian identity that initiates many moral concerns in the continent.

To explain it more succinctly, Benedict XVI presents two important cultures of Europe: Christian culture and the culture of scientific rationality. Europe may not be the place of origin of Christianity but for Benedict XVI, “it was precisely in Europe that Christianity took on its most efficacious cultural and intellectual form.”<sup>57</sup> Christianity and Europe have a historical relationship and thus Christianity is important in the identity of Europe. Together with Christianity, during the age of Enlightenment, a new culture was born the culture of scientific rationality. This culture imposes a new perspective. Benedict XVI explains

Europe has developed a culture that, in a manner hitherto unknown to mankind, excludes God from public awareness. His existence may be denied altogether or considered unprovable and uncertain and, hence, as something belonging to the sphere of subjective choices. In either case, God is irrelevant to public life.<sup>58</sup>

In the other work of Benedict XVI, he reiterates,

This state declares God himself to be a private matter that has no place in the public sphere in which the shared will of the citizens is formed. This sphere

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comments that “with his [Benedict XVI] intellectual range, he [Benedict XVI] was quite aware that the origins of most world problems did have, in one way or another, European roots.” See James V. Schall, S.J., foreword to *Turning Point for Europe? The Church in the Modern World: Assessment and Forecast*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., by Joseph Ratzinger, trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), EPUB.

<sup>57</sup> Ratzinger, *Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures*, 29.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

is now considered a matter of reason alone, and reason cannot clearly recognize God. Religion and faith in God belong to the realm of the emotions, not to that of reason. God and his will lose their relevance to public life.<sup>59</sup>

The emphasis of reason seems to deny God of any merit. His existence is tantamount to irrationality and uncertainty. This must be set aside and be classified as private matter according to the culture of scientific rationality. Furthermore since what matters is what can be demonstrated, morality, a needed aspect in social life, must be expressed in another means.

Benedict XVI further explains,

This [culture of scientific rationality] is a purely functional rationality that has shaken the moral consciousness in a way completely unknown to the cultures that existed previously, since it maintains that only that which can be demonstrated experimentally is “rational.”<sup>60</sup>

The scientific rationality gives importance to the ends of every act. Benedict XVI says, “in a world based on calculations, it is the calculation of consequences that determines what should be considered moral and immoral.”<sup>61</sup>

The crisis of Europe that is the absence of God in political activity causes many fundamental social concerns in Europe. The absence of God causes the disintegration of moral values.

### **The Moral Dilemma of Modern Society**

Benedict XVI, in his essay “What Keeps the World Together: The Prepolitical Moral Foundation of a Free State,”<sup>62</sup> observes that the rushed development of the modern world happened because of three important factors. First is the rise of

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<sup>59</sup> Ratzinger, *Values in a Time of Upheaval*, 137.

<sup>60</sup> Ratzinger, *Christianity and the Crisis of Cultures*, 30.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>62</sup> Ratzinger, *Values in the Time of Upheaval*, 31-44.

the “global society”<sup>63</sup> that promotes the interrelation of societal elements. Second is the advancement of “man’s power to destroy and create.”<sup>64</sup> The third factor is the desertion of the past “ethical certainties”<sup>65</sup> of society due to the encounters and influence of each culture.

All of these factors show that, though they help in the advancement of today’s period, they have not formed any ethical consciousness for the modern period. Benedict XVI suspects the growing influence of science in the lives of the modern human beings as the primary factor of this phenomenon. The scientific revolution of the modern time that initiates all of these factors “cannot generate any ethics ... [and also contributes] to the dissolution of old moral certainties.”<sup>66</sup> Modern human beings then live in a modern society with uncertain moral foundation. One can see this lack of moral guiding principles in the phenomena of drugs, terrorism, and “the production of man” that become an evident concerns of the modern society.

An interesting example of Benedict XVI is the sudden widespread of drugs in the modern period, something, according to him, that the people of the previous periods, especially the Middle Ages, are not familiar. Benedict XVI believes that drugs fill up a missing aspect of human life—the human need for something infinite.<sup>67</sup> It is an example where technology replaces ethical or religious principles. What the previous generations accomplish through religious activities, such as asceticism and meditation are replaced with a “mystery drug” that can provide (easily, fast, and without delay) a human person his innate desire for the transcendent. The existence of drugs in the modern period

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ratzinger, *Values in the Time of Upheaval*, 32.

<sup>66</sup> Ratzinger, *Values in the Time of Upheaval*, 32.

<sup>67</sup> Benedict XVI comments that “the ‘great journey’ that men attempt in drugs is the perversion of mysticism, the perversion of the human need for infinity, the rejection of the impossibility of transcending immanence, and the attempt to extend the limits of one’s own existence into the infinite.” See Ratzinger, *Turning Point for Europe?*, part 1, chap. I.1.a.

discloses a fundamental sentiment of the modern persons: human beings are dissatisfied with what they have and hope for a better world.<sup>68</sup>

Terrorism also is a phenomenon that has become rampant in the modern period. Behind the fear of the terrorist is the anxiety of the destructive power that the modern human being discovered. The modern persons not only can annihilate a particular clan, they can now destroy the whole human race. With that in mind, modern man fears all the more terrorists, who are fond of destruction and now can possibly get hold of a weapon capable of mass destruction. Behind the act of terror of the terrorists is the misguided moralism of terrorism. The purpose of terrorism, as Benedict XVI perceived it, is the fulfillment of God's promise not through His divine act but through human means. Human beings then become the hands of God who will apply in the present "the criterion of the heavenly expectation."<sup>69</sup> Whatever is the means that the terrorists employ, they can be justified as long as the end would be the fulfillment of what is hoped for.

What really pushes a terrorist to produce mass terror is one's protest of the reality and the demand for the better world.<sup>70</sup> This demand for the better world leads human beings to question traditional criteria with their positivistic mentality. What was moral is now seen as obsolete. What are needed are moral criteria that will usher into existence what are missing. Benedict XVI comments that in terrorism, "the sole moral value that exists is the future society in which everything that does not exist now will be fulfilled."<sup>71</sup> It is the future that really matters and the future lies

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<sup>68</sup> Teixeira uses as an example of modern human persons' dissatisfaction their tendency to keep on "pushing forward to a constant progress but never able to achieve its [their] purpose." It is because their purpose can only be found in their creator. See Fabio de Souza Teixeira, "On Christian Hope: An Analysis and Reshaping of the Encyclical Letter of Joseph Ratzinger," (Master's thesis, Maryhill School of Theology, 2010), 98.

<sup>69</sup> Ratzinger, *Turning Point for Europe?*, part 1, chap.1.1.b.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ratzinger, *Turning Point for Europe?*, part 1, chap.1.1.b.

in human being's hand. He even adds, "'Moral' is what serves to bring about the new society."<sup>72</sup> In the modern society, any norms that hinder the birth of the "new society"—a society of development and progress—must be suspected of as a threat that must be eradicated.

Another victim of this moral vacuum is the dignity of human person. Benedict XVI has noticed that

There is a remarkable reluctance to embrace the future. Children, who are the future, become a threat to the present day, and people feel that children take away something from our life. They are often seen, not as a hope, but rather as a restriction.<sup>73</sup>

Modern human person sees human life as a burden. The dignity of human person who once was valued since a human person is created in the image and likeness of God, loses its weight and becomes a surplus—something that can be set aside—in modern society. This is because what really matter for the modern person is progress. Benedict XVI explains that

There are no longer any values independent of the goals of progress, and everything can be permissible or even necessary—moral, in the new sense of terms—in a given situation. Even man can become a means to an end. It is not the individual that counts, but only future, which is made into a cruel divinity with absolute power over everyone and everything.<sup>74</sup>

He added,

The criterion of rationality is taken exclusively from the experience of technological production based on science. Rationality is oriented to functionality, to effectiveness, and to an increase in the quality of life for all .... Man is no longer to be born in an irrational manner but it to be produced rationally. Man as a product is subject to the control of man. Imperfect must be weeded out; the path of planning and production

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ratzinger, *Values in a Time of Upheaval*, 140.

<sup>74</sup> Ratzinger, *Values in a Time of Upheaval*, 144.

must aim at the perfect man. Suffering must disappear, and life is to consist of pleasure alone.<sup>75</sup>

Technocratic mentality, as Benedict XVI would name the culture of scientific rationality in his other works, will not even spare humanity. The human person who has initiated this culture is also the main victim of its wrath.

The absence of God in the political sphere indeed causes moral disintegration. An example of this is the insecure human dignity. With God as a guarantor, human dignity and the laws that dare to protect can easily be altered or misinterpreted. Benedict XVI adds that “This validity of human dignity, which comes before all political action and decision making, points ultimately to the Creator. It is only he who can posit laws that are rooted in the essence of man and that no one may alter.”<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, Benedict XVI comments that “we cannot trust one another and live together in peace unless man recognizes that he is an ultimate end, not a means to some other end, and unless we consequently regard other persons as sacred and inviolable.”<sup>77</sup>

Benedict XVI fears that the insistence of such terrible culture without God and moral values could lead to even more harm. He continues,

The dissolution of the primal certainties of man about God, about himself, and about the universe—the dissolution of the consciousness of those moral values that are never subject to our own judgment—all this is still our problem. In a new form, it could lead to the self-destruction of European consciousness.<sup>78</sup>

Here we can see an insistence of Benedict XVI on the importance of Christianity in the identity of Europe and of the strengthening of moral values in the society. Humanity grapples around the problem of the loss of moral grounds in the modern society.

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 157.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>77</sup> Ratzinger, *Values in a Time of Upheaval*, 157.

<sup>78</sup> Ratzinger, *Values in a Time of Upheaval*, 145.

This is the modern world of modern human persons. The human person deals with this reality that the modern period unleashed. Temporality or “world” of the modern period can be the inhumane behavior of human person towards his fellow human person. This disrupts the ideal image of person as relation.

This is the problem that Benedict XVI sees in the modern society. Politics of the modern time passes laws that lack or have questionable moral principles. In the modern time, progress takes the center stage. Anything that does not promote progress must be set aside. Principles that would only hinder progress are considered a threat.

What is apparent in the situation of modern society is the loss of “person as relation.” In the modern society a person is an individual who is either useful or useless. This is the fundamental error that benedict XVI emphasized.

In his ideal society, a person as relation is necessary to be able to form a just and humane society. When one stops to be related to the other because of the loss of the image of person as relation, inhumane act would remain a reality.

### **Benedict XVI on the Temporal dimension of Christian Hope**

The changes that the modern human beings initiated affect not only how they deal with the present but also how they perceive the future. Benedict XVI, who has been suspicious of the ideology of the modern time, explains how the philosophy of the time changes the concept of hope.

In the modern time, the life of every human being centers in the discoveries of modern science. With their precision, science and technology dictate the movement of the modern world. Science frames humanity’s mind set according to its standard. Every move of every modern human being must always be in relation to what science dictates. Scientific mentality creeps into the life of every human being to the point that the modern human



beings see happiness only in what science and technology offer. Benedict XVI says that “the new correlation between science and praxis would mean that the dominion over creation—given to man by God and lost through original sin—would be reestablished.”<sup>79</sup> Salvation comes not anymore from God of faith but from god of science. Benedict XVI further explains:

The recovery of what man had lost through the expulsion from Paradise was expected from faith in Jesus Christ: herein lay “redemption”. Now, this “redemption”, the restoration of the lost “Paradise” is no longer expected from faith, but from the newly discovered link between science and praxis. It is not that faith is simply denied; rather it is displaced onto another level—that of purely private and other-worldly affairs—and at the same time it becomes somehow irrelevant for the world.<sup>80</sup>

The promise of eternal bliss that Christian faith says can only be found in God at the end of time can also be found in science at the present time. In the here and now, eternal bliss can be obtained. The man of science, not the man of faith, receives the right of admission to “paradise.” The hope of modern man lies not anymore on the paradise of the God of faith but on the paradise that the scientifically-oriented modern society offers.

Christian Faith, in the modern period, cannot anymore compete with the allurements of science. Christian faith and Christian hope (both, according to the modern mentality, concern themselves with the world to come) are seen as hindrances to science which claims of its concern for the world here and now. Faith then must be set aside. It does not bring the paradise modern human being desires. In such mentality, hope transforms according to the call of the modern period. Benedict XVI sees this change of hope in the philosophy of Francis Bacon. Hope, as Benedict XVI interprets Bacon’s philosophy, changes into “*faith in progress*.”

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<sup>79</sup> Benedict XVI, *Encyclical Letter on Christian Hope (Spe salvi)*, 30 November 2007, (Pasay City: Paulines Publishing House, 2008), n. 16.

<sup>80</sup> Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*, n. 17.

For Bacon, it is clear that the recent spate of discoveries and inventions is just the beginning; through the interplay of science and praxis, totally new discoveries will follow, a totally new world will emerge, the kingdom of man.”<sup>81</sup>

Science seduces human beings with what it can offer—progress. The Garden of Eden changes into the mega-cities of the modern time. The garden that the modern human being aspires is a garden full of the products of science and technology. It is a garden of comfort, luxury, abundance, security. It is a garden of material satisfaction. This garden is the kingdom of Man—a kingdom for and by human beings. There is no need to wait for the *eschaton*, human beings can bring their own salvation. Benedict XVI further explains, that what

He [modern humane being] looks forward is not, as in the early Church, the kingdom of God, but the kingdom of man, not the return of the Son of Man, but the final victory of a rational, free, and brotherly order among men who have discovered themselves. The development through which we are living presents itself not as a gift from on high, but as the product of hard work, of planned, calculated and inventive activity.<sup>82</sup>

Real hope then, as far as modern thinking is concerned, does not need faith. In contrast to Paul’s claim (cf. Eph 2:12) hope in a Godless world is possible. Benedict XVI, reflecting on Ernst Bloch’s philosophy of hope, posits that “for Bloch the opposite of what we have heard in Paul is true: the atheist is the only one who hopes and, as long as the Marxist way of transforming the world was unknown, human beings lived in this world without true hope and therefore had to try to be content with imaginary hope.”<sup>83</sup>

For Ernst Bloch the constant struggle of human beings to transform the world for the better shows that only the world can offer the possible salvation to humankind not a mysterious person

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Faith and the Future* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1971), 82.

<sup>83</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, “On Hope,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* 35 (Summer 2008), 302.

from above. When humankind frees himself from the shackle of faith, only then can they really truly hope.<sup>84</sup>

The possibility of progress becomes the surety of modern human being. They are able to continue to live a life full of hope since progress has a tantalizing offer—a new and perfect community deprived of anomaly. Progress is then the new source of hope.

### **Progress as the Source of Hope**

Progress does not solely mean infrastructures, new gadgets, and other means of comfort and luxury. Progress means a world of reason and freedom. Benedict XVI explains that

Progress is primarily associated with the growing dominion of reason, and this reason is obviously considered to be a force of good and a force for good. Progress is the overcoming of all forms of dependency—it is progress towards perfect freedom. Likewise freedom is seen purely as a promise, in which man becomes more and more fully himself.<sup>85</sup>

Reason and freedom have become the most sought values. What really entices modern human being to believe in the progress that the modern world offers is its being reasonable and its promise of freedom. When a human being is free from any dependency and is guided by reason, it is and only then that a human being can truly be himself, only then can a perfect human community befitting of the need of modern human being, be possible.<sup>86</sup>

There are two important stages in history that solidify the place of reason and freedom as political condition for realizing

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<sup>84</sup> Philip McDonagh cites Friedrich Nietzsche, who believes that “religious believers are victims of false hope,” in making the point that indeed modernity sees that Christian faith deprives the people of the real hope. See Philip McDonagh, “Uncovering the Sources of Creation: Pope Benedict XVI on Hope,” *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 13, 4 (2010), 103.

<sup>85</sup> Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*, n. 18.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

a perfect humanity: the French Revolution and the proletarian revolution.

Benedict XVI explains that the French Revolution was backed up with the desire “to establish the rule of reason and freedom as a political reality.”<sup>87</sup> He continues that the demand for reason and freedom is best illustrated in one of the works of Emmanuel Kant. Benedict XVI adds that the revolution according to Kant can

Accelerate this transition from ecclesiastical faith to rational faith. The “Kingdom of God” proclaimed by Jesus receives a new definition here and takes on a new mode of presence; a new “imminent expectation”, so to speak, comes into existence: the “Kingdom of God” arrives where “ecclesiastical faith” is vanquished and superseded by “religious faith”, that is to say, by simple rational faith.<sup>88</sup>

As the faith taught by Church falls back to the corner and become a mere history, the rational faith takes place. This is a faith shared by all, not because of a Church but because of reason. What is more appealing than the evidences that the logical human mind can think of? A society guided by reason is the real kingdom of God.

Because of the “new social situation,” another revolution happens that changes again where hope of humanity lies. It is the proletarian revolution of Karl Marx. Benedict XVI explains:

Once the truth of the hereafter had been rejected, it would then be a question of establishing the truth of the here and now. The critique of Heaven is transformed into the critique of earth, the critique of theology into the critique of politics. Progress towards the better, towards the definitively good world, no longer comes simply from science but from politics— from a scientifically conceived politics that recognizes the structure of history and society and thus points out

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 19.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

the road towards revolution, towards all-encompassing change.<sup>89</sup>

By restructuring the society according to the need of the masses, the real kingdom of God will be realized—a society guided by political reason. Benedict XVI continues that Karl Marx, after inciting the people to revolt,

presumed that with the expropriation of the ruling class, with the fall of political power and the socialization of means of production, the new Jerusalem would be realized. Then, indeed, all contradictions would be resolved, man and the world would finally sort themselves out. Then everything would be able to proceed by itself along the right path, because everything would belong to everyone and all would desire the best for one another.<sup>90</sup>

Sadly, what Marx predicted as the logical end did not happen. Benedict XVI explains that Marx failed to include human frailty in his calculation. Benedict says further:

He [Marx] forgot that man always remains man. He forgot man and he forgot man's freedom. He forgot that freedom always remains also freedom for evil. He thought that once the economy had been put right, everything would automatically be put right. His real error is materialism: man, in fact, is not merely the product of economic conditions, and it is not possible to redeem him purely from the outside by creating a favourable economic environment.<sup>91</sup>

The revolution of Marx fell short. What humanity needs is the formation of its soul. Inner revolution is what the modern man needed. This is something that Benedict XVI keeps on repeating throughout his career as a theologian and as a pastor.

History may show that Marx failed; it, nevertheless, shows a definite change in the perspective of human being. Hope is not anymore hope for the coming kingdom. Hope moves humanity to

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<sup>89</sup> Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*, 20.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 21.

<sup>91</sup> Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*, n. 21.

take action and builds the kingdom themselves. God is taken out of the picture. Humanity takes the major role. The whole world then is under the control of human beings.

It is not anymore the will of God that occupies human mind. Human beings now think of the best possible plan. Benedict XVI adds that

History has become something we can direct. History seems no longer something decreed by God or imposed by fate, but simply the result of our rational planning, through a practical reason which enjoys a manifest power over this earth. Planning has taken the place of providence, and this is all the more true in that history has now really become world history in which all partial histories have merged into the single, indivisible history of a mankind which must carry responsibility for itself.<sup>92</sup>

Human beings take dominion over the whole creation. They direct their future. Everything comes from human being's initiative. All of it comes from humanity's deeds and merit. The world is a creation not of God anymore, but of man.

It can be surmised then that the real aim of progress is ultimately freedom from God. Reason cuts its relation to faith; freedom is to be free from dependency to God. God is already obsolete. It is the time where human being has to stand for himself.

The modern human being then hopes not because there is God but because there is human being who plans for everything even their own salvation.<sup>93</sup> In one of Benedict XVI's earlier works, he commented that human being believes not anymore to Divine intervention but to human being's power. He said

Human beings have all power over the earth. They expose the functions of the earth to the light of day, and they know the laws that govern its path in space. Their knowledge is their power: They have so to speak the

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<sup>92</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, trans. Michael Waldstein (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988), 209.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

power to take the world apart and put it back together by themselves. For humans the world is a combination of functions that they utilize and force to serve them. In a world thus exposed to the light of day, there is no longer room for God's intervention. Every assistance given to humanity can only come from other human beings. Since power over the world is only found in human beings, there is no longer a God.<sup>94</sup>

For Benedict XVI, the hope of the modern time is not anymore Christian hope. It had undergone "secular mutation."<sup>95</sup> Benedict XVI uses the term optimism as an appropriate name for the hope of the modern time.

### **Optimism**

Benedict XVI believes modern human beings are optimists. Even behind all the anxieties, modern human beings remain positive. It is not because of the belief of a merciful and just God but because optimism naturally denies the existence of everything negative. An optimist is blind to the dark side of reality and sees what only is positive.

The modern person turns his back to the reality of war, poverty, abuses of the powerful, of moral degeneration. Only the good side of reality is highlighted. But behind the optimistic smile of the modern person, despair lurks. Benedict XVI even adds that "optimism could possibly be merely a cover behind which lurked the despair that one was trying to overcome in this way."<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *The God of Jesus Christ: Meditation on God in the Trinity*, trans. Robert J. Cunningham (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1979), 8.

<sup>95</sup> Rowland claims that most of the theological reflections of Benedict XVI deals with secular mutations of Christian Hope and the treatment to such anomalies. See Tracey Rowland, *Ratzinger's Faith: The Theology of Pope Benedict XVI* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 201.

<sup>96</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *To Look on Christ: Exercises in faith Hope, and Love*, trans. Robert Nowell (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 41.

Benedict XVI sees two kinds of optimism: temperamental and ideological.

### **Temperamental Optimism**

Temperamental optimism is the positive response of a human person to the events of his life. When a person sees his problems as challenges in certain degrees, this can be considered as temperamental optimism. This is what people usually mean when they call someone as optimistic. This is not the concern of Benedict XVI. He adds that “temperamental optimism is a fine thing and useful in life’s hardships and suffering: who would not rejoice over the natural happiness and confidence that shines out from some people, and who would not want it for himself or herself?”<sup>97</sup> What really dominates the mind of the modern person is the optimism that Benedict XVI calls as ideological optimism.

### **Ideological Optimism**

Ideological optimism, according Benedict XVI, “is a secularization of Christian hope: they depend ultimately on the transition from the transcendent God to the god ‘history.’”<sup>98</sup> He adds that “the goal of optimism is the utopia of the finally and everlastingly liberated and fortunate world, the perfect society in which history reaches its goal and reveals its divinity. The immediate aim, which as it were guarantees the reliability of the ultimate goal, is the success of our ability to do things.”<sup>99</sup>

Ideological optimism then simply reflects the desire of the modern person to be the creator god. Human beings can live without God. Furthermore, what assures this optimism is the logical sequence of history that will eventually be fulfilled,<sup>100</sup> Benedict XVI explains.

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<sup>97</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *To Look on Christ: Exercises in faith Hope, and Love*, 45.

<sup>98</sup> Ratzinger, *To Look on Christ*, 46.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 47.



An optimist continues to be optimistic because of his firm belief on humanity. Benedict XVI explains that “‘optimism’ is the theological virtue of a new god and a new religion, the virtue of deified history, of a god ‘history,’ and thus of the great god of modern ideologies and their promise.”<sup>101</sup> He continues that “optimism is the shape and expression of belief in history and thus obligatory for someone who wishes to serve liberation, the revolutionary ushering in of the new world and the new man. According to this hope would be the virtue of an aggressive ontology, the dynamic force of the march towards utopia.”<sup>102</sup>

The promise of this “god history” is the perfect world—utopia. This is the world that modern person hopes—a world created and controlled by human person, a world guided not by grace but by reason. Optimism then is the proper attitude of a modern person who now sees in history the creation of the utopia. Benedict XVI further adds that “the goal of the ideologies is finally and ultimately success, in which we are able to realize our own wishes and plans. Our own ability and activity on which we are betting is however aware that ultimately it is guided and confirmed by an irrational fundamental tendency of development.”<sup>103</sup>

Even though how intricate a human being’s plan, there are still some limitations to it. Science itself can only discuss something it can observe and control. Reason can speak of what it can understand. The same thing happens with ideological optimism. It solely relies on human capability which also depends on an uncertain entity—development itself. Benedict XVI further explains that “the product of the promise of optimism is something that we must ultimately produce ourselves, trusting that the blind process of development in connection with our own activity will finally lead to the right goal.”<sup>104</sup>

What modern person believes as definite and certain is actually uncertain. Development that human being boasted of, has to come through a number of trials and errors before it can

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>102</sup> Ratzinger, *To Look on Christ*, 43.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

be called a success. Science and technology certainly have their sacrifice to reach its current state. What is true and scientific today may become false and superstition tomorrow. Before the fulfillment of a logical sequence of history, the human person has to traverse to a vast gap of uncertainties.

These uncertainties make the modern person anxious despite being in place of freedom and reason. Optimism then forces persons to set aside these anxieties. Ideological optimism sees not the terrible accidents that occur for the sake of progress, for the sake of the promised utopia. Benedict XVI adds that “in reality ideological optimism is merely the façade of a world without hope that is trying to hide from its own despair with this deceptive sham.”<sup>105</sup> It sets aside all, both the disturbing realities and the natural events in human life e.g., death, for the sake of the perfect society. Benedict XVI says that “ideological optimism is an attempt to have death forgotten by continually talking about history striding forward to the perfect society.”<sup>106</sup> It forces human person to forget other realities and proposes its own reality as the only reality.

Optimism is just one of the many effects of modern ideology on Christian hope. In his book, *To Look on Christ: Exercises in faith Hope, and Love*, Benedict XVI exhaustively discusses the different barriers of Christian hope due to the ever growing influence of modernity to the human beings.

### **Benedict XVI and Gustavo Gutierrez: Orthodoxy and Orthopractice**

Perhaps an intriguing theological dispute in the career of Benedict XVI as a theologian is his disputes with the Liberation Theology, especially to the Gustavo Gutierrez.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Ratzinger, *To Look on Christ*, 48.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> James Corkery offered an interesting discussion and critical reflection on the dispute of Benedict XVI and Gustavo Gutierrez. See James Corkery, *Joseph Ratzinger's Theological Ideas: Wise Cautions and Legitimate Hopes* (Dublin: Dominican Publications, 2009), 74--80.

The main contention here is the humanity's perspective of the future. Benedict says,

The man of today looks toward the future. His slogan is "Progress", not "Tradition"; "Hope", not "Faith". He is moved, it is true, by a certain romanticism about the past. He delights in surrounding himself with precious things of history, but all of this serves only to confirm that these times are past and that the empire of the man of today is tomorrow, the world he himself is going to build.<sup>108</sup>

Once again, Benedict XVI recounts the tendency of human person to cross the line of a creator. He comments that modern man sees faith as a trophy of the past and the present demands a new trophy that will usher in the future. He continues

For that to which he looks forward is not, as in the early Church, the kingdom of God, but the kingdom of man, not the return of the Son of Man, but the final victory of a rational, free, and brotherly order among men who have discovered themselves. The development through which we are living presents itself, not as a gift from on high, but as the product of hard work, of planned, calculated, and inventive activity. Thus, for the man of today hope no longer means looking for things over which we have no control, but action by our own power.<sup>109</sup>

This, as presented by Corkery, can be seen as Benedict XVI's commentary on Liberation Theology which he perceives as promoters of "Orthopractice over orthodoxy." Benedict XVI comments that the main object of liberation theology is the liberation for the creation of a new human being in a society of solidarity. It means that liberation theology, specifically, the theology of Gutierrez as something that sees the kingdom of God as a utopia achievable through man's effort. Gutierrez offers three level of liberation: socio-economic level, utopian level,

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<sup>108</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Faith and the Future* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1971), 82.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

theological level.<sup>110</sup> What really worries Benedict XVI is the tendency of this theology to promote the lies of utopia and its tendency to be Marxist.

Benedict XVI believes that orthodoxy is the way to Orthopractice. He explains the early Church sees orthodoxy not as “right doctrine but the right way of worshipping and glorifying God.”<sup>111</sup> This is not only about sound doctrine but more importantly it means that correct action is a reflection of correct doctrine. He continues

For there is no such thing as right action without a knowledge of what is right. The will without knowledge is blind, and so action, Orthopractice, without knowledge is blind and leads into the abyss. The great deception of Marxism was to tell us that we had thought long enough about the world, that it was finally time to change it. But if we do not know what we should change it into, if we do not understand its intrinsic meaning and inner purpose, then change alone becomes destruction.<sup>112</sup>

For benedict XVI, orthodoxy lone is enough. It encapsulates even the proper practice.

Gutierrez explains that

To hope does not mean to know the future, but rather to be open, in an attitude of spiritual childhood, to accepting it as a gift. But this gift is accepted in the negation of injustice, in the protest against trampled human rights, and in the struggle for peace and fellowship. Thus hope fulfills a mobilizing and liberating function in history.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> Corkery, *Joseph Ratzinger's Theological Ideas*, 76.

<sup>111</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *On the Way to Jesus Christ*, trans., Michael Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 108.

<sup>112</sup> Ratzinger, *On the Way to Jesus Christ*, 108--109.

<sup>113</sup> Gustavo Gutierrez, *Essential Writings*, edited by James Nickoloff (Makati: St Pauls, 2004), 199.

Behind the definition of Gutierrez is the concrete suffering of his people. He promotes action as the new way of teaching the right doctrine. He adds that the future only matter when it is experienced in the daily life of the people.<sup>114</sup>

The differences of these two giants of contemporary theology may be seen clearly but it must be noted that their concept of hope begins with the recognition that it comes from above. Benedict XVI and Gutierrez, with different emphasis believe that the future that God promised can be manifested in the present.

### **Benedict XVI's Christian Hope**

For Benedict XVI a Christian is a person of hope. He explains that “to be a Christian is to be one who hopes; it is to situate oneself on the foundation of a sure hope ... hope is not just one virtue among others; it is the very definition of Christian existence.”<sup>115</sup> Christian faith brought faith to Greek pagan world that sees nothing beyond death. Hope consoles humanity's fear of death something that bothers them since ancient time. Benedict XVI explains that “the hope of faith, on the other hand, reveals to us the true future beyond death, and it is only in this way that the real instances of progress that do exist become a future for us, for me, for every individual.”<sup>116</sup> Since death has a meaning, human person can then continue in his journey without fearing the unknown future brought by death.

In the surprise of many in the Greek world, Christian faith offers something entirely outside what the Greeks usually thought of. It presents a bright future despite the bleak past.<sup>117</sup> This is what Christian hope holds—the promised future. Benedict XVI continues that:

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Ratzinger, “On Hope,” 301.

<sup>116</sup> Ratzinger, *To Look on Christ*, 49.

<sup>117</sup> See Fabio de Souza Teixeira, “On Christian Hope: An Analysis and Reshaping of the Encyclical Letter of Joseph Ratzinger,” (Master's thesis, Maryhill School of Theology, 2010), 102.

Hope has to do with the future. It signifies that man expects of the future some joy, some happiness that he does not now have. Hope therefore rests on the experience of temporality according to which man never totally possesses his own being.<sup>118</sup>

Hope starts from the belief that there is something more that the present reality can offer, as what Benedict XVI points out, “hope rests first of all on something missing at the heart of the human condition.”<sup>119</sup> There is still an ultimate reality that outshines the present reality. It is not simply a fulfillment of today’s demand, as Benedict XVI explains, “Christian hope knows no idea of an inner fulfillment of history. On the contrary, it affirms the impossibility of an inner fulfillment of the world.”<sup>120</sup> What it offers is something more. He then adds that:

The goal of Christian hope is the kingdom of God, that is, the union of world and man with God through an act of divine power and love. The immediate aim that shows us the way and confirms the rightness of the ultimate goal is the perpetual presence of this love and this power that accompanies us in what we do and takes us up at the point where the potential of our own ability to act comes to an end.<sup>121</sup>

It is to bring to completion the coming of the Kingdom of God. Jesus’ salvific act initiated what was prophesied in the Old Testament, the coming of the Kingdom of God—a reality where God reigns over everything especially in the hearts of man. It continues through the Church guided by the Holy Spirit. Now Christian hope is the hope for coming of what is already “here but not yet.” In contrast to the claim of the modern thinkers that progress is possible if human beings think of the present.

Furthermore, an important aspect that must always be remembered is that the assurance of this hope is the ever faithful

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<sup>118</sup> Ratzinger, “On Hope,” 302.

<sup>119</sup> Ratzinger, “On Hope,” 306.

<sup>120</sup> Ratzinger, *Eschatology*, 213.

<sup>121</sup> Ratzinger, *To Look on Christ*, 46--47.

God who sent his Son to once again assure humanity that the goal of their hope is real. He explains:

The aim of Christian hope, by contrast, is a gift, the gift of love, which is given us beyond all our activity: to vouch for the fact that this thing that we cannot control or compel and that is yet the most important thing of all for human beings does exist, and that we are not clutching at thin air waiting insatiably for it, we have the interventions of God's love in history, most powerfully in the figure of Jesus Christ in whom God's love encounters person.<sup>122</sup>

Unlike the hope in the modern times, hope is a gift from someone who can truly give. Hope is given from the outside, from someone who has the power to give such gift. It is a gift that is beyond human intervention, someone who is despite being divine knows what is to be human. It is because, Benedict XVI explains:

Hope refers to the person. True, it aspires to something that goes far beyond the person, a new land, paradise. But if it aspires to this, it is because the person has need of it; it is hope only to the degree that it is hope for the person concerned and not for anyone else anywhere else. The anthropological problem of hope therefore consists in the human need for something that goes beyond all human activity.<sup>123</sup>

This gift, this hope is already assured for it already has begun in the person of Jesus Christ. Human activity cannot assure such future. Benedict points out that "the gift of the promise of hope ... is precisely that, a gift that as something already bestowed we await from him who alone can really give: the God who in the midst of history has already begun his age through Jesus Christ."<sup>124</sup> It is noted that hope is hope of something not possible without God's providence. The coming Kingdom of God is impossible with God's action. The human impossibility of the

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<sup>122</sup> Ratzinger, *To Look on Christ*, 47.

<sup>123</sup> Ratzinger, "On Hope," 305.

<sup>124</sup> Ratzinger, *To Look on Christ*, 48--49.

anticipated reality does not bring despair but rather hope for the one assures its possibility the One who is ever faithful.

### **Temporal Dimension of Christian Hope**

The temporal dimension of Christian hope can be seen in fragments throughout the works of Benedict XVI. Basically it has two aspects that have been emphasized in his works. First that hope also has an effect in the present time and the second is that hope has a communal aspect.

#### **Hope as Hope in the Present and Hope for Others**

Christian hope, though its aim is eternal life, is not simply other-worldly virtue. It also has its effects in the present. Benedict XVI adds that:

The new man is not utopian: he exists, and to the extent that we are united with him hope is present and in no way merely future. Eternal life and real fellowship and community, liberation, are not utopia, the mere expectation of what does not exist. “Eternal life” is real life, even today and at present in communion with Jesus.<sup>125</sup>

Christians’ hope of the future indeed affects their present. Only when the future is assured can human being truly live their present. Benedict XVI explains that “here too we see as a distinguishing mark of Christians the fact that they have a future: it is not that they know the details of what awaits them, but they know in general terms that their life will not end in emptiness. Only when the future is certain as a positive reality does it become possible to live the present as well.”<sup>126</sup>

This is possible because Christian faith moves human being to live the present life with vigor. Benedict XVI added that:

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<sup>125</sup> Ratzinger, *To Look on Christ*, 61.

<sup>126</sup> Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*, n. 2.



Christianity was not only “good news”—the communication of a hitherto unknown content. In our language we would say: the Christian message was not only “informative” but “performative”. That means: the Gospel is not merely a communication of things that can be known—it is one that makes things happen and is life-changing. The dark door of time, of the future, has been thrown open. The one who has hope lives differently; the one who hopes has been granted the gift of a new life.<sup>127</sup>

Christian faith sees present life differently. A Christian does not abhor the present to the point that he cannot live in it; rather a Christian is able to live life even if death is imminent. Death is not feared in the same way it would be feared by those without hope. Death is accepted as part of reality for there is more beyond death. Benedict XVI reflects that “only the one who can see hope in death can also lead a life of hope.”<sup>128</sup>

Christian hope then initiates social change as what Benedict XVI narrates in *Spe salvi*. This change though was not through external violence but through the heart’s torment of all who witnessed Christ’s crucifixion. Benedict XVI says:

Christianity did not bring a message of social revolution like that of the ill-fated Spartacus, whose struggle led to so much bloodshed. Jesus was not Spartacus, he was not engaged in a fight for political liberation like Barabbas or Bar-Kochba. Jesus, who himself died on the Cross, brought something totally different: an encounter with the Lord of all lords, an encounter with the living God and thus an encounter with a hope stronger than the sufferings of slavery, a hope which therefore transformed life and the world from within.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*, n. 2.

<sup>128</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Images of Hope: Meditations on Major Feasts*, trans. John Rock and Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2006), 105.

<sup>129</sup> Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*, n. 4.

By their faith, the early Christians live out a life that dares to change the social structure of their time not through revolution but by simply being Christians. In the *Letter to Philemon* of Paul, it can be seen how faith changes the relationship of the master and slave, as what the culture of the time dictates, into the relationship of brothers and sisters who share the same faith. Benedict XVI explains that

Those who, as far as their civil status is concerned, stand in relation to one another as masters and slaves, inasmuch as they are members of the one Church have become brothers and sisters—this is how Christians addressed one another. By virtue of their Baptism they had been reborn, they had been given to drink of the same Spirit and they received the Body of the Lord together, alongside one another. Even if external structures remained unaltered, this changed society from within.<sup>130</sup>

It must be differentiated that the object of Christian hope will always be the coming Kingdom of God. Christian hope moves human person not to build the Kingdom of God (for the Kingdom of God will always be a gift) through social change but to manifest the coming Kingdom through one's life. In addition, early Christians, too, by living here in the present, project their ideal community in the here and now. Benedict XVI describes it as a "new society." He continues:

When the *Letter to the Hebrews* says that Christians here on earth do not have a permanent homeland, but seek one which lies in the future (cf. *Heb* 11:13-16; *Phil* 3:20), this does not mean for one moment that they live only for the future: present society is recognized by Christians as an exile; they belong to a new society which is the goal of their common pilgrimage and which is anticipated in the course of that pilgrimage.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*, n. 4.

This is not possible if the future is bleak and unknown. The certainty of the future moves human being to change the status quo for the better. Only when the future touches the present can all of these be possible. The people during the time of Christ were moved. Benedict XVI explains that “from the hope of these people who have been touched by Christ, hope has arisen for others who were living in darkness and without hope.”<sup>132</sup>

### **On the Relevance of the Temporal Dimension of Christian Hope in the Modern Society**

The dilemma of modern society centers on the lack of ethical consciousness that can support the advancement of science and technology due to the God’s dethronement from the political sphere. This lack of ethical consciousness leads to the degradation of human dignity. The suspect and eventually the victim of the unchecked advancement of science is no other than the human person. Human persons with the help of their acquired knowledge can now destroy the entire humanity. They can kill the unborn. They can abuse the weak. Human person can create weapons of war and terror. Laws that are supposed to safeguard the weak are now turned against the persons they are supposed to defend. Laws against the unborn are easily passed by the court. A person of power can easily abuse the weak. All of these become possible because human person cease to become persons. In the eyes of many human persons of the modern time a person is not his fellow person but an individual detached from him.

When a person stops to become person in the eyes of a fellow human person, genuine human relationship is not possible. The other becomes a tool for success, for progress. The other becomes laboratory rats for many experiments. Some are disregarded and considered useless by the society who equates human worth with human utility. The old and the unborn, unless proven useful, for experiments perhaps, are in danger. The more

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<sup>132</sup> Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*, n. 8.

humanity plunge deeply the lies of modern period, the more humanity crave for the kingdom of man and not of the Kingdom of God, the more humanity plunges deeply to the abyss of self-destruction.

Only when human being relates to his fellow human being can this dilemma be countered. When human person starts to truly hope, only then can one escape the abyss of self-destruction, the loss relation of humanity to his fellow human being and to God. This can be found in the temporal dimension of Benedict XVI's Christian hope.

### **The Relevance of the Temporal Dimension of Christian Hope in View of the Interrelationship of the Three Theological Virtues**

Christian hope is relevant to the needs of the modern human person because genuine Christian hope moves Christians to heal the broke relation of persons and point humanity to the real source of Hope. This becomes possible when hope is considered with the other theological virtues. Hope, the little sister that guides her other sisters love and faith as portrayed by a famous writer and poet Peguy, becomes a movement, an action that will make the future felt not only of the individual but of the many.

#### **Hope as Hope**

Hope's basic predisposition is that the "not yet" is assured in the promise of someone beyond us. Hope is always assured not of something from the inside not by one's own power but by someone more powerful. It is always as I hope in Thee. The Thee of Christian hope is the Triune God who is also a "We," a God who is in relationship not only to his own person but also to His creation. This relationship of the "Thee" to "I" becomes the surety of hope.

Though hope may have started as "I", it must be noted that a hope, the genuine hope, is a hope for "us," i.e., for the many. Hope, in many of its features, is relational. Christian hope

of Benedict XVI, too, is relational. It is a hope that fundamentally is different from the hope that the modern world espouses. It is a hope that builds relationship and manifested in the present. It is the hope that leads to communion.

### **Hope and Love**

Hope has a space based characteristic. Hope is not individualistic. A human being with Christian hope hopes for the salvation of his fellow human being. Hope has a social-communal dimension. The one who truly hopes sees one's neighbors as a fellow human being worthy of respect. He reaches out to others. This is evident in many social and charitable institutions. These institutions bring hope to their hopeless beneficiaries. Hope can be seen as other-oriented virtue when it is seen side by side with another theological virtue—love.

In Benedict XVI's theology, there is a thin line of demarcation between the virtue of Hope and love. Benedict posits that "hope in the proper sense of the word is ... the certainty that I shall receive that great love that is indestructible and that I am already loved with this love here and now."<sup>133</sup> Benedict XVI believes that the man of hope can truly be a man of love if he is also a man of love.

The presence of love in the human world makes human beings hopeful. Benedict XVI says, "love is God's greatest gift to humanity, it is his promise and our hope."<sup>134</sup> He further adds that charity "is the primordial truth of God's love, grace bestowed upon us, that opens our lives to gift and make it possible to hope for a 'development of the whole man and of all men', to hope for progress 'from less human condition to those which are more human', obtained by overcoming the difficulties that are

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<sup>133</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *To Look on Christ: Exercises in faith Hope, and Love*, trans. Robert Nowell (New York: Crossroad, 1991),

<sup>134</sup> Benedict XVI, *Encyclical Letter on Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth (Caritas in veritate)*, 29 June 2009 (Makati: Word and Life Publications, 2009), n. 2.

inevitably encountered along the way.”<sup>135</sup> When love is present in the community, hope also becomes all the more present.

Love with its dynamic characteristic cannot but be expressed to others. The same thing happens with Christian hope. Genuine Christian hope is not individualistic. It is always a hope for all. When a Christian hopes, he hopes for the coming of the kingdom of God not for his/her sake but for the sake of the whole creation. Christian is not simply a hope for one’s life. It is always for everyone’s life because for Benedict XVI, all are related for all are persons.

### Hope and Faith

Hope has a time-based characteristic. Hope is “essentially related to the future.”<sup>136</sup> A man hopes for something he has not yet received. Christian hope, though essentially looking for the future, also brings the future in the present. Hope also is hope in the present that is influenced by Christian’s hope of the future.<sup>137</sup> It must be clarified that in Benedict XVI’s theology of Christian hope, Christians are not hindered to live their life for the present because of its orientation to the Christian *eschaton*. All the more Christians are able to live their present situation because of the clarity of the future promised to him for, as Benedict XVI says, “Without future even the present becomes unbearable.”<sup>138</sup>

Perhaps, it can be clearly understood with the virtue of faith. Benedict XVI explains that “hope is the fruit of faith ... in it our life stretches itself out towards the totality of all that is real, towards a boundless future that becomes accessible to us in

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., n. 8.

<sup>136</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Faith and the Future* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1971), 25.

<sup>137</sup> Philip McDonagh, as he discusses the relation of faith and hope in the thought of Benedict XVI, wonderfully expresses that “where there is faith and hope, the present is changed, touched by the future reality.” See Philip McDonagh, “Uncovering the Sources of Creation: Pope Benedict XVI on Hope,” *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 13.4 (2010), 105.

<sup>138</sup> Ratzinger, *Faith and the Future*, 40.

faith.”<sup>139</sup> Faith is the substance of hope. Christians hope for what they believe. Faith is not simply a list of doctrines that Christians should adhere to. Benedict explains that “faith in the Christian sense is not primarily a mysterious system of knowledge, but an existential attitude, a fundamental decision about the direction of life, which we described provisionally by word ‘trust.’”<sup>140</sup> Faith then is an act. It guides human beings in their decisions in life. Active faith is manifested in the life of the believer. Christians become truly Christians when the faith is vivid in their lives in the present.

The same is true with Christian hope. Since faith is the substance of hope, only when hope manifests in the present, as faith manifested in the present, can hope be truly hope.

### **The Person of Christian Hope in the Modern Society**

The person of Christian hope challenges the norms of the modern society. A person of hope moves to bring the kingdom of God in the present and be expressed to its fellow human beings aware that the Kingdom is not made but received. The person of Christian hope does not rob God of the power to establish the Kingdom. His faith and love for God make him present God and not himself. The modern people need to see once again that their neighbor is a person, a fellow human person. He is not alone in the society. His decisions also affect his fellow human person. The temporal dimension of Christian hope of Benedict XVI helps the human person to open his eyes and extend his hands to his fellow human person. Perhaps when every human person of the modern society is person of hope, then the many inhumane acts would become a thing of the past.

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<sup>139</sup> Ratzinger, *To Look on Christ*, 66.

<sup>140</sup> Ratzinger, *Faith and the Future*, 25.

## Conclusion

The concept of “temporal” in Benedict XVI’s theology can be drawn from his social-political thought. It must be noted that the “temporal” could be understood using the definition of the “world” of Benedict XVI. He says that the temporal is the total of human behavior in relation to human persons’ act of reshaping their earthly human existence. Human person holds an important key in understanding his concept the “temporal”

The core of Benedict XVI’s socio-political thought, that is “person as relation” can be considered as the genuine human behavior that can reshape humanity’s earthly existence. Benedict XVI concept of temporal focuses on one important reality of human society that is: human person is a person of relation.

Applying the drawn concept of “temporal” as human behavior or human act of forming his reality in a particular period to the foundational feature of society of Benedict XVI that is relation, it follows that Benedict XVI’s concept of temporal can be seen as relational. For Benedict XVI the ideal act in reshaping reality or situation is the act that builds relationship.

The temporal dimension of Christian hope can be seen in the communal characteristic of Christian hope. Benedict XVI emphasizes that Christian hope is not individualistic for it is always a hope for others. Christian hope has a temporal dimension because of the fact that it is a hope of the present. Christian faith moves man to live out in the present his faith. These are the components that prove that Christian hope has a temporal dimension for Benedict XVI.

Since the temporal dimension of Christian hope is communal and can also be manifested in the present, the temporal dimension of hope can be a possible response to the needs of the modern human being. The need of modern human person is the reconnection to the other person. The promise of progress that leads many human degradation forces the modern human person to be suspicious of his fellow human person. The modern human persons see their neighbors as tool for progress and the future of



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the city of man. But Christian hope, as lived by Christian, can help in reshaping modern reality into Christian reality.

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