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# *Quærens*

*Journal of Theology and Pastoral Life*

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**The Filipino Expression *Bahala Na* as A Revelatory and Salvific Experience: A Study Through Schillebeeckx’s Theological Hermeneutics of Suffering**

*Patrick Meryll J. Garcia and Reginaldo M. Mananzan, SJ*



**Recoletos School of Theology, Inc.**

81 Alondras St. Miranila Homes, Congressional Ave. Ext.,

1101 Quezon City, Philippines

[www.rst.edu.ph](http://www.rst.edu.ph)

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### **Administration**

Research, Planning and Development Office  
Recoletos School of Theology, Inc.  
81 Alondras St. Miranila Homes, Congressional Avenue Ext.  
1101 Quezon City, Philippines  
(email: [quaerens@sscrmn.edu.ph](mailto:quaerens@sscrmn.edu.ph))

All business and editorial correspondence (e.g. matters concerning manuscripts, books for reviews, advertising and subscriptions) should be addressed to:

*Quaerens*  
Journal of Theology and Pastoral Life  
Recoletos School of Theology, Inc.  
81 Alondras St. Miranila Homes, Congressional Ave. Ext.  
U.P. P.O. Box 206, U.P. Diliman  
1101 Quezon City, Philippines

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# The Psalms in Christian North Africa

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Enrique A. Eguiarte, OAR

## *Abstract*

*The article discusses the role that Psalms played in ancient North Africa during 3rd and 4th centuries as it focuses on the writings of Tertullian, and Cyprian. It discusses how Psalms figured in the Donatist literature, particularly in Tyconius, a Catholic who wrote against the Donatists in his Liber Regularum, in Optatus of Milevis, and in Parmenianus and Petilianus, the leaders of the movement in the late 4th century. The writings of the latter Donatist leaders are presented in connection with the works of St. Augustine.*

## Introduction

It is common knowledge how scholars regard the *Documents* of the martyrs of Scilli (180 A.D.) as the first testimony of a Latin version of the Letters of Paul and probably also excerpts from the Gospels, and other parts of the Bible in North Africa<sup>1</sup>. These documents attest to the presence of a Latin translation of the Scriptures in North Africa at the end of the 2nd Century. In fact, according to G. Dunn<sup>2</sup>, Tertullian's quotations of the Scripture are the first extant testimonies of a Latin

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. C. Estin, "Les traductions du Psautier", in J. Fontaine – Ch. Pietri, *Le monde latin antique et la Bible*, Paris, 1985, p. 69; Cf. G. D. Dunn, *Tertullian*, London and New York, 2004, p. 20; Cf. V. Saxer, "La Bible chez les Pères latins du IIIe. Siècle", in J. Fontaine – Ch. Pietri, *Le monde latin antique et la Bible*, Paris, 1985, p. 341 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. G. D. Dunn, *Tertullian*, London and New York, 2004, p. 20.

translation of the Scriptures. Among all the Books of the Bible, the Psalms are the most prominent, since the Church has always traditionally used them for prayers, and they have an important part in the spirituality and the liturgy of the Church. In Northern Africa, during the 3rd and 4th centuries up to the year 380, there are important testimonies of how the Book of Psalms was used, which version of the text was used, and which texts were important.

In this study, I will present the role that Psalms had in the writings of Tertullian, and Cyprian. I will also present how Psalms figured in the Donatist world, particularly in Tyconius and his *Liber Regularum*, in Optatus of Milevis and also in what we can know about the leaders of the movement in the late 4th century, specifically, Parmenianus and Petilianus.

## TERTULLIAN AND THE PSALMS

The Scriptures had an important role in the writings of Tertullian. His works are full of exegesis and he frequently writes about Scripture in forensic terms. Moreover, to take one Book as an example, quotations and allusions of the gospel of Matthew appear in all Tertullian's Works, except for *De pallio*<sup>3</sup>. In fact he quotes all the Books of the canonical writings, except 2 and 3 John<sup>4</sup>. He believed that the Scriptures belonged to the Church, and so the heretics had no right to use them<sup>5</sup>. Scripture was, for him, the source of revelation, but it needed to be interpreted. He used allegory and typology but avoided esoteric meanings<sup>6</sup>. Tertullian's quotations of the Scriptures are the earliest extant evidence of Latin texts<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. T. P. O'Malley, *Tertullian and the Bible, Language, Imagery, Exegesis*, Nijmegen/Utrecht 1967, p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ch. Kannengisser, *Handbook of Patristics Exegesis*, Leiden-Boston 2004, I, p. 593.

<sup>5</sup> *Praesc.* 15.3.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *Adu. Marc.* IV,35. CSEL 47, 542,22; Cf. also, *Adu. Marc.* III,5,3; *Adu. Marc.* III,14,5; *Adu. Marc.* III,24,2; *Adu. Marc.* IV,17,12; *Pud.* 8,11; *De resurr.* 37,4; et al.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. G. D. Dunn, *Tertullian*, London and New York, 2004, p. 20.

## The Psalm Version

Before Tertullian's time, the Church in North Africa, especially in the Liturgy<sup>8</sup>, used a Latin translation of some of the Books of the Bible. In fact, Tertullian makes an allusion to the use of the Psalms in the Liturgy in his own time, in his Work *De oratione*, when he states: "*quorum clausulis respondeant qui simul sunt*"<sup>9</sup>.

About the fact of the existence of a Latin version of some books of the Bible before Tertullian's times, there is a great discussion among the scholars<sup>10</sup>. Nevertheless, the nuanced position of P. Monceaux<sup>11</sup> has been commonly accepted. He asserts that Tertullian did know a Latin Translation of some of the Books of the Bible. This version was a translation which was closely related to the quotations that Cyprian will later use<sup>12</sup>. In his classic Study of the Text of the Latin Book of Psalms<sup>13</sup>, Paul Capelle asserts that Tertullian used as a point of departure different Latin versions, among which was a particular important version of the Psalms that had "familiarity" (*filiation-parenté*) with Cyprian's version of the Psalms<sup>14</sup>. Moreover, from the 60 quotations from the Psalms which are used by both Tertullian and Cyprian, Capelle makes an interesting lexical comparison of 32 of them. If we take a close view of Capelle's comparative list, we will notice mainly two things: (1) Both versions have a similar Greek text as point of departure; and (2) both use the

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. G. Bardy, "La latinisation de l'église d'Occident", in *Irenikon* 14 (1937), p. 3-20.

<sup>9</sup> *De orat.* 27. CSEL 20, 198.15. "On peut en inférer (...) que ses traductions émanent directement d'une population impatiente de prendre part à la prière publique, sans que cela exclue l'intervention d'autorités ecclésiastiques". Cf. C. Estin, "Les traductions du Psautier", in J. Fontaine – Ch. Pietri, *Le monde latin antique et la Bible*, Paris, 1985, p. 70.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. T. P. O'Malley, *Tertullian and the Bible, Language, Imagery, Exegesis*, Nijmegen/Utrecht, 1967, pp. 10 ff.: Cf. T. D. Barnes, *Tertullian. A Historical and Literary History*, Oxford, 1985, pp. 275 ff.; Cf. C. Estin, "Les traductions du Psautier", in J. Fontaine – Ch. Pietri, *Le monde latin antique et la Bible*, Paris, 1985, p. 69; G. D. Dunn, *Tertullian*, London and New York, 2004, pp. 19-23, gives a good insight of this problem.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Paul Monceaux, *Histoire Littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne*, Bruxelles, 1963, I, pp. 106-118.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. T. P. O'Malley, *Tertullian and the Bible, Language, Imagery, Exegesis*, Nijmegen/Utrecht, 1967, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> Paul Capelle, *Le texte du Psautier Latin en Afrique*, Roma, 1913.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Capelle, *Le texte du Psautier Latin en Afrique*, 9.



same Latin words, at times rhetorical words, such as “*ensem*” (long sword) instead of “*gladium*” in Psalm 44<sup>15</sup>. Thus we can affirm with Capelle that the 32 examples are a proof of the relationship of both versions of the Psalms, what Capelle calls a close familiar relationship, or at least a family relationship (“*au moins la parenté*”)<sup>16</sup>. He does not forget that there are also differences, and that there is not only one Latin African version of the Psalms, as Augustine asserts in *De Doctrina Christiana* (2,11). There are many because: *Qui enim Scripturas ex hebraea in graecam verterunt, numerari possunt, latini autem interpretes nullo modo. Ut enim cuique primis fidei temporibus in manus venit codex graecus et aliquantulum facultatis sibi utriusque linguae habere videbatur, ausus est interpretari*<sup>17</sup>.

Capelle concludes that the African Latin Text of the Psalms used by Tertullian was, in his time, in a process of deepening its roots, and that cannot be considered as something like a fixed text<sup>18</sup>. This is also the idea of Barnes, who asserts that “though he sometimes chose to provide his own spontaneous translation of scriptural texts, he more often employed an already existing translation”<sup>19</sup>.

Nevertheless, if we go back to Tertullian’s writings, we will immediately notice that the quotations of the same Psalm’s verse are not always identical. This happens not only in different works, but also within the same work, and even in quotations that are separated just by few lines. Capelle asserts that this text difference, even in the same work, should be attributed to the different Latin versions that there were in Tertullian’s time. He gives two reasons to support this idea: (1) the general appearance of the texts is similar; and (2) all the textual differences are present in African or other Latin Biblical versions<sup>20</sup>. Nevertheless it seems to be not too logical that Tertullian should be quoting from different sources in the same work, and even just some

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Adu. Marc.* III,7. CSEL 47, 14.17.

<sup>16</sup> Paul Capelle, *Le texte du Psautier Latin en Afrique*, p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> Augustine, *doctr. chr.* 2,11,16.

<sup>18</sup> Paul Capelle, *Le texte du Psautier Latin en Afrique*, p. 19.

<sup>19</sup> Timothy David Barnes, *Tertullian. A Historical and Literary Study*, Oxford, 1985, p. 277.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. P. Capelle, *Le texte du Psautier Latin en Afrique*, p. 19.

lines after he has quoted one Psalm's text<sup>21</sup>, he will be quoting the same Psalm's verse in a different way because he was reading a different Psalm version. We can also attribute the textual differences, as O'Malley does, to Tertullian's own translation of the Psalm verses in some works, because he felt that the Christian language was different<sup>22</sup>, or to the fact that he was quoting the text guided only by his memory<sup>23</sup>, and trying to adapt the Psalm's text to his own argument, following a very foristic style.

## Main Topics

### The Yoke of the Law

Psalm 2:3 is used by Tertullian in *Aduersus Marcionem* to assert that Christ and the New Law have broken the yoke of the Old Testament Law. From the four quotations of Ps 2:3 in *Aduersus Marcionem*, three times the text is used to support the idea that the yoke of the Law of the OT has been broken, "in order that after that moment, the human being might be justified by the liberty of faith, not by servitude to the law"

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<sup>21</sup> Some of the most relevant cases are, e.g., Psalm 9:19, quoted in *Adu. Marc.* IV,14. CSEL 47, 460,2: "*Tolerantia pauperum peribit*"; and some lines after in *Adu. Marc.* IV,39. CSEL 47, 554,17: "*Toletantia iustorum periet*"; Psalm 17:26, in *Pud.* 18: "*cum sancto sanctus eris (...) et cum peruerso peruersus eris*"; In *Adu. Marc.* V,18. CSEL 47, 640,2: "*Cum iusto iustus eris et cum peruerso peruerteris*"; in *exh. cast.* 10: "*Cum sancto, sanctificaberis (...)*"; Psalm 21:17, when quoted in *Adu. Marc.* III,19. CSEL 47, 408,25; and IV,42. CSEL 47, 564,4, uses "*foderunt*"; in *De resurr.* 20, he uses: "*perfossus*"; Psalm 103:4, in *Adu. Marc.* II,8. CSEL 47, 345,11: "*apparitores flammam ignis*"; in the same Work, *Adu. Marc.* III,9, CSEL 47, 348,5: "*apparitores suos ignem flagrantem*"; Psalm 109:1, *Prax.* IV,11 - *Adu. Marc.* V,9,17. CSEL 47, 602,24: "*Scabellum pedum tuorum*". In *Prax.* 30 - *Hermog.* 11: "*sub pedibus (pedes)*".

<sup>22</sup> O'Malley, *Tertullian and the Bible, Language, Imaginery, Exegesis*, p. 9. Cf. J.-C. Fredouille, *Tertullien et la conversion de la culture antique*, Paris, 1972, p. 316; Cf. E. Gallicet, "Cipriano e la Bibbia: 'Fortis ac sublimis vox'", en T. Alimonti et al. (ed.), *Forma futura. Studi in onore del cardinale Michelle Pellegrino*, Torino, 1975, p. 44.

<sup>23</sup> "Tertullian (...) was offering his own translation. In other fewer instances, Tertullian has a translation that agrees with one or other of the African Old Latin versions. Not all these instances were judged to be coincidence. However, in some of these cases, Tertullian did not depend upon his Old Latin text slavishly; sometimes he corrected or improved the Latin obviously with his eye on a Greek text. Further, he often quoted from memory and not always accurately". G.D. Dunn, *Tertullian*, London and New York, 2004, p. 20.

(Gal 2:16). In two of the cases abovementioned, the Psalm's text is accompanied by quotations from the Letter to the Galatians (2:16; 3:11; 3:13)<sup>24</sup>; (5:6, 5:10, 5:14)<sup>25</sup>.

Psalm 2:3 is also used in another sense in the same work, namely to present not only the success of the Apostles and their preaching to all the nations, but also their sufferings from all those who reject Christ. He uses the text of Psalm 2:3, as quoted in Act 4:25-30, together with Psalm 19:5, "*Disrumpamus uincula eorum et abiciamus a nobis iugum eorum; (...) tumultuatae sunt gentes et populi meditati sunt inania; adstiterunt reges terrae et principes congregati sunt in unum aduersus Dominum et aduersus Christum eius*"<sup>26</sup>.

### The prophecies of the OT are accomplished in Christ

Tertullian uses Psalm 2:7, to prove that in Christ all the things that had been promised in the OT have been accomplished in him. Christ is the Son begotten by the Father, to whom all nations are subdued, and not to any son of David, who ruled only the Jewish people: "*'Filius meus est tu, ego hodie generaui te, postula de me, et dabo tibi gentes hereditatem tuam et possessionem tuam terminus terrae'*". You will not be able to put in a claim for some son of David that is meant here, rather than Christ; or for the ends of the earth being promised to David, whose kingdom was limited to the Jewish nation simply, rather than to Christ, who now embraces the whole world in the faith of his gospel"<sup>27</sup>.

The second time Psalm 2:7 is used in *Aduersus Marcionem* is in the context of the Transfiguration of Christ (Mt 17:1-8) and it is a demonstration that Christ is the Son of God. He underlines that it is important that this revelation is done on a Mountain, as the OT Law was also given on a Mountain: "He retires to a mountain. In the nature of the place I see much meaning. For the Creator had originally formed his ancient people on a mountain, both with visible glory and his voice. It was only right that the New Testament should be attested on such an elevated spot as that whereon the Old Testament had been composed

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Adu. Marc.* V,3. CSEL 47,577.6-7.

<sup>25</sup> *Adu. Marc.* V,4. CSEL 47, 579.1.7.9. All translations of Tertullian texts, are basically from the Philip Schaff editon, Ante-Nicen Fathers, III, Grand Rapids, 1982. I have corrected the translation and changed some words.

<sup>26</sup> *Adu. Marc.* III,22. CSEL 47, 415.8.

<sup>27</sup> *Adu. Marc.* III,20. CSEL 47,410.16.

(...) On the present (...) occasion, therefore, the cloud was not silent; but there was the accustomed voice from heaven, and the Father's testimony to the Son; precisely as in the second Psalm he had said, '*Filius meus est tu ego hodie genui te*'"<sup>28</sup>.

Tertullian will also use Psalm 2:7 linked with Psalm 44:1, to prove against Praxeas, that the Father is not the same as the Son, that they are "distinct; I say distinct, but not separate". In the two quotations from Psalm 2:7 in *Adversus Praxean*<sup>29</sup>, it is linked to Ps 44.1: " '*Eructavit cor meum sermonem*<sup>30</sup> *optimum*'", in such a sense that he is himself both the emitter and the emitted, both he who sent forth and he who was sent forth, since he is both the Word and God. I propose you also to observe, that on my side I advance the passage where the Father said to the Son, '*Filius meus est tu, ego hodie generaui te*'"<sup>31</sup>. For the same scope Psalm 109:3 will be used also in *Aduersus Praxean*: "If you want me to believe that he is both the Father and the Son, show me some other passage where this is declared, '*Dixit Dominus domino meo, sede ad dexteram meam, donec ponam inimicos tuos scabellum pedum tuorum*'"<sup>32</sup>.

The incarnation of Christ, and how he was going to suffer, is foretold, according to Tertullian in Psalm. 8:6, a Psalm's verse that has many variations in Tertullian's works<sup>33</sup>, despite that the heretics do not accept this truth: "and whatever other (weaknesses and imperfections) the heretics take them (in their assumptions) as unworthy of God, in order to discredit the Creator, without considering that these circumstances are suitable enough for the Son, who experienced even human sufferings -hunger and thirst, and tears, and actual birth and real death-, '*propter hoc minoratus a patre modicum citra angelos*'"<sup>34</sup>.

Moreover, the first coming of Christ and his passion are presented in Psalm 8:6 and 21:7, just to prepare another Psalm's text to discuss the second coming in glory of Christ, namely, Psalm 44:2-3: "His form

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<sup>28</sup> *Adu. Marc.* IV,22. CSEL 47, 494.4.

<sup>29</sup> *Prax.* 7, *Prax.* 11.

<sup>30</sup> Capelle, affirms that the use of the Word "*sermo*" instead of "*verbum*" is a typical trace of the "African Text". Cyprian also uses the word. Cf. Capelle, *Le texte du Psautier Latin en Afrique*, p. 65.

<sup>31</sup> *Prax.* 11.

<sup>32</sup> *Prax.* 11; Cf. *Adu. Marc.* V,9. CSEL 47, 560.24.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Capelle, *Le texte du Psautier Latin en Afrique*, p. 17.

<sup>34</sup> *Prax.* 16.

was disfigured; ‘(...) uermen se pronuntians et non hominem, ignominiam hominis et nullificamen populi’. Now these signs of degradation belong to his first coming, just as the tokens of his majesty do his second advent (...) His dominion is an endless dominion, which shall not pass away; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed (Dn 7,13-14). Then indeed he shall have both a glorious form, and a spotless beauty above the sons of men. ‘*Tempestiuus enim*’ says (the Psalmist), ‘*decore citra filios hominum. Effusa est gratia in labiis tuis; propter ea benedixit te deus in aeuum. Acingere ensem super femur tuum potens tempestiuitate tua et pulchritudine tua*’ (Psalm. 44:2-3), with the Father after he diminished him ‘*modicum citra angelos*’ (Psalm. 8:6)”<sup>35</sup>.

The passion of Christ is foretold in Psalm 21. Tertullian states to Marcion: “If you require still further prediction of the Lord’s cross, the twenty-first Psalm is sufficiently enough to afford it to you, containing as it does the entire passion of Christ”. He quotes particularly Psalm 21:17, to underline how Christ was nailed to the cross: “ ‘*Foderunt*’<sup>36</sup>, says he, ‘*manus meas et pedes*’, which is the special cruelty of the cross. And again, when he implores his Father’s help, he says, ‘*saluum fac me ex ore leonis*’, that is, the death, ‘*de cornibus unicornis humilitatem [meam]*’; in other words, from the limits of the cross, as we have shown above”<sup>37</sup>.

### Palm tree or Phoenix Bird?

In *De carnis resurrectione*, Tertullian reads the text of Psalm 91:13, not as referring to a palm tree, but to the mythological bird called Phoenix<sup>38</sup>, “which renews its life in a voluntary death; its dying day is

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<sup>35</sup> *Adu. Marc.* III,7. CSEL 47, 387.7. The text of Psalm 44:3-5, is also referred some lines after this quotation (*Adu. Marc.* III,14. CSEL 47, 399.5), with the difference that instead if the word “*citra*”, he uses “*praeter*”. Nevertheless the most important change of the Psalm’s text is in Book V (*Adu. Marc.* V,18. CSEL 47, 639.19), where he changes the word “*ensem*” (a rhetorical word) for the more common “*gladium*”. Almost two Centuries after, Augustine will use for this same Psalm’s verse the word “*gladium*” (Cf. Augustine, *en. Ps.* 44,11: “*Accingere gladium tuum circa femur, potentissime*”. In fact Augustine never uses the Word “*ensis*” in a biblical text. Nevertheless he uses twice the word, particularly in *c. Faust.* 20,12, where “*ensis*” is used as a synonym of *gladius*: “*Neque enim sicut in armis una res est sub triplici appellatione, ensis, mucro, gladius (...)*”.

<sup>36</sup> In *De resurr.* Tertullian uses the Word “*perfossus*”, instead of “*foderunt*”.

<sup>37</sup> *Adu. Marc.* III,19. CSEL 47, 409.1.

<sup>38</sup> Tertullian uses in other Works the bird’s image to illustrate other mysteries of faith. (Cf. *De resurr.* 35,9-10; *Scorp.* 9,7-8; *De fug.* 3,2; *De monog.* 9,1).

the day of its birth, for on it, it departs and returns”<sup>39</sup>. This is taken as an image of the resurrection of the bodies which, after the death, will come back to life. He supports this idea with the Psalm’s text: “What can be more expressive and more significant for our argument; or to what other thing can give such a proof of it [the resurrection]? God also in his Scripture [says]: ‘*et florebis enim, inquit, uelut phoenix*’; that is, from death, from the grave, so that you believe that the substance of the body may be recovered even from the fire”<sup>40</sup>.

## Conclusion

The Psalm’s texts are present in all Tertullian’s writings. Maybe the work in which the Psalms are quoted more frequently is in *Aduersus Marcionem*. The Psalm’s texts, and also other biblical texts, are used by Tertullian as forensic arguments against his opponents, or as documents to prove his own point of view. The Psalm’s texts are at times slightly changed, so that they can fit within his own arguments, or even because he is quoting the text not using a written testimony, but his own memory.

With P. Monceaux, we can assert that Tertullian was not the first translator of the Psalms. He has as point of departure through one important Psalm’s version which is related to Cyprian’s Latin version. Nevertheless, with Barnes, we can state that he uses other translations, or he quotes the text by memory and he even makes his own translation of the text of the Psalms, when he feels that the language used in the Latin version is too strange for the Christian use, or he wants to use the Psalm’s text to support his own ideas. Despite of all the Biblical textual discussion in the works of Tertullian, we can see how the Psalms are present through all his works, and are used as an excellent source of proofs and arguments against his adversaries.

## CYPRIAN AND THE PSALMS

Scripture plays an important role within the works of Cyprian. The first two books of the *Ad Quirinus*, or as they came to be called later *Testimonia* or incorrectly *Testimoniorum libri aduersus Iudaeos*, have a

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<sup>39</sup> *De resurr.* 13. CSEL 47, 42.11.

<sup>40</sup> *Idem.*

common preface and reflect the fruit of Cyprian's Scripture studies under the initial direction of Cecilianus<sup>41</sup>, and have "an exceptional importance in the study of the history of the biblical *testimonia*"<sup>42</sup>. The third Book of the *Testimonia*, a longer supplementary collection of Scripture texts devoted to norms of Christian conduct, was written separately and is provided with a distinct preface. It was composed shortly after *Test. I-II*<sup>43</sup>.

The Scripture for Cyprian is the "spring of God's fullness" (*diuinae plenitudo fontis*)<sup>44</sup>. Nevertheless, Cyprian hardly ever uses a Scriptural quotation without identifying the text as biblical, by means of an introductory formula. In this way of underlining the importance of the Biblical Text, he differs from his predecessor Tertullian, who frequently mixes passages from the Scriptures with his own text. Tertullian also, at times, personally translated the texts from the Greek to fit in his own context<sup>45</sup>, while Cyprian makes a difference, not only because of the rough literal quality of the biblical Text<sup>46</sup>, so different from his polished style, but also for his respect for the Text of the Scriptures, a text which was, at least for the text of the Psalms, a fixed and "canonical" Text<sup>47</sup>. The most frequently used introductory formula for both OT and NT texts is "*scriptum est*"<sup>48</sup>. Another form for introducing a text as biblical,

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. *Vita Caecilii Cypriani* 4. CSEL 3.1, xciv,22.

<sup>42</sup> V. Saxer, "La Bible chez les Pères latins du IIIe. Siècle", in J. Fontaine – Ch. Pietri, *Le monde latin antique et la Bible*, Paris, 1985, p. 348.

<sup>43</sup> The attitude towards sinners (*Test. III*,28) argues for its composition before the Decian persecution, that is about the year 249.

<sup>44</sup> *Test I*, praef. The image of the fountain or source is common in Cyprian's writings. The Gospels are four rivers which flow from the divine river of Scriptures, and which give water to the fruitful trees ("*quattuor fluminibus id est euangelium quattuor*": ep. 73,10. CSEL 3.2, 787.19)

<sup>45</sup> Cf. T.P. O'Malley, *Tertullian and the Bible, Language, Imagery, Exegesis*, Nijmegen/Utrecht, 1967, p. 29.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. E. Auerbach, *Lingua letteraria e pubblico nella tarda antichità latina e nel Medioevo*, Milano, 1960, p. 48; Cf. E. Gallicet, "Cipriano e la Bibbia: 'Fortis ac sublimis vox'", in T. Alimonti et al. (ed.), *Forma futuro. Studi in onore del cardinale Michelle Pellegrino*, Torino, 1975, p. 44.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. V. Saxer, "La Bible chez les Pères latins du IIIe. Siècle", in J. Fontaine – Ch. Pietri, *Le monde latin antique et la Bible*, Paris, 1985, p. 348.

<sup>48</sup> *Test I*, praef.



is its identification as *scriptura*<sup>49</sup> or *scripturae*<sup>50</sup>. He never uses the word *testamentum* to refer neither to the OT nor to the NT<sup>51</sup>. These words not only served as an introduction to the Biblical Texts, but also reflect his understanding of the Bible as a collection of divine sayings and commands that require obedience.

His christological and ecclesiological exegesis led him to lose the sight of the difference between the revelation in the OT and the NT. He assigns to both Testaments similar weight, because both contain authoritative *diuina praecepta*<sup>52</sup>.

### Cyprian and the Psalms

The Psalms have a special role in the writings of Cyprian. From the 150 Psalms, he quotes from 52 of them<sup>53</sup>, having a total of 141 quotations of the Psalms in his works<sup>54</sup>. From these quotations, 95 occur in the *Ad Quirinum* or *Testimoniorum*<sup>55</sup> and 46 in other works. But from this 46, 36 of the quotations have been previously used in the *Testimoniorum*. There are only nine quotations of the Psalms which have not been used in the *Testimoniorum*<sup>56</sup>.

Cyprian will use the Psalm's text to prove cristological, ecclesiological, theological or liturgical issues. An overview of the

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<sup>49</sup> Cf. *Un.* 25: *Dom.* 25; *Op.* 18, et al.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. *Ep.* 55,29; *Vir.* 4; *Test.* I,5. He also uses, *diuina lectio* (*Zel.* 16); *coelesti voce* (*Lap.* 7); *sermo dei* (*Test.* II, 3); *Domini uerba* (*Vir.* 2);

<sup>51</sup> The expression: "*dispositio alia et testamentum nouum*" (*Test.* I,11) refers to the general notion of covenant (cf. Jr 38:31-32a, LXX) and not to the Scripture itself.

<sup>52</sup> A statement that the NT mark progress over the OT sources occurs in Cyprian's first baptismal letter to Magnus (*Ep.* 69,6. CSEL 3.2, 755.15). The same happens when he talks about Idolatry (*Fort.* 5).

<sup>53</sup> 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23, 34, 26, 27, 29, 32, 33, 36, 40, 44, 45, 49, 50, 52, 55, 61, 67, 68, 71, 73, 81, 83, 87, 88, 95, 96, 106, 109, 110, 111, 115, 117, 118, 125, 131, 132, 134, 138, 140.

<sup>54</sup> V. Saxer presents 113 quotations in a comparison with the only 3 quotations of the psalms made by Novatian. Cf. V. Saxer, "La Bible chez les Pères latins du IIIe. Siècle", in J. Fontaine – Ch. Pietri, *Le monde latin antique et la Bible*, Paris, 1985, p. 344.

<sup>55</sup> Book I = 9; Book II = 39; Book III = 47.

<sup>56</sup> Ps. 4:5b (*Dom.* 5); Ps. 19:8-9 (*Fort.* 10); Ps. 22:5b (*Ep.* 63,11); Ps. 26:3-4a (*Fort.* 10); Ps. 36:7b, 12-13 (*Zel.* 8); Ps. 36:35-36 (*Ep.* 59,3); Ps. 68:33b (*Dom.* 23); Ps. 138:16a (*Lap.* 27); Ps. 140:5b (*Ep.* 70,2).



Psalms collected in his works would put into light his own interest. In such a way, we can notice that some Psalms have a particular importance for Cyprian. Following the Psalm's numbers of the LXX Text, we would notice that three sections of Psalm 21 (21:7-9<sup>57</sup>; 21:17b-23<sup>58</sup>; 21:28-29<sup>59</sup>) are used to prove christological topics, namely, the lowliness in which Christ came in his first coming<sup>60</sup>, that the Jews would fix Christ to the cross<sup>61</sup>, and that Christ's eternal Lordship will start with his Resurrection<sup>62</sup>. Psalm 22:5b, would be used in a long letter to Cecil to criticize those who offer the Eucharist with a chalice containing only water<sup>63</sup>. Psalm 33 would be for Cyprian a source of inspiration for topics such as the Eucharist (Ps 33:9-11)<sup>64</sup>, humbleness (Ps 33:19-20)<sup>65</sup>, and mainly the unity of the Church (Ps 33:13-15)<sup>66</sup>. Psalm 36:25-26 will be used three times in a context fostering almsgiving, encouraging believers to be generous and to have confidence in God's help<sup>67</sup>. Psalm 49 is one of the most frequently cited Psalms in Cyprian's writings. The first verses (49:1-6) are used as christological proofs<sup>68</sup>; other verses are interpreted as proofs of the rejection of the old sacrifices of the OT (Ps. 49:13-15)<sup>69</sup>. More important is Ps. 49:16-18, where the word *disciplina* gives Cyprian a key to discuss the importance of the *disciplina ecclesiastica*, mainly to rebuke those who do not respect the Lord's command to celebrate the Eucharist with a mixed chalice, namely, with wine mixed

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<sup>57</sup> *Test.* II,13. CSEL 3.1, 78.11.

<sup>58</sup> *Test.* II,20. CSEL 3.1, 87.21.

<sup>59</sup> *Test.* II,29. CSEL 3.1, 97.7.

<sup>60</sup> *Test.* II,13. CSEL 3.1, 78.11.

<sup>61</sup> *Test.* II,20. CSEL 3.1, 87.21.

<sup>62</sup> *Test.* II,29. CSEL 3.1, 97.7.

<sup>63</sup> *Ep.* 63,11. CSEL 3.2, 710.3; Cf. W.H. Bates, "St. Cyprian and the «Aquarians»", in *SP* 15 [TU 120], 1984, 511-515; Cf. C. Burini, "L'eucaristia nostra offerta e nostro sacrificio" (Cipriano ep. 63,9)", in Vattioni, F., *Sangue e antropologia nella liturgia* III, Roma, 1984, 1251-1266.

<sup>64</sup> *Test.* III,20. CSEL 3.1, 138.21.

<sup>65</sup> *Test.* III,6. CSEL 3.1, 118.18.

<sup>66</sup> *Un.* 24. CSEL 3.1, 231.13.

<sup>67</sup> *Test.* III,1. CSEL 3.1, 110,13; *Dom.* 21. CSEL 3.1, 282.19; *Op.* 19. CSEL 3.1, 388.13.

<sup>68</sup> *Test.* II,28. CSEL 3.1, 95.2; *Pat.* 22. CSEL 3.1, 413.22.

<sup>69</sup> *Test.* I,16. CSEL 3.1, 50.1.

with water<sup>70</sup>. He also uses this section of Psalm 49 in his report of the IV Council of Carthage (AD 254) to criticize those who sympathized with the schismatic bishops Basilides and Martial<sup>71</sup>. Psalm 67 is also important for Cyprian, not only because he reads verses 2-8 as revelation about Christ, but mainly because of verse 7a, which is an invitation to unity. It is one of the most frequently cited Scriptural texts in all of Cyprian's writings. He quotes this Psalm not only in his work about the *Unity of the Church*<sup>72</sup>, but also in his work about the *Our Father*<sup>73</sup>, and in his letters<sup>74</sup>, mainly in his letter to Magnus, where he talks about the schismatic Novatian<sup>75</sup>. Cyprian will use the Psalm 115:3-4,6, to give strength and to console those who are suffering. This text is particularly important for him, since he uses it on two especial occasions: first, to encourage the bishops and priests who were imprisoned in the mines of Sigus in Numidia<sup>76</sup>, and second, to give strength to those preparing to suffer martyrdom<sup>77</sup>. Psalm 140 will be used by Cyprian to give light to ecclesiological and liturgical issues. Verse 2b will be used to prove that the Eucharist could be offered in the morning, against the objection of those who said that the Eucharist should be offered in the evening in remembrance of Christ's death towards the evening<sup>78</sup>. Verse 5b, because of the word *oleum*, will be used to assert that the baptismal anointing undertaken by the heretic is invalid<sup>79</sup>.

### Psalm Texts and Christological topics

Cyprian underlines that Christ is the First-Born and the personified Wisdom. For this purpose he uses not only quotations from the Wisdom Literature, but also a long quotation from

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<sup>70</sup> *Ep.* 63,18. CSEL 3.2, 715.13; Cf. P. Siniscalco, "La lettera 63 di Cipriano sull'eucarestia. Osservazioni sulla cronologia, sulla simbologia, sui contenuti", in A. Ceresa Gastaldo (ed.), *Storia e interpretazione degli antichi testi eucaristici*, Genova, 1995, 69-82.

<sup>71</sup> *Ep.* 67,9. CSEL 3.2, 742.24.

<sup>72</sup> *Un.* 8. CSEL 3.1, 217.15.

<sup>73</sup> *Dom.* 23. CSEL 3.1, 284.22.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. *Ep.* 11,3. CSEL 3.2, 497.16.

<sup>75</sup> *Ep.* 69,5. CSEL 3.2, 754.3; Cf. M. Girardi, "Scrittura e battesimo degli eretici nella Lettera di Firminiano a Cipriano", in *VetChr* 19 (1982), 37-67.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. *Ep.* 76,4. CSEL 3.2, 831.11.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. *Ep.* 10,2. CSEL 3.2, 492.1.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. *Ep.* 63,16. CSEL 3.2, 714.18.

<sup>79</sup> Cf. *Ep.* 70,2. CSEL 3.2, 768.21.

Psalm 88:28-34a<sup>80</sup>. Christ is also the Word of God that speaks in the Psalms. The text of Psalm 36:6 is used to assert that it foretells that Christ is the Word of God, calling him *Sermone Dei*<sup>81</sup>. In fact in the christological section of the *Testimiorum* he alludes five times to Psalm 44. The proof that Christ is the Word of God is taken from Psalm 44:2a “*Eructavit cor meum sermonem bonum, dico ego opera mea regi*”<sup>82</sup>. Another proof that Christ is the Word of God is taken from Psalm 106:20a: “*Misit sermonem meum et curavit illos*”<sup>83</sup>.

But Christ is not only the Word of God. He himself is God. To prove this, he uses Ps. 44:7-8, where, verse 8 is read as a direct address to Christ, to underline his anointing as Messiah: “*propterea unxit te Dominus Deus tuus oleum exultationis super participes tuos*”<sup>84</sup>. Psalm 45:11 is used by Cyprian as a proleptic word of Christ, where he affirms that he is God: “*Vacate et cognoscite, quoniam ego sum Deus, exaltabor in gentibus et exaltabor in terra*”<sup>85</sup>.

The text of Psalm 67 is particularly important, since he reads verses 2-8 as an OT revelation about Christ. The text of Psalm 67:5a is used to underline that Christ is God: “*Cantate Deo, psallite nomini eius, uiam facite ei qui ascendit in occasum, Deus nomen est illi*”<sup>86</sup>. Cyprian also reads Psalm 81:1, referring the word *Deus* to Christ, and predicting Christ’s teaching in the synagogue (Lk 2:46-50): “*Deus stetit in synagoga eorum, in medio autem deos discernens*”<sup>87</sup>. In this same Psalm,

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<sup>80</sup> “*Et ego primogenitum ponam eum et altissimum apud reges terrae. In aeternum seruabo illi misericordiam meam et testamentum meum fidele illi et ponam in saeculum saeculi semen eius (...) Si derelinquerint filii eius legem meam et in iudiciis meis non ambulauerint, si iustificationes meas profanauerint et praecepta mea non obseruauerunt, uisitabo in uirga facinora eorum et in flagellis delicta eorum: misericordiam autem meam non dispargam ab eis*” (Ps. 88:28-34a; *Test. II*,1. CSEL 3.1, 63.2)

<sup>81</sup> “*Sermone Dei caeli solidati sunt et spiritu eius omnis uirtus eorum*” (Ps. 32:6; *Test. II*,3. CSEL 3.1, 64.18)

<sup>82</sup> *Test. II*,3. CSEL 3.1, 64.17.

<sup>83</sup> *Test. II*,3. CSEL 3.1, 65.1.

<sup>84</sup> “*Thronus tuus, Deus, in saecula saeculorum, uirga aequitatis, uirga regni tui. Dilexisti iustitiam et odio habuisti iniustitiam: propterea unxit te Dominus Deus tuus oleum exultationis super participes tuos*” (Ps. 44:7-8; *Test. II*,6. CSEL 3.1, 69.18).

<sup>85</sup> Ps. 45:11; *Test. II*,6. CSEL 3.1, 70.2.

<sup>86</sup> Ps. 67:5a; *Test. II*,6. CSEL 3.1, 95.12.

<sup>87</sup> Ps. 81:1; *Test. II*,6. CSEL 3.1, 71.1.

verses 6-7a are connected to Jn 10:34-36, noting that if those who have been just and have obeyed the divine precepts can be called 'gods', how much more is Christ, the Son of God: "*Ego dixi: dii estis et filii Altissimi omnes, uos autem sicut homines moriemini*"<sup>88</sup>.

Despite that Cyprian, with all the patristic tradition, considered Psalm 21 as a privileged revelation of the Passion of Christ, he uses Psalm 21:7-9 to assert that the first coming of Christ was humble: "*Ego autem sum uermis et non homo, maledictum hominum et abiectio populi. Omnes qui me uidebant despiciebant me et locuti sunt in labiis et mouerunt caput: Sperauit in Domino*"<sup>89</sup>. The passion of Christ is foretold, according to Cyprian, in Psalm 21:17-23, a text suggested by Jn 19:24 and Mt 24:35. For Cyprian, in the Psalm it is said prophetically that: "the Jews would fix Him to the Cross"<sup>90</sup>, "*Effoderunt manus meas et pedes, dinumerauerunt omnia ossa mea. Ipsi autem contemplant sunt et uiderunt me, diuiserunt uestimenta mea sibi et super uestem meam sortem miserunt*"<sup>91</sup>. Another testimony used by Cyprian to prove that Christ will be nailed to the cross is, first of all, the text of Psalm 87:10b, "*Exclamaui ad te, Domine, tota die, extendi ad te manus meas*"<sup>92</sup>. In this same sense is interpreted the text of Psalm 118:120a, "*Confige clauis de metu tuo carnes meas*"<sup>93</sup>, and the text of Psalm 140:2b, "*Alleuatio manuum mearum sacrificium uespertinum*"<sup>94</sup>. Christ can offer his

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<sup>88</sup> Ps. 81:6-7a; *Test.* II,6. CSEL 3.1, 71.2.

<sup>89</sup> Ps. 21:7-9; *Test.* II,13. CSEL 3.1, 78,11.15.

<sup>90</sup> *Test.* II,20. CSEL 3.1, 87.21.

<sup>91</sup> The Psalm text continues: "*Tu autem Domine ne longinquaueris auxilium tuum, in auxilium meum adtende. Libera a gladio animam meam et de manu canis unicam meam. Salua me ex ore leonis et a cornibus unicornium humilitatem meam. Enarrabo nomen tuum fratribus meis, in medio ecclesiarum laudabo te*". *Test.* II,20. CSEL 3.1, 87.21.

<sup>92</sup> Ps. 87:10b; *Test.* II,20. CSEL 3.1, 88.13.

<sup>93</sup> Ps. 118:120a; *Test.* II,20. CSEL 3.1, 88.7.

<sup>94</sup> Ps.140:2b; *Test.* II,20. CSEL 3.1, 88.8. The text of this Psalm is used also in the letter to Cecil to answer to the objection of some, that the Eucharist should be offered in the evening, because Christ offered his own sacrifice in the Last Supper in the evening. Cyprian states that Christ offered his sacrifice in the evening: "in order to signify, by the hour of the sacrifice, the setting and evening of the world, as it is written in Exodus ('he quotes Ex 12:6'). And also in the Psalms: '*Adleuatio manuum mearum sacrificium uespertinum*'. (*Ep.* 63,16. CSEL 3.2, 714,18.)

sacrifice because he is a Priest, as foretold in Psalm 109:3b-4<sup>95</sup>, so that “the old priesthood would cease and a New Priest would come who would exist forever”<sup>96</sup>. In fact, the sacrifices of the Jews “would be rejected, and a new one celebrated”<sup>97</sup>, as Psalm 4:6<sup>98</sup> affirms, according to Cyprian. In the same sense, he interprets the words of Psalm 49:13-15, “*non edam carnes taurorum*”<sup>99</sup>. Also in this Psalm, he sees a foretelling of the *sacrificium nouum* in Psalm 49:23<sup>100</sup>, “*Sacrificium laudis clarificauit me, et illic uis est, in qua ostendam illi salutare Dei*”.

For Cyprian, the Jews, keeping the old sacrifices, were not able to recognize the “bread and cup of Christ and all his graces, but we would accept them, and the name of Christians would be blessed on the earth”<sup>101</sup>, as it is foretold in Ps. 33:9-11<sup>102</sup>. The new sacrifice of the Eucharist, includes a *calix inebrians*<sup>103</sup>, as presented in Psalm 22:5b, a text that Cyprian uses in a long letter to Cecilian to criticize the practice of offering the Eucharistic cup containing only water, instead of wine mixed with water. Water alone, according to Cyprian, cannot represent the Blood of Christ: “The Holy Spirit expresses also the symbolism of

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<sup>95</sup> Ps. 109:3b-4; *Test.* I, 17. CSEL 3.1, 50.15: “*Ante luciferum generaui te. Iurauit Deus, et non penitentur, tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedech*”. Cyprian uses the same text with some omissions in the so-called Eucharistic letter addressed to Cecil: “The fact that Melchisedek represented the type of Christ, the Holy Spirit declares in the psalms, saying in the person of the Father to the Son: ‘*Ante luciferum generaui te (...) Tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedek*’ ”. (*Ep.* 63,4. CSEL 3.2, 703.7).

<sup>96</sup> *Test.* I,17. CSEL 3.1, 50.15.

<sup>97</sup> *Test.* I,16. CSEL 3.1, 50.6.

<sup>98</sup> Ps. 4:6; *Test.* I,16. CSEL 3.1, 50.6: “*Sacrificate sacrificium iustitiae et sperate in Domino*”.

<sup>99</sup> Ps. 49:13-15; *Test.* I, 16. CSEL 3.1, 50.1: “*Non edam carnes taurorum aut sanguinem hircorum bibam? Sacrifica Deo sacrificium laudis et redde Altissimo uota tua. Inuoca me in diem praesuras, et eximam te, et clarificabis me*”.

<sup>100</sup> Ps. 49:23; *Test.* I,16. CSEL 3.1, 50.4.

<sup>101</sup> *Test.* I,23. CSEL 3.1, 58.2. All translations of Cyprian’s texts, are basically from M. A. Fahey, (*Cyprian and the Bible: A Study in third Century Exegesis*, Tübingen, 1971). I have corrected the translation and changed some words.

<sup>102</sup> Ps. 33:9-11; *Test.* I,23. CSEL 3.1, 58.2: “*Gustate et uidete, quoniam Dominus dulcis est. Felix est uir, qui sperat in eum. Timete Dominum sancti eius, quoniam non est inopia eis qui eum metuunt. Diuites egerunt et esurierunt, qui autem inquirunt Dominum non indigebunt omni bene*”.

<sup>103</sup> Ps. 22:5b; *Ep.* 63,11. CSEL 3.2, 710.3.

this reality in the Psalms, when he makes mention of the Lord's chalice and says: '*Calix tuus inebrians perquam optimus*'. A chalice which inebriates is assuredly mixed with wine. Water alone cannot inebriate anyone"<sup>104</sup>.

Cyprian will also find the key word "rex" in the Psalms, and would apply it to Christ, because "He will reign as king for ever"<sup>105</sup>. This occurs in Psalm 2:6-7a, "*Ego autem constitutes sum rex ab eo super Sion montem sanctum eius adnuntians imperium eius*"<sup>106</sup>. The word "rex" also occurs in Psalm 5:3b-4, and the text is interpreted by Cyprian as another prophecy that Christ "will reign as King forever"<sup>107</sup>: "*Rex meus et Deus meus*"<sup>108</sup>. Also the final section of Psalm 21(vv.28-29) is interpreted as a prophecy that Christ will reign as king forever<sup>109</sup>. Moreover, the "*Rex claritatis*" of Psalm 23:7 is Christ, according to Cyprian's interpretation<sup>110</sup>. Psalm 44:2-5a, is presented in the christological section of the *Testimoniorum* as a proof that Christ will

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<sup>104</sup> Ps. 22:5b; *Ep.* 63,11. CSEL 3.2, 710.53. The *calix tuus inebrians perquam optimus*, has some spiritual effects: "The chalice of the Lord so inebriates that keeps one sober; brings souls to spiritual wisdom; finally, just as ordinary wine relaxes the minds, expands the soul and expels all sadness so too, the use of the Blood of the Lord and the Life-giving chalice takes away the memory of the old man, induces forgetfulness of former wordly life, and relaxes with the joy of God's mercy the sorrowful and sad heart which was once pressed down with the weight of sins".

<sup>105</sup> *Test.* II, 29. CSEL 3.1, 97.5.

<sup>106</sup> Ps. 2:6-7a; *Test.* II,29. CSEL 3.1, 97.5.

<sup>107</sup> *Test.* II,29. CSEL 3.1, 98.4.

<sup>108</sup> Ps. 5:3b-4; *Test.* II,29. CSEL 3.1, 98.4: "*ad te orabo, Domine, mane exaudies uocem meam, mane adistam tibi et contemplanor (te)*". In another text Cyprian asserts that since Christ's resurrection occurred in the morning, "we must also pray in the morning, so that the Lord's Resurrection may be celebrated by morning's prayer. And this previously the Holy Spirit pointed out in the Psalm saying ('Quote Ps 5:3b-4')". *Dom.* 35. CSEL 3.1, 292.26.

<sup>109</sup> "*Commemorabuntur et conuertentur ad Dominum omnes termini terrae et adorabunt in conspectu tuo omnes patriae gentium: quoniam Domini est regnum et dominabitur omnium gentium*". Ps. 21:28-29; *Test.* II, 29. CSEL 3.1, 97.7.

<sup>110</sup> Ps. 23:7-10; *Test.* II,29. CSEL 3.1, 97.10: "*Auferte portas, principes, uestri et extollimini, portae aeternae, et introibit rex claritatis. Quis est iste rex claritatis? Dominus fortis et potens, Dominus fortis in proelio. Auferte portas, principes, uestri extollimini, portae aeternae, et introibit rex claritatis. Quis est iste rex claritatis? Dominus uirtutum ipse est rex claritatis*".

reign as a king forever<sup>111</sup>. The “*Rex noster*” in Psalm 73:12, is interpreted as Christ<sup>112</sup>. Also, according to Cyprian, the earth rejoices, because Christ is the eternal King<sup>113</sup>.

## Psalm Texts and the Church

Cyprian uses the Psalms to talk about the Church. An often cited quotation to underline the unity of the Church is Psalm 67:7a<sup>114</sup>. In the *Testimoniorum*, Cyprian underlines that “schism must not be made, despite he who withdraws should remain in the one faith and in the same tradition”<sup>115</sup>. The same text is quoted in his work about the Unity of the Church (*De ecclesiae catholicae unitate*)<sup>116</sup> and in his letters<sup>117</sup>. In a letter addressed to Magnus about the schismatic Novatian, he quotes Jn 10:16, and says: “But if the flock is one, how can we consider in the flock someone who is not even in it? When there is one shepherd presiding in the government of the Church through a successive ordination, how can we consider as shepherd someone who succeeds no one, who is only a stranger and a profane person, beginning from himself, an enemy of peace of the Lord and of the unity of God, and who does not live in the house of God, that is in the Church of God: In that house live only those of one heart and one soul, since the Holy Spirit says in the Psalms (‘Quote Ps 67:7a’)”<sup>118</sup>.

Psalm 132:1 is also important to underline the unity of the Church: “*Ecce quid bonum et uoluptabile est ut habitant fratres in unum*”<sup>119</sup>.

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<sup>111</sup> Ps. 44:2-5a; *Test.* II,29. CSEL 3.1, 97.16: “*Eructauit cor meum sermonem bonum, dico ego opera mea regi. Lingua mea calamus scriptoris acute scribentis. Decorus specie super filios hominum, effusa est gratia in labiis tuis, porpterea benedixit Deus in saecula. Adcingere ensem tuum ad femur, potentissime decori et specie tuae, et intende et dirige et regna propter lenitatem et ueritatem et iustitiam*”.

<sup>112</sup> Ps. 73:12; *Test.* II,29. CSEL 3.1, 98.12: “*Deus autem rex noster ante saeculum, operatus est salutem in medio terrae*”.

<sup>113</sup> Ps. 96:1b; *Test.* II,29. CSEL 3.1, 98.7: “*Dominus regnauit exultet terra, iucundetur insulae multae*”.

<sup>114</sup> Ps. 67:7a; *Test.* III,86. CSEL 3.1, 174.16: “*Deus qui habitare facit unianimes in domo*”.

<sup>115</sup> *Test.* III,86. CSEL 3.1, 174.16.

<sup>116</sup> *Un.* 8. CSEL 3.1, 217.15.

<sup>117</sup> *Ep.* 11,3. CSEL 3.2, 497.16; *Ep.* 69,5. CSEL 3.2, 754.3.

<sup>118</sup> Ps. 67:7a; *Ep.* 69,5. CSEL 3.2, 754.3.

<sup>119</sup> Ps. 132:1; *Test.* III, 86. CSEL 3.1, 174.9.



Curiously enough there is only one text of the Psalms used in the baptismal controversy, namely Psalm 140:5b, because of the word *oleum* in the citation: “*oleum peccatoris non ungat caput meum*”. For Cyprian this quotation is a proof that the baptismal anointing undertaken by the heretics is invalid: “Now it is at the Eucharist that the baptized ought to be able to be anointed with oil consecrated at the altar. But those who have neither altar nor Church cannot make the consecration of the oil. Therefore, since it is clear that oil cannot be sanctified [by the heretics], neither the spiritual anointing can exist among the heretics, nor can the Eucharist be held among them. We ought to know and remember what is written: ‘*Oleum peccatoris non ungat caput meum*’. And the Holy Spirit gives this warning beforehand in the Psalms fearing that someone could go astray and wandering from the way of truth, might go to be anointed among the heretics and adversaries of Christ”<sup>120</sup>.

Cyprian uses three times Psalm 2:12 to underline the importance of ecclesiastical discipline (*disciplina*). The first quotation occurs in the *Testimoniorum*<sup>121</sup>. In *De habitu virginum*, he asserts: “To obey discipline is salutary; to avoid and neglect it is fatal. In the Psalms, the Holy Spirit says: ‘(‘Quote Ps. 2:12a’)’<sup>122</sup>. In Cyprian’s letter 4, dealing with a scandal caused by some deacons who lived in the same house in which also some virgins were living, he states: “(...) to maintain ecclesiastical discipline by all means of utility and salvation, since (...) in the Psalms the Holy Spirit instructs us, saying: (‘Quote Ps. 2:12a’)’<sup>123</sup>.

The text of Psalm 36:35-36 is used by Cyprian to prove the importance of ecclesiastical discipline. In letter 59 addressed to Pope Cornelius, he asserts that the verbal attacks coming from the enemies of the Church should not be a reason to neglect the duties of the bishop, “Since this is not a reason, dear brother, to abandon ecclesiastical discipline or to be weak in the exercise of the bishop’s authority, because we are bothered by criticism or submitted to methods of intimidation. Divine Scripture answers and warns, saying (...): *Vidi impium exaltatum et extolli super cedros Libani: et transiui, et ecce non fuit. Et quaesiui eum, et non est inuentus locus eius*”<sup>124</sup>.

<sup>120</sup> Ps. 140: 5b; *Ep.* 70,2. CSEL 3.2, 768.21.

<sup>121</sup> *Test.* III,66. CSEL 3.1, 168,12.

<sup>122</sup> *Vir.* 1. CSEL 3.1, 187.7.

<sup>123</sup> Ps. 2:12a; *Ep.* 4,1. CSEL 3.2, 473.14.

<sup>124</sup> Ps. 36:35-36; *Ep.* 59,3. CSEL 3.2, 669.6.



Moreover, verses 17-18 of Psalm 49 are used by Cyprian in his report of the IV Council of Carthage (A.D. 254) to rebuke those who felt sympathy for the schismatic bishops Basilides and Martial, “Although some of our colleagues, dear brethren, think they ought to neglect God’s discipline and insolently live in communion with Basilides and Martial, this case ought not to disturb our faith since the Holy Spirit in the Psalms intimidates those who act in this way, and say: (‘Quote Ps. 49:17-18’). He shows that those who have been associated with the blameworthy become sharers and companions in the crimes of others”<sup>125</sup>.

Psalm 88:31-33,34a, is used by Cyprian in the treatise *De Lapsis*, to state that a penitent could be pardoned even from the sin of apostasy. After describing vice in the Church, he affirms: “If that is what we have become, what do we not deserve for such sins, when God’s judgment warned us long ago saying; ‘*Si derelinquerint filii eius legem meam et in iudiciis meis non ambulauerint, si iustificationes meas profanauerint et praecepta mea non obseruauerunt, uisitabo in uirga facinora eorum et in flagellis delicta eorum*’”<sup>126</sup>.

According to Cyprian, public repentance is also urged in the Psalms, as in Psalm 6:6b, where he uses the Greek word *exhomologesin* (public confession), which is more concrete than the Latin term *confessio*: “One ought to *exhomologesin* (make a public confession of sin) while he is still in the flesh, ‘*Apud inferos autem quis confitebitur tibi?*’”<sup>127</sup>. But sins are also forgiven, according to Cyprian, by giving alms and performing other works of mercy. To prove this, he uses Psalm 36:25-26<sup>128</sup>, Psalm 111:9<sup>129</sup>, Psalm 67:6a<sup>130</sup>, and especially Psalm 40:2, not only in his *Testimoniorum*<sup>131</sup>, but also in a section of the Work *De opera et eleemosynis*, where he affirms: “The sinner who has not himself been merciful will not be able to merit the mercy of God, nor will he

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<sup>125</sup> *Ep.* 67,9. CSEL 3.2, 742.24.

<sup>126</sup> *Lap.* 6. CSEL 3.1, 241.6.

<sup>127</sup> Ps. 6:6b; *Test.* III,114. CSEL 3.1, 182.10.

<sup>128</sup> Ps. 36:25-26; *Test.* III,1. CSEL 3.1, 110.13: “*Iuuenior fui et senui et non uidi iustum derelictum neque semen eius quaerens panem. Tota die miseretur et faenerat, et semen eius in benedictione est*”.

<sup>129</sup> Ps. 111:9; *Test.* III,1. CSEL 3.1, 110.17: “*Dispersit, dedit pauperibus, iustitia manet in saeculum saeculi*”.

<sup>130</sup> This text especially for the Works of Mercy with the widows and orphans. Ps. 67:6a; *Test.* III,113. CSEL 3.1, 182.7: “*Patris orphanorum et iudicis uiduarum*”.

<sup>131</sup> Ps. 40:2; *Test.* III,1. CSEL 3.1, 110.15.

obtain anything from God's love through prayers, who has not been humane to the request of the poor. Likewise in the Psalms, the Holy Spirit declares and confirms this saying: '*Beatus*<sup>132</sup> *qui intellegit super egenum et pauperem, in die malo liberabit illum Deus*' "<sup>133</sup>.

## Conclusion

The Psalms played a special role in Cyprian's writings. He had a particular respect for the text of the Scriptures and everytime he used one Biblical text, he will introduce it with a particular formula. His work *Ad Quirinum (Testimoniorum)* shows how Cyprian used many Psalm texts to prove theological, christological, liturgical and spiritual topics. He found in the Word of God, and particularry in the Psalms, an abundant source to back the Christian doctrine and his particular ideas about Christianity. Cyprian finds an established or "canonical" text and despite its roughness, he respects it as Word of God. There are Psalms which had a particular importance for Cyprian, like Psalm 21, used to prove Christological topics<sup>134</sup>. Psalm 33 is, for Cyprian, a source of inspiration for topics such as the Eucharist (Ps. 33:9-11)<sup>135</sup> and the unity of the Church (Ps. 33:13-15)<sup>136</sup>. Psalm 36:25-26 is used to foster almsgiving<sup>137</sup>. Psalm 49 is one of the most frequently cited Psalms in Cyprian's writings, as a Christological proof<sup>138</sup> and to underline the importance of the *disciplina ecclesiastica*<sup>139</sup>. Psalm 67 is also important as an invitation to unity<sup>140</sup>. Psalm 115:3-4.6 will be used to console those suffering<sup>141</sup>. Psalm 140 will be used by Cyprian to give light to ecclesiological and liturgical issues<sup>142</sup>.

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<sup>132</sup> In the text of the Psalm Ps 40:2 in the *Testimoniorum* (Test. III,1. CSEL 3.1, 110.15) he uses the word "*felix*" instead of "*beatus*".

<sup>133</sup> *Op.* 5. CSEL 3.1, 376.26.

<sup>134</sup> *Test.* II,13. CSEL 3.1, 78.11.

<sup>135</sup> *Test.* III,20. CSEL 3.1, 138.21.

<sup>136</sup> *Un.* 24. CSEL 3.1, 231.13.

<sup>137</sup> *Test.* III,1. CSEL 3.1, 110.13; *Dom.* 21. CSEL 3.1, 282.19; *Op.* 19. CSEL 3.1, 388.13.

<sup>138</sup> *Test.* II,28. CSEL 3.1, 95.2; *Pat.* 22; CSEL 3.1, 413.22.

<sup>139</sup> *Ep.* 63,18. CSEL 3.2,715.13.

<sup>140</sup> *Un.* 8. CSEL 3.1, 217.15.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. *Ep.* 76,4. CSEL 3.2, 831.11.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. *Ep.* 70,2. CSEL 3.2,768.21.

## THE DONATIST AND THE PSALMS

In the polemic among Catholics and Donatists in North Africa during the 4th century, the Scriptures played a central role. The Donatists used the biblical text in different ways. Many verses were used as simple reports of the status of things, whether of the Donatist, or of the Catholic community. In the context of controversy, the quotations from the Bible might well have been introduced each time with the words: “This is the way the world, the Church, or life is. This is the way I want you to think about it, and you will, if you accept God’s words. I know I am right, because what I say matches what the Bible says. And we all know the Bible is true”<sup>143</sup>.

The old North Africa’s Manuscripts of the Bible, have *capitula*, added by the Donatists, as a testimony of the Donatists’ interest for the Scripture and of the work of reviewing the old biblical texts. Another interesting example of how the polemic among Catholics and Donatists was focused not only on liturgical, theological or historical issues, but also on biblical topics, could be found in Augustine’s commentary on Psalm 132, where he asserts that the Donatists affirm that the word “monk” (*monachus*) could not be found in the Bible, while the word “fighters” (*agonsti*) that they used to call their *circumcelliones* occurs within the biblical text (2 Tim 4:7)<sup>144</sup>.

Nevertheless, the sources to get to know the characteristics of the Donatists’ Bible are scarce. We mainly have three sources, leaving behind the *Passiones* of the Donatist’s martyrs<sup>145</sup>, namely, Tyconius’ two works, the *Liber Regularum* and his commentary on the Book of Revelation (that has been lost, and its remains lie scattered, either as

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<sup>143</sup> Cf. M. Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa*, Minneapolis, 1997, p. 142.

<sup>144</sup> *en. Ps. 132,6: “Ostendite ubi scriptum sit nomen monachorum, ostendant ubi scriptum sit nomen agonisticorum. Sic eos, inquit, appellamus propter agonem. Certant enim; et dicit Apostolus: Certamen bonum certavi (2 Tim 4,7) Quia sunt qui certant adversus diabolum, et praevalent, milites Christi agonistici appellantur. Utinam ergo milites Christi essent, et non milites diaboli, a quibus plus timetur, Deo laudes, quam fremitus leonis”.*

<sup>145</sup> Cf. M. Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa*, pp. 41-50; Cf. M. Tilley, *Donatist Martyr Stories. The Church in conflict in Roman North Africa*, Liverpool, 1996.

source or as influence, in the works of medieval exegetes)<sup>146</sup>; and for the Psalms, we have mainly the quotations kept in the works of Augustine, where he refers his discussion with the Donatist's bishops Petilianus and Parmenianus. I will present first, the psalms in Tyconius' *Liber Regularum*. Then, the Donatist psalm's text, as it is referred to by Augustine, and finally the Psalms in the writings of Optatus of Milevis.

## Tyconius

One of the most brilliant thinkers in North Africa in the '70s and '80s of the 4th century was Tyconius. He wrote two hermeneutical works, his commentary on the Apocalypse, that, as mentioned earlier, has been lost though parts of it remain, within the work of medieval exegetes. The other work is the *Liber Regularum*, "the first treatise on biblical hermeneutics in the Latin West"<sup>147</sup>. As a Donatist he managed to put aside any residual millenarism within his church, and offered to Donatist a new ecclesiology, where evil within the "church of the Pure" was not minimized, as Parmenianus did, but presented the evil and the evildoers as part of the pilgrim Church. Because of his ideas he was condemned and expelled from the Donatist Church<sup>148</sup> by the council of Carthage (380), guided by Parmenianus<sup>149</sup>.

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<sup>146</sup> Cf. K.B. Steinhauser, *The Apocalypse Commentary of Tyconius: A History of Its Reception and Influence*, Frankfurt, 1987.

<sup>147</sup> P. Bright, *The book of Rules of Tyconius*, Indiana, 1988, p. 2. Cf. M. Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa*, p. 115. Cf. G. Gaeta, "Il Liber Regularum di Ticonio, studio sull'ermeneutica scritturistica", in *AnSE* 5 (1988), 103-124.

<sup>148</sup> K.B. Steinhauser in an interesting article has put forward the hypothesis of the Greek origin of Tyconius and that he did not become a catholic once he was expelled from the donatist, not because of theological reasons, but because of his "cultural environment". He maintains that he was an ethnic Greek, a descendant of Greek speaking ancestors. "His status as a member of an ethnic minority indicates why he would not have felt himself at home in neither the Donatist nor the Catholic communities, both of which were Roman". K.B. Steinhauser, "Tyconius, was he Greek?" in *SP* 27 93 (1993), 394-395. Cf. L.J. Van der Lof, "Warum wurde Tyconius nicht katholisch?", in *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 57 (1966), 260-283.

<sup>149</sup> The records of the council do not survive, but Augustine is the one who informs us that Tyconius was excommunicated because he affirmed that the Church was spread all over the World, and because he taught that no one could be stained by the sin of others. Cf. Augustine, *c. ep. Parm.* 1,1.2. CSEL 51, 20.7.

Nevertheless, his only extant work, the *Liber Regularum* is the first systematic attempt of an exegetical work. His mystical rules provide an explanation of the unity of the whole Bible, Old and New Testaments, and also of the unity of the Bible and the world. Despite the importance of this work, the summary and interpretation provided by Augustine<sup>150</sup> in his work *De Doctrina Christiana*<sup>151</sup>, effectively deflected attention from the *Liber Regularum*<sup>152</sup>. Moreover, as Burkitt asserts, the “corrupt state of the text (...) has prevented the recognition of the very important place which Tyconius holds in the history of Biblical Interpretation in Western Europe”<sup>153</sup>. As the same Burkitt recognized, the *Liber Regularum* is a rich source to get to know the pre-Augustinian versions of the Old North Africa’s Bible<sup>154</sup>. Despite that Burkitt focuses on the Old Latin text of the prophets as it is also a good source of information about the Psalms.

### The Psalms within the *Liber Regularum*

Tyconius quotes 29 times<sup>155</sup> the Psalms within his *Liber Regularum*. In the first rule, *de Domino et corpore eius*, he quotes six Psalms (Ps. 90:11-16; Ps. 17:51; Ps. 79:15; Ps. 2:7 [within the quotation of Lc 3:22]; Ps. 50:14; Ps. 109:1). In the second rule, *Domini corpore bipartito*, he quotes one Psalm (Ps. 119:5-7). In the third rule, *De promissis et lege*, he quotes five psalms (Ps. 142:2; Ps. 50:6; Ps. 102:4; Ps. 115:1 [2 Cor 4,13]; Ps. 23:4-5). In the fourth rule, *De specie et genere*, he quotes two Psalms (Ps. 88:33 [2 Sam 7,14]; Ps. 136:9). In

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<sup>150</sup> Cf. M. Tilley, “Understanding Augustine, Misunderstanding Tyconius”, in *SP* 35 (2001), 330-337.

<sup>151</sup> Augustine, *doctr. chr.* 3,30,42-56.

<sup>152</sup> Cf. W. S. Babcock, “Augustine and Tyconius”, in *SP* 17 (1982), 1209-1215; P.C. Bori, “La ricezione delle Regole di Ticonio, da Agostino a Erasmo”, in *AnSE* 5 (1988), 125-142; Cf. M. Dulaey, “La sixième Règle de Ticonio et son résumé dans le *de doctrina christiana*”, in *REAug* 35 (1989), 83-103; Ch. Kannengiesser, *A Conflict of Christian Hermeneutics in Roman Africa: Tyconius and Augustine*, Berkeley, 1989; L. Ayres, “Agustín y Ticonio sobre metafísica y exegesis”, in *AVGVSTINVS* 40 (1995), 297-302; R. Gryson, “Le sete regole per la Scrittura”, in L. Leoni – D. Leoni, *Ticonio*, Bologna, 1997; P. Camastra, *Il Liber regularum di Ticonio: contributo alla lettura*, Roma, 1998; P. Marone, “L’uso delle regole di Ticonio nella produzione letteraria di Agostino”, in *SMSR* 24 (2000), 241-254; J.-M. Vercruyse, *Tyconius. Le livre des Règles*, Paris, 2004.

<sup>153</sup> F. C. Burkitt, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius*, Preface, Cambridge, 1894.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. *Idem*.

<sup>155</sup> According to Bright, the quotations are 34. Cf. P. Bright, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius*, Indiana, 1988, p. 40.

the fifth rule, *De temporibus*, he quotes four Psalms (Ps. 118:164; Ps. 67:18; Ps. 104:8; Ps. 64:12). In the sixth rule<sup>156</sup>, *De recapitulatione*, he quotes two Psalms (Ps. 125:1-3; Ps. 72:28[1 Cor 6,17]). In the last rule, *De diabolo et corpore eius*, he quotes nine Psalms (Ps. 45:3; Ps. 17:8; Ps. 2:6-7; Ps. 71:3; Ps. 113:4; Ps. 96:2; Ps. 95:9; Ps. 54:21; Ps. 8:3). It is evident that the last rule is the one in which he quotes more Psalms (9). We have two long quotations. One in the first rule, Ps. 90:11-16, and Ps. 125:1-3, in the sixth rule.

To make a comparison with other Latin African texts of the Psalms, it is necessary to follow the critical edition of Burkitt, because of the “corrupt state of the text”, since his first edition in the 16th century by Grynaeus of Basle<sup>157</sup>. As the same Burkitt had demonstrated, the biblical text of the prophet Isaiah used by Tyconius is very close to the one used by Cyprian<sup>158</sup>. He also asserts that it is a text of the African branch (K) of the *Vetus Latina*, with its own variants (C)<sup>159</sup>. Nevertheless, which is the text that Tyconius used for the Psalms? Taking Burkitt critical edition, we find only four Psalm quotations that are also present in Cyprian, namely, Ps. 2:6 (seventh rule); Ps. 2:7 (first rule), and Ps. 23:4 (third rule); Ps. 88:33 (fourth rule)<sup>160</sup>. Nevertheless this last quotation (Ps. 88:33) is only an allusion to the Psalm’s text, since it is quoting directly 2 Sam 7,14. For this reason I have left aside this text. In what follows, I will present the comparison between Cyprian and Tyconius Psalm’s texts.

### Ps. 2:6

Tyconius: “*Ego autem constitutus sum rex ab eo super Sion montem sanctum eius adnuntians imperia* (Cyprian: *imperium*) eius”<sup>161</sup>.

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<sup>156</sup> Cf. M. Dulaey, “La sixième Règle de Ticonio et son résumé dans le de doctrina christiana”, in *REAug* 35 (1989), 83-103. Cf. K.B. Steinhauser, “Recapitulatio in Tyconius and Augustine”, in *Aug St.* 15 (1984), pp. 1-5.

<sup>157</sup> Cf. P. Bright, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius*, Indiana, 1988, p. 1; F. C. Burkitt, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius*, Preface, Cambridge, 1894, xxviii.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. F. C. Burkitt, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius*, Preface, Cambridge, 1894, liii.

<sup>159</sup> Cf. F. C. Burkitt, *The Book of Rules of Tyconius*, Preface, Cambridge, 1894, lii.

<sup>160</sup> Cyprian, *ep.* 11,2,1. CSEL 3.2, 96.20.

<sup>161</sup> Cyprian, *Test.* II,29; CSEL 3.1, 97.5; Tyconius, *Liber Regularum*, 72,28 (Burkitt)

They use the same text, except for the word “*imperia*”, that appears in the *Liber Regularum*. Augustine has a different version in the last part: “*Ego autem constitutus sum rex ab eo super Sion montem sanctum eius, praedicans praeceptum Domini*”<sup>162</sup>.

### Ps 2:7

Tyconius: “*Dominus dixit ad me: Filius meus es tu, ego hodie generaui te*”<sup>163</sup>.

They use the same text, and it is also the same text used at times by Tertullian<sup>164</sup>. Augustine uses in the last part a different word: “*Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te*”<sup>165</sup>.

### Ps. 23:4

Tyconius: “*qui non iuravit proximo suo in dolo. Iste accipiet benedictionem a Domino*”<sup>166</sup>.

Cyprian: “*et non iuravit subdole proximo sibi. Iste accipiet benedictionem a Domino*”<sup>167</sup>.

They have different texts in the first part. In this case, Tyconius’ text is closer to Augustine’s text: “*Et non iuravit proximo suo in dolo*”<sup>168</sup>. *Hic accipiet benedictionem a Domino*”<sup>169</sup>. P. Capelle in his classical study asserts that this Psalm’s text is an example of the accordance of what he calls “the Donatist text”, with witnesses which are post-Cyprianic<sup>170</sup>.

Finally if we compare the Tyconius’ longest text, namely Ps. 90:11-16<sup>171</sup>, with Augustine’s version<sup>172</sup>, we will notice that there is a great similarity, despite the small differences. The difference with Augustine’s text is put into brackets with the letter “A”:

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<sup>162</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps.* 2,5.

<sup>163</sup> Cyprian, *Test.* II,8. CSEL 3.1, 73.5. Tyconius *Liber Regularum*, 7.6 (Burkitt).

<sup>164</sup> Cf. Tertullian, *Prax.* 11; *Adu. Marc.* III,20. Tertullian also uses the variant “*genui*”. Cf. *Prax.* 7; *Adu. Marc.* IV,22.

<sup>165</sup> *en. Ps.* 2,6.

<sup>166</sup> Tyconius, *Liber Regularum*. 29.1 (Burkitt).

<sup>167</sup> Cyprian, *Test.* II,18. CSEL 3.1, 85.2.

<sup>168</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps.* 23,4.

<sup>169</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps.* 23,5.

<sup>170</sup> “Nouvel exemple de l’accord du texte donatiste avec le témoins postérieurs contre S. Cyprien”. P. Capelle, *Le texte du Psautier Latin en Afrique*, p. 74.

<sup>171</sup> Tyconius, *Liber Regularum*, 3.14 (Burkitt).

<sup>172</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps.* 90,2,3. 6.7.9-13.



Tyconius: “*Angelis suis mandavit de te ut custodiant te in omnibus uis tuis, in manibus ferant (A: tollent) te ne (A. adds: quando) offendas ad lapidem pedem tuum. Super aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis, et conculcabis leonem et draconem. Quoniam in me speravit eripiam (A: eruam) eum, protegam illum (A: eum) quoniam cognovit nomen meum. Inuocabit me et exaudiam eum, cum ipso sum in tribulatione, eripiam (A: et eximam) et glorificabo eum. Longitudine dierum adimplebo (A: replebo<sup>173</sup>) eum et ostendam illi salutare meum”.*

## Conclusion

In the *Liber Regularum* Tyconius uses the Psalms widely to explain his seven hermeneutical rules. It is difficult to assert which Psalm’s version he used, since not all Psalms quoted by Tyconius in the *Liber Regularum* are used by Cyprian. Nevertheless with the few coincidences, we can affirm that Tyconius’ Psalms’ text is at times similar to the one used by Cyprian, as happens with the prophetic text which was studied by Burkitt, but also there are some texts which are closer and similar to the Psalm’s text used by Augustine. Maybe we have in Tyconius a witness of a Psalm’s text which is a “middle-way” between Cyprian and Augustine.

## Donatist Psalm Texts within Augustine’s Works

Augustine wrote several works that provide information about Donatist exegesis. These are *Contra litteras Petiliani* (400-403); *Epistula ad Catholicos de secta donatistarum*, also known as *De unitate ecclesiae* (401); *Contra Cresconium grammaticum donatistam*<sup>174</sup> (405); *Liber de unico baptismo* (410/411); *Contra Gaudentium*<sup>175</sup> (420). From the seven

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<sup>173</sup> Augustine uses ‘replebo’ 10 times in his works. He uses this verb form for the NT text of Lc 12,18 (Cf. s. 32,27; s. 107A [= Lambot 5]). He only uses twice the word *adimplebo*, as a psalm quotation, namely Ps. 80,11 (*en. Ps.* 80,15). Maybe the form ‘adimplebo’ reflects an old Psalm’s version, namely a “Cyprianic” text.

<sup>174</sup> Cf. P. Langa, “La autoridad de la Sagrada Escritura en el *Contra Cresconium*”, *Augustiniana* 41 (1991), 691-721; J.M. Poulle-Voyau, *Moyens et fin de l’écriture polemique dans le Contra Cresconium d’Augustin*, Paris, 2013.

<sup>175</sup> Cf. E. Lamirande, “Notes sur le texte biblique du *Contra Gaudentium*”, in BA 32 (1965), 746-747; Cf. M. Tilley, “Contre Gaudentius (*Contra Gaudentium*)”, in A. Fitzgerald – M.-A. Vannier (ed.), *Saint Augustin. La Méditerranée et l’Europe IVe-XXIe siècle*, 2005, 352-353.



Psalm Texts that Augustine refers as taken from his adversaries<sup>176</sup>, there are two which are particularly important, because Augustine quotes completely Psalms 1 and 2. The complete text of these Psalms give us the opportunity to take a close glance at the kind of psalter they used, even if the two are only a sample.

### Psalm 1

We will refer to the complete text of Psalm 1 to observe the coincidences with the Old Latin African text witnessed by Tertullian and Cyprian, and also the differences with this text. The coincidences will be presented in bold, and the main differences in italics. The complete text of Psalm 1, as referred to by Augustine in his work *Contra Litteras Petiliani*<sup>177</sup> is:

- (1) Beatus uir qui non abiit consilio impiorum, et in uia peccatorum non stetit . Et **super cathedram**<sup>178</sup> pestilentiae non sedit.
- (2) Sed in lege Domini uoluntas eius, et **in lege Domini**<sup>179</sup> meditabitur die *ac*<sup>180</sup> nocte.
- (3) Et erit **uelut**<sup>181</sup> lignum quod plantatum est *circa decursus*<sup>182</sup> aquarum, quod fructum suum dabit in tempore suo. Et folium eius non decidet, et omnia quaecumque **fecerit**, *prospera procedent*<sup>183</sup>.

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<sup>176</sup> Augustine, *c. litt. Pet.* 2,46,107 (Psalm 1:1-6); *c. litt. Pet.* 2,92,102 (Psalm 2:13); *c. litt. Pet.* 2,47,109 (Psalm 22:1.4.5.6); *c. ep. Parm.* 3,5,26 (Psalm 25:4-10); *c. ep. Parm.* 2,9,18 (Psalm 49:16.17.18); *c. litt. Pet.* 2,20,44 (Psalm 104:15); *c. ep. Parm.* 2,10,20 (Psalm 140:5).

<sup>177</sup> Augustine, *c. litt. Pet.* 2,46,107.

<sup>178</sup> Tertullian (*Adu. Marc.* II,19) refers "*in cathedra pestilentium*"; Tertullian (*De Pud.* 18. CSEL 3.1, 259.15), also refers "*in cathedra pestilentiae*". Augustine (*en. Ps.* 1,1) refers: "*in cathedram pestilentiae*".

<sup>179</sup> Cyprian (*Test.* III,120) refers the same wording; Augustine (*en. Ps.* 1,2), refers: "*in lege eius*".

<sup>180</sup> Cyprian (*Test.* III,120) and Tertullian refer: "*et*".

<sup>181</sup> Tertullian (*Adu. Marc.* II,18. CSEL 3.1, 361.21) refers also "*tamquam*". Augustine (*en. Ps.* 1,3) refers: "*tamquam*".

<sup>182</sup> Tertullian (*Adu. Marc.* II,18. CSEL 3.1, 361.21) refers: "*exitus*", Augustine (*en. Ps.* 1,3) refers: "*secundum decursus*".

<sup>183</sup> Tertullian (*Adu. Marc.* II,18. CSEL 3.1, 361.24) refers: "*prosperabuntur*"; Augustine (*en. Ps.* 1,3) also refers: "*prosperabuntur*".

- (4) Non sic impii, non sic; sed tamquam pulvis quem *proicit*<sup>184</sup> uentus a facie terrae.
- (5) *Propterea non exsurgent*<sup>185</sup> impii in iudicio, neque peccatores in consilio iustorum.
- (6) Quoniam **scit Dominus uias**<sup>186</sup> iustorum, *et iter*<sup>187</sup> impiorum periet

If we follow the insights of P. Capelle about this text<sup>188</sup>, we will agree that this text offers two main characteristics: (1) There are coincidences with the Old African Latin text, mainly with that of Tertullian, because of the vocabulary and expressions (“*in lege domini*”, “*uelut lignum*”, “*scit*”); (2) There are also new elements in this text that do not appear in other African Latin texts such as: “*circa*”, “*prospera precedent*”, “*exurgent*”, “*uias*”.

After the study of the other Donatist texts that are kept in the works of Augustine, namely, the 33 verses referred by Augustine, P. Capelle concludes that the Donatists made an effort to keep the old form of the biblical text, approaching not to the text witnessed in Cyprian’s works, but to the old text referred to by Tertullian<sup>189</sup>. He also presents the hypothesis that the Donatists wanted not only to keep the old text of the Psalms, but since we can find some words in the Donatist’s Psalm text, which are not present in the old versions, this may give witness of a work of reviewing the Psalm’s text; he asserts that the Donatists were interested not only in keeping the old “African” texts, but also in presenting to their opponents (namely to the Catholics) a revised version of the Biblical texts. Nevertheless, as Capelle recognizes, the Donatists’ renewal work, within the Psalm’s text, was not really considerable.

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<sup>184</sup> An old African text refers here “*abicit*”. Augustine (*en. Ps. 1,4*) refers the verse without any change.

<sup>185</sup> Cyprian (*Test. III,31*) refers “*resurgent*” and “*iudicium*”. Augustine (*en. Ps. 1,5*), refers: “*Ideo non resurgunt*”.

<sup>186</sup> Augustine refers in *en. Ps. 1,6*: “*nouit Dominus uiam*”.

<sup>187</sup> An old African text refers “*et uia*”.

<sup>188</sup> Cf. Paul Capelle, *Le texte du Psautier Latin en Afrique*, p. 72.

<sup>189</sup> “(...) les donatistes s’efforcèrent surtout de maintenir la forme Antique du texte biblique. Cette forme n’est pas toujours conforme aux citations de S. Cyprian, mais se rapproche aussi de Tertullian et d’autres anciens textes africains”. P. Capelle, *Le texte du Psautier Latin en Afrique*, p. 77.

## Optatus of Milevis

Another witness of the Psalm's text in North Africa is the bishop Optatus of Milevis<sup>190</sup>. Within his Work *Aduersus donatistas*, as P. Marone asserts, he quotes 50 Psalm texts<sup>191</sup>. His quotations of the Psalms could be divided, according to P. Capelle<sup>192</sup>, mainly in three groups. (A) The quotations where he refers to the Psalm following a Donatist text, in a polemical context; (B) The common quotations with Cyprian's text; (C) His very own versions<sup>193</sup>. It is important to underline that Capelle's point of view was contested by E. Bounaiuti<sup>194</sup>, but without giving enough proofs. Moreover, the examples he studies in his essay are from the NT, and not from the Psalms. Also Blomgren in an essay on the authenticity of Book VII of Optatus' *Aduersus donatistas*, states that the main obstacle to get to know Optatus' biblical version is the two manuscript traditions that had trasmitted the text<sup>195</sup>. He also affirmed that Optatus from time to time, quoted the text from memory, and not following an specific text. He also put forward the hypothesis that some of Optatus' biblical quotations could have been altered by the copists of the manuscripts<sup>196</sup>. Other scholars such as Pincherle<sup>197</sup>, Altaner<sup>198</sup> and lately Mazzucco have studied Optatus' biblical versions. Nevertheless, they have focused on the NT texts and not on the Psalms<sup>199</sup>.

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<sup>190</sup> Cf. P. Marone, *L'esegesi biblica di Ottato di Milevi*, Roma, 2008.

<sup>191</sup> Cf. P. Marone, *L'esegesi biblica di Ottato di Milevi*, p. 75.

<sup>192</sup> Cf. P. Capelle, *Le texte du Psautier latin en Afrique*, p. 78-81.

<sup>193</sup> Cf. C. Mazzucco, *Ottato di Milevi in un secolo di studii. Problemi e retrospettive*, Bologna, 1993.

<sup>194</sup> Cf. E. Buonaiuti, "Le citazioni bibliche in Ottato di Milevi", in *Rivista di Scienza delle Religioni*, 1 (1916), 145-146.

<sup>195</sup> Cf. C. Mazzucco, *Ottato di Milevi in un secolo di studi: problema e prospettive*, Bologna, 1993, p. 37.

<sup>196</sup> Cf. S. Blomgren, *Eine Echtsfrage bei Optatus*, Stockholm, 1959, pp. 58-62.

<sup>197</sup> Cf. A. Pincherle, "L'ecclesiologia nella controversia donatista" in *RR* 18 (1947), p. 44. Here he states that Optatus added "a significative *cum ipsis*" to the text of 1 Tim 2,2. In another article he affirms that Optatus (*Adu. Don.* IV,4,2; V,3,9), as Augustine (*De bapt.* II,14,19; *cath. fr.* 63; *Cresc.* I,31,37) adds "*iterum lauandi*" to the text of Jn 13,10, following a text used by Commodian (*instr.* II,6,9). Cf. A. Pincherle, "Sopra un verso di Commodiano", in *RSLR* 1 (1965), p. 433.

<sup>198</sup> Cf. B. Altaner, *Patrologie. Leben, Schriften und Lehre der Kirchenväter*, Freiburg, 1978, p. 80, presents the words "*non facies schism*" of 1 Cor 1:10, as a voluntary reminiscence of the Didaché.

<sup>199</sup> For a good summary on this topic, Cf. C. Mazzucco, *Ottato di Milevi in un secolo di studi: problema e prospettive*, Bologna, 1993, p. 79.

### The polemical context

Optatus refers within his work *Aduersus donatistas*, to the Psalm's text used by the Donatists to be able to give an answer to his opponents using their own words. That is the case of psalm 1:1, which he refers to identically as the Donatist text quoted by Augustine in the *Contra Litteras Petiliani*<sup>200</sup>, with only one small difference: "(...) *non abiit consilio impiorum, et in uia peccatorum non stetit*<sup>201</sup> . Et *in*<sup>202</sup> *cathedram pestilentiae non sedit*". The context of the quotation is merely accidental, since Optatus blames the Donatists of usurping the seat (*cathedra*) of Peter, taking as point of departure the words of Psalm 1, where the word "*cathedra*" is used in a pejorative sense: "(...) since you pretend to usurp the keys of the kingdom of heaven, since you are fighting with pride and sacrilegal boldness against the Seat of Peter, rejecting the happiness which merited to be praised ('he quotes Psalm 1:1')"<sup>203</sup>. He then comments that the *consilium impietatis*, has been the meeting of their elders, with which they broke the unity of the Church.

Optatus also refers to Psalm 49:16-18 in a Donatist's Psalm version, to prove that the sinners are not the Catholics, but the Donatists, since he asserts that if they would have loved unity of the Church, they would not have caused a division within the Church<sup>204</sup>; but as the Psalm's text affirms, they have hated the discipline and have forgotten the words of the Lord. The quotation is very close to the Psalm's text referred to by Augustine in his *Contra epistulam Parmeniani* 2,9,18. In footnotes we will refer to the differences: "*ad quid exponis iustitias*<sup>205</sup> *meas et adsumis*

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<sup>200</sup> Cf. *c. litt. Pet.* 2,46,107.

<sup>201</sup> "Da altra parte Parmeniano a se stesso e ai suoi correligionari, attribuiva la lode di Ps. 1,1, riservata a chi 'non si arresta nella strada dei peccatori', e associava la purezza di cui parla Eph. 5,27. Solo loro che idealizzavano la santità e il martirio, fino a farne il manifesto del loro movimento". P. Marone, *L'esegesi biblica di Ottato di Milevi*, Roma, 2008, p. 51.

<sup>202</sup> The donatist text refers "*super*".

<sup>203</sup> Optatus of Milevis, *Adu. Don.* II,5. CSEL 26, 39.21. The translation of all Optatus' texts is mine. Cf. R. B. Eno, "The Work of Optatus as a Turning Point in the African Ecclesiology", in *Thomist* 37 (1973), 668-685. Here, 672ff.

<sup>204</sup> "(...) per il donatista [Parmeniano], come per Cipriano, in relazione a Ps. 49,16 bisognava distinguere nettamente tra dentro e fuori della Chiesa, e non era ammessa l'esistenza di un battesimo salvifico fuori della Chiesa". P. Marone, *L'esegesi biblica di Ottato di Milevi*, Roma, 2008, p. 69.

<sup>205</sup> The text reported by Augustine says "*iustificationes*".

*testamentum meum per os tuum. tu autem contempsisti<sup>206</sup> disciplinam et abiecasti sermones meos retro. sedens aduersus fratrem tuum denotabas et aduersus filium matris tuae ponebas scandalum. uidebas furem, et currebas<sup>207</sup> cum eo et cum adulteris<sup>208</sup> portionem<sup>209</sup> tuam ponebas<sup>210</sup>.*

Another important Psalm's verse which is quoted to reject rebaptism, is Psalm 140: 5<sup>211</sup>, "*oleum peccatoris non ungat caput meum*"<sup>212</sup> (Let not the oil of the sinner anoint my head). Optatus presents a prosopological reading of the verse, following a Cyprianic tradition<sup>213</sup>, to prove that the one who is speaking in the Psalm's text is Christ and not David or any other human person. Optatus explains to Parmenianus, that this verse is the expression of the disdain that Christ has for any human anointing or validation of his work<sup>214</sup>. P. Marone underlines the baptismal importance of this text, that at times is linked in Optatus' work with Jer 2:13<sup>215</sup>.

As P. Cappele asserts, after examining other Psalm's text<sup>216</sup>, there are Psalm texts which Optatus refers to in his work *Aduersus donatistas* following the Donatist text, in order to prove his own position using the adversary's text version.

### The common quotations from Cyprian's text

If we take a look at the common quotations of the Psalms' text from Cyprian, we will notice that there is a difference between the Psalm text used by Cyprian, and the one used by Optatus. The first verse of Psalm 132 is an excellent example. While Cyprian reports: "*Ecce quid bonum et uoluptabile est ut habitant fratres in unum*"<sup>217</sup>; Optatus states: "*Ecce*

<sup>206</sup> The text reported by Augustine says: "*odisti*".

<sup>207</sup> The text reported by Augustine says: "*concurrerebas*".

<sup>208</sup> The text reported by Augustine says: "*moechis*".

<sup>209</sup> The text reported by Augustine says: "*particulam*". Nevertheless, Tertullian old text, has also "*portionem*".

<sup>210</sup> Optatus of Milevis, *Adu. don.* IV,3. CSEL 26, 105.16.

<sup>211</sup> P. Marone offers an interesting summary of the Bilbe verses where the text of the LXX could be recognized. According to Marone, Ps. 140:5 is one of them. Cf. P. Marone, *L'esegesi biblica di Ottato di Milevi*, Roma, 2008, p. 100.

<sup>212</sup> Augustine refers the verse in a different way: *Oleum autem peccatoris non impinguabit caput meum* (en. Ps. 140,13).

<sup>213</sup> Cf. M. Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa*, p. 109.

<sup>214</sup> Cf. Optatus, *Adu. don.* IV,7. CSEL 26,112.2.

<sup>215</sup> Cf. P. Marone, *L'esegesi biblica di Ottato di Milevi*, p. 43.

<sup>216</sup> Cf. P. Cappele, *Le Texte du Psautier Latin en Afrique*, p. 72-79.

<sup>217</sup> Cyprian, *Test.* III,85. CSEL 3.1, 76.8.

*quam bonum et quam iucundum habitare fratres in unum*"<sup>218</sup>. Optatus quotes the Psalm's verse to demonstrate that the Donatists disregard the discipline of the Lord, because they do not want to live in unity<sup>219</sup>.

### His very own versions

Despite the Optatus' Psalm version being near to the one used by Augustine, there are still differences, maybe not so important, but we can notice particularly that he wants to separate himself from the Old African Latin versions (i.e., Tertullian's and Cyprian's). Some differences with the Psalms used by Augustine are: Ps 10:4, Optatus uses "*ad sagittandos*"<sup>220</sup>, while Augustine uses "*at sagittent*"<sup>221</sup>. In Psalm 95:1-3, Optatus uses "*pronuntiate (...) ipsius*"<sup>222</sup>, Augustine refers: "*annuntiate (...) eius*"<sup>223</sup>.

### Conclusion

As we have seen, Optatus of Milevis uses the Donatist Psalm's text within his work when he wants to demonstrate to his opponents their mistakes and he rebukes them with their own biblical words<sup>224</sup>. Nevertheless, Optatus uses also in his works a Psalm's version which tries to take distance from the Old Latin Versions (i.e., Tertullian and Cyprian). He does so in a more radical way than Augustine. The variations in his Psalms' quotations could not be found in any African text. That is why we can suppose that Optatus, moved by the polemic with the Donatist, and since the Scriptures were an instrument used to demonstrate their own position, he tried to use a different version from the one used by the Donatist and he even demonstrated his universality using Italian versions, or other versions which were not "African", to underline even linguistically, the universality of the Church<sup>225</sup>.

<sup>218</sup> Optatus of Milevis, *Adu. don.* IV,4. CSEL 26, 106.8.

<sup>219</sup> Optatus of Milevis, *Adu. don.* IV,4. CSEL 26, 106.8.; Cf. II,15; III,6.

<sup>220</sup> Optatus of Milevis, *Adu. don.* II,21. CSEL 26, 58.9.

<sup>221</sup> Augustine *en. Ps.* 10,2.

<sup>222</sup> Optatus of Milevis, *Adu. don.* II,1. CSEL 26, 35.5.

<sup>223</sup> Augustine, *en. Ps.* 95,3.

<sup>224</sup> Cf. M. Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa*, p. 109.

<sup>225</sup> P. Capelle asserts that: "Il est vraisemblable que les catholiques ne voulurent point rester en arrière et se mirent, eux aussi, à examiner leur textes, par crainte que des adversaires aussi minutieux n'y trouvassent des défauts, Cela fut (...) le principe d'une révision complète, pour laquelle les catholiques, moins étroits et moins orgueilleux que les donatistes, s'aiderent des versions d'Europe, incontestablement plus littéraires. Ainsi, de façon presque involontaire, s'accroissait encore l'isolement des schismatiques africains et leur éloignement de l'Église universelle". P. Capelle, *Le Texte du Psautier Latin en Afrique*, p. 81.

**Abbreviations**

**Works of Tertullian**

<i>Adu. Marc.</i>	Aduersus Marcionem.
<i>Prescr.</i>	De prescription haereticorum.
<i>De orat.</i>	De oratio.
<i>Pud.</i>	De pudicitia.
<i>De resurr.</i>	De carnis resurrectione.
<i>De exhort.</i>	De exhortatione.
<i>De fug.</i>	De fuga in persecutione.
<i>De monog</i> .	De monogamia.
<i>De praesc.</i>	De praescriptione haereticorum.
<i>Prax.</i>	Aduersus Praxean.
<i>Hermog.</i>	Aduersus Hermogenem.
<i>Scorp.</i>	Scorpiace.

**Works of Cyprian**

<i>Dem.</i>	Ad Demetrianum.
<i>Dom.</i>	De dominica oratione.
<i>Don.</i>	Ad Donatum.
<i>Ep.</i>	Epistulae.
<i>Fort.</i>	Ad Fortunatum (De exhortatione martyrii).
<i>Idola</i>	Quod idola dii non sunt.
<i>Lap.</i>	De Lapsis.
<i>Mort.</i>	De mortalitate.
<i>Op.</i>	De opera et eleemosynis.
<i>Pat.</i>	De Patientiae.
<i>Sent.</i>	Sententiae episcoporum de haereticis baptizandis.

<i>Test.</i>	Ad Quirinum (Testimoniorum libri tres).
<i>Un.</i>	De ecclesiae catholicae unitate.
<i>Vir.</i>	De habitu uirginum.
<i>Zel.</i>	De zelo et liuore.

### **Works of Optatus of Milevis**

<i>Adu. don.</i>	Aduersus donatistas.
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### **Works of Augustine**

<i>en. Ps.</i>	Enarrationes in Psalmos.
<i>c. litt. Pet.</i>	Contra litteras Petiliani.
<i>Cresc.</i>	Contra Cresconium grammaticum donatistam.
<i>c. Gaud.</i>	Contra Gaudentim donatistarum episcopum.
<i>s.</i>	Sermones.



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## "et factus sum mihi regio egestatis" Peccatum in *Book II of Augustine's* Confessiones

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Lounal E. Jarumay, OAR

"ut tu dulcescas mihi, dulcedo non fallax, dulcedo felix et sicura,  
et colligens me a dispersione"  
Augustinus, *conf.* 2, 1, 1.

### *Abstract*

*This article aims to revisit the concept of sin in Augustine's Confessiones II. While there is a plethora of studies on the subject matter from which the current article is greatly indebted, the current article seeks to contribute to it by structurally recounting his narrative through which the recollection of his youthful and formative years is described. He considers this period as the beginning of his regio egestatis. Augustine's recollection of this particular period of his life is heavily filtered by his Christian faith which permits him to have a purposive interpretation of his history. With this purposive interpretation, he understands the events as they were, how they unfolded, how they affected him, and how they played their parts within a wider divine ordination. He thus speaks of his sexual awakening, the failure of his parents, and the stealing of his neighbor's pears as focal points of descent. This descent, however, also became the landmarks of redemption since it was in them and through their contrast that, from a Christian perspective, he recognized the presence of God who never abandoned him. Viewed from this angle, his*

*recollection of youthful adventures and misfortunes becomes a vivid retelling of human incapacity to search for beauty outside God's divine ordination.*

## Introduction

J. Couenhoven notes that Augustine is known as *the* theologian of sin.<sup>1</sup> This cannot be further from the truth. Such statement, however, can be read in two ways: on the one hand, it convicts Augustine of being a pessimist for his “disabled” anthropology and being overly reliant on divine grace to the point of eclipsing any ounce of human participations; on the other hand, it is a positive affirmation for, indeed, he was preoccupied with the concept of sin and evil even before his definitive entrance into Christianity. One has only to read his *Confessiones* (ca. 397-401) to initiate into the bishop's struggle with the nature of evil and sin. In his earliest works, the so-called *Cassiciacum Dialogues*, one gets a glimpse of his introduction in understanding this perennial problem. Towards the end of *Contra Academicos*, the catechumen Augustine points to the certain clemency, *quadam clementia*, of the *Summus Deus* as the primary reason that allowed him access to an otherwise ineffable knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Later on, this idea of *quadam clementia* would be developed into a mature understanding of God's grace and providence.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. J. Couenhoven, *Augustine*, in *T&T Clark Companion to the Doctrine of Sin*, edd. K. L. Johnson – D. Lauber, London – New York 2016, 181-198.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Aug., *Acad.*, 3, 19, 42 (CSEL 63, 79, linn. 17-25): *non enim est ista huius mundi philosophia, quam sacra nostra meritissime detestantur; sed alterius intelligibilis, cui animas multiformibus erroris tenebris caecatas et altissimis a corpore sordibus oblitus numquam ista ratio subtilissima reuocaret, nisi summus deus populari quadam clementia diuini intellectus auctoritatem usque ad ipsum corpus humanum declinaret atque summitteret, cuius non solum praeceptis sed etiam factis excitatae animae redire in semet ipsas et respiscere patriam etiam sine disputationum concertatione potuissent*. Unfortunately, Augustine does not provide further explanation of *clementia* as used in *Acad.* Moreover, the word only appears once in the entire corpus. Its immediate context, however, guarantees its vital implication to the entire dialogue. Augustine is assuring Romanianus of his resolve to continue the search for the truth, and that such search is not in vain for it is no doubt assisted by authority and reason; see also B. Studer, *The Grace of Christ and the Grace of God in Augustine of Hippo: Christocentrism or Theocentrism?*, Collegeville 1997, 70-77; G. Catapano, *Agostino*, Roma 210; M. Foley (trans.), *Against the Academics: St. Augustine's Cassiciacum Dialogues*, vol. 1, London 2019.

<sup>3</sup> See V. H. Drecoll, *Gratia*, in *Augustinus-Lexikon*, vol. 3, ed. C. Mayer, Basel 2004, 182-242; A. Dupont, *Gratia in Augustine's Sermones ad Populum during the Pelagian Controversy: Do Different Contexts Furnish Different Insights?*, Leiden – Boston 2013 (Brill's Series in Church History 59).

This is given a concrete image by Augustine himself in his autobiography, the *Confessiones*. While this is rudimentary, one can suspect that the label given to Augustine, taken negatively, is not true, and gravely misses his point of departure. In fact, as already observed in his *Contra Academicos*, it was his discovery of God's ineffable goodness that led him to re-evaluate the nature of sin. On this subject, however, a myriad books and articles have been written approaching the subject from different perspectives. To this effect, this paper aims to explore his concept of sin in Book II of his *Confessiones* with the hope of contributing, even a little, to the corpus of the Augustinian scholarship.<sup>4</sup>

### Augustine on Evil and Sin

Before exploring Book II, a brief overview of Augustine's understanding of evil and sin is necessary. Augustine sees creation as governed by a certain order. In *De Genesi ad litteram* (ca. 399-415), he employs *Sap.* 11, 21, that is, God organized the world by measure, number, and order.<sup>5</sup> Creation in itself is thus good as it follows the nature ordained by the Creator. Evil, according to Augustine, is the privation of good and the corruption of the created order, *corruptio uel modi uel speciei uel ordinis naturalis*.<sup>6</sup> For Augustine, true evil is found in the

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<sup>4</sup> On *Peccatum*, see the bibliography of M. Lamberigts, *Peccatum, Peccatum originale*, in *Augustinus-Lexikon*, vol. 4, edd. R. Dodaro – C. Mayer – C. Müller, Basel 2012, 581-599; 599-615; see also P. Rigby, *Original Sin in Augustine's Confessions*, Ottawa 1987; C. Conybeare, *The Routledge Guidebook to Augustine's Confessions*, London – New York 2016; P. F. Beatrice, *The Transmission of Sin: Augustine and the Pre-Augustinian Sources*, New York 2013; T. Nisula, *Augustine and the Functions of Concupiscence*, Leiden – Boston 2012 (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 116).

<sup>5</sup> *Sap.* 11, 21: *omnia in mensura et numero et pondere disposuit*; Aug., *Gn. litt.* 2, 1, 2 (CSEL 28/1, 33); cf. *conf.* 5, 7; *c. litt. Pet.* 2, 43; *ciu.* 12, 19; *Io. eu. tr.* 1, 13.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Aug., *nat. b.* 4 (CSEL 25/2, 857, linn. 3-8): *proinde cum quaeritur, unde sit malum, prius quaerendum est, quid sit malum. quod nihil aliud est quam corruptio uel modi uel speciei uel ordinis naturalis. mala itaque natura dicitur, quae corrupta est; nam incorrupta utique bona est. sed etiam ipsa corrupta, in quantum natura est, bona est; in quantum corrupta est, mala est*; cf. *ench.* 4, 13 (CCSL 46, 54-55, linn. 28-55); see also J. K. Coyle, *Natura boni (De)*, in *Augustinus-Lexikon*, vol. 4, edd. R. Dodaro – C. Mayer – C. Müller, Basel 2012, 178-183; G. R. Evans, *Evil*, in *Augustine through the Ages*, ed. A. D. Fitzgerald, Grand Rapids 1999, 340-344; W. M. Frierson, *The Problem of Evil: A Metaphysical and Theological Inquiry*, PhD. Dissertation 1977; D. A. Cress, *Augustine's Privation Account of Evil: A Defense*, in *Augustinian Studies* 20 (1989), 109-128; W. E. Mann, *Augustine on Evil and Original Sin*, in *The Cambridge companion to Augustine*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. D. V. Meconi, Cambridge 2014, 89-107.



realm of intellectual created beings, beings endowed with free will.<sup>7</sup> Man being created *ex nihilo* is capable of change and change means that the good can be diminished or augmented.<sup>8</sup> Augustine explains that every being, in so far as it is a being, is good, and as it is defective, is evil.<sup>9</sup> It must be noted that he is not speaking of ontological change but of moral and spiritual change that may or may not compromise the ordained order. Moreover, when he is speaking of man's perfection, he is referring to his supernatural orientation, that is, *ad Deum*. Thus, evil is when man deviates himself from the divinely ordained order, and in so doing, turns away from the Creator. Speaking of the first sin of Adam, Augustine writes that the first fall of man was his love of himself.<sup>10</sup> He explains in *ep.* 118 (ca. 408/414) that the first sin, that is, the defect of the will is to take joy in his own power.<sup>11</sup> Commenting on the Fall of Man in the Book of Genesis, Augustine writes that the devil and Eve played an important role in the fall of Adam. In *De civitate Dei* (413-427), he explains that Adam was not deceived by Eve; rather he chose Eve, being her companion and not wanting to be separated from her even if this meant sharing in her sin.<sup>12</sup> In other words, from the privation of good proceeds the tendency to choose created things over the Creator, thus, from evil or defect proceeds sin.

Augustine offers various definitions and descriptions of sins. Sin can be generally classified in two categories: the first is the sin of Adam, *peccatum originis/originale*, which affected his progeny, and his personal sin. The second is the sin of the children of Adam which Augustine calls *poena peccati* or *peccatum hereditarium*. In *De peccatorum meritis et remissione et de baptismo parvulorum*

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<sup>7</sup> Cf. J. Patout Burns, *Augustine on the Origin and Progress of Evil*, in *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 16 (1988), 13.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Aug., *ench.* 4, 12 (CCSL 46, 54, linn. 1-26).

<sup>9</sup> Aug., *ench.* 4, 13 (CCSL 46, 54, linn. 29-36): *Unde res mira conficitur, ut quia omnis natura in quantum natura est, bonum est, nihil aliud dici videatur cum vitiosa natura mala esse natura dicitur, nisi malum esse quod bonum est: nec malum esse nisi quod bonum est; quoniam omnis natura bonum est, nec res aliqua mala esset si res ipsa quae mala est natura non esset.*

<sup>10</sup> Id., *s.* 96, 2, 2 (PL 38, 585): *prima hominis perditio, fuit amor sui.*

<sup>11</sup> Id., *ep.* 118, 3, 15 (PL 33, 439): *primum autem peccatum, hoc est primum uoluntarium defectum esse gaudere ad propriam potestatem.*

<sup>12</sup> Id., *ciu.* 14, 11 (CSEL 40/2, 26-30).

(ca. 411/412), Augustine describes the link between the *peccatum originis* and *poena peccati*, arguing that the sin committed by Adam transformed the body into a *moriturus* alluding to *Rom.* 8, 10.<sup>13</sup> His children, in turn, inherited this corporeal state as sharing in his punishment. In *De duabus animabus* (ca. 391/395), Augustine, writing against the Manicheans, offers a concrete description of sin. He writes that "sin is the will to hold or to follow that which justice prohibits, and from which it is free to abstain".<sup>14</sup> In *Ad Simplicianum* (ca. 396), he describes the sin of man as disorder and perversity, that is, an aversion from the more excellent Creator, and a conversion towards the inferior creatures.<sup>15</sup> In his anti-Pelagian writings, Augustine emphasizes the link between *peccatum* and *concupiscentia*. In *Contra Iulianum opus imperfectum* (ca. 428/430), Augustine describes *concupiscentia* as a desire for sinning, a *lex peccati*.<sup>16</sup> As to why man commits sin, he explains that man is created *de nihilo* and not *de Deo*.<sup>17</sup> Created *de nihilo*, man is capable of and *per naturam* subject to change.

### **Peccatum in Book II of the Confessions**

In his *Retractationes* (ca. 426/427), Augustine recalls the motive in writing this autobiography; he notes, "The thirteen books of my Confessions praise the just and good God for my evil and good acts,

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<sup>13</sup> Id., *pecc. mer.* 1, 4-8 (CSEL 60, 5-10); *Rom.* 8, 10: *si autem Christus in uobis, corpus quidem mortuum est propter peccatum, spiritus autem uita est propter iustitiam*; as cited by Augustine. The word *moriturus*, as used by Augustine, indicates the necessity of the corrupted body to suffer death; see *pecc. mer.* 1, 7 (CSEL 60, 8-9).

<sup>14</sup> Id., *duab. an.* 15 (CSEL 25/1, 70, linn. 15-17): *Ergo peccatum est voluntas retinendi vel consequendi quod iustitia vetat, et unde liberum est abstinere*. The translate is mine unless indicated otherwise.

<sup>15</sup> Id., *Simpl.* 1, 2, 18 (CCSL 44, 45, linn. 550-552): *Est autem peccatum hominis inordinatio atque peruersitas, id est a praestantiore Conditorum auersio et ad condita inferiora conuersio*.

<sup>16</sup> Id., *c. Iul. imp.* 1, 71 (CSEL 85/2, 80-84, linn. 1-9 – 9-37 – 38-64 – 64-92 – 93-105).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 31-32 (CSEL 85/2, 230-232); Julian cited Augustine's position on man's creation *de nihilo* that explains the tendency to sin. Augustine agrees but refutes Julian's claim that *nilhil* is *uiolentum* since it cannot be so, but only by volition that both man and even angel commit sin. Augustine adds that had man been created *de natura dei*, there would never be any inclination to sin.

and lift up the understanding and affection of men to Him".<sup>18</sup> In the process of glorifying God, however, Augustine had to face his own self, vacillating from one place to another, allowing to see himself under the contrast of God's sweetness and his sinfulness.<sup>19</sup> It is within this scope that the purpose of Book II is discerned. The first is Augustine's declaration found in the very first paragraph, that is, in confessing his sins he may love God. The second is for the readers, that is, as Augustine confesses his wretched state, he invites the readers to look into their personal wandering, and like him, he wants them to see God as the *medicus* who rescues them from sinful diseases.<sup>20</sup> In between these two purposes, Augustine also wants to demonstrate the struggle between the spirit and the flesh that often leads to desolations and the sense of emptiness.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Aug., *retr.* 2, 32, 1 (CSEL 36, 137, linn. 1-3): *Confessionum mearum libri tredecim et de malis et de bonis meis deum laudant iustum et bonum atque ni eum excitant humanum intellectum et affectum*; the English translation is taken from the translation of M. I. Bogan in *Saint Augustine: The Retractations*, Washington D.C. 1999 (The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation 60), 130; see important studies on the *Confessiones* listed in E. Feldmann, *Confessiones*, in *Augustinus-Lexikon*, vol. 1, ed. C. Mayer, Basel 1986-1994, 1134-1193; see also F. van Fleteren, *Confessiones*, in *Augustine through the Ages*, ed. A. D. Fitzgerald, Grand Rapids 1999, 227-232; A. Kotzé, *Augustine's Confessions: Communicative Purpose and Audience*, Leiden – Boston 2004 (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 71).

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Aug. *conf.* 2, 1, 1 (CSEL 33, 29, linn. 10); cf. H. Chadwick, *Self-Justification in Augustine's Confessions*, in *The English Historical Review* 118 (2003), 1161-1175

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 7, 15 (CSEL 33, 41, linn. 9-16); see I. Bochet, *Medicina, Medicus*, in *Augustinus-Lexikon*, vol. 3, C. Mayer, Basel 2004-2010, 1230-1234; R. E. Arbesmann, *The concept of 'Christus medicus' in St. Augustine*, in *Traditio* 10 (1954), 1-28; Id., *Christ the Medicus humilis in St. Augustine*, in *Augustinus Magister* (Congrès International Augustinien, Paris, 21-24 septembre 1954) 2, Paris 1954, 623-629; T. F. Martin, *Paul the Patient. Christus Medicus and the "Stimulus Carnis"* (2 Cor. 12:7). *A Consideration of Augustine's Medicinal Christology*, in *Augustinian Studies* 32 (2001), 219-256; cf. C. Starnes, *Augustine's Conversion: A Guide to the Argument of Confessions I-IX*, Waterloo 1990, 33-51.

<sup>21</sup> J. J. O'Donnell, *Augustine, Confessions* vol. 2, Oxford 1992, 126-127

Drawing inspiration from the narrative of the prodigal son, Augustine describes his juvenile state of sinfulness as being in *regio egestatis*, land of famine.<sup>22</sup> J. C. Cadavini<sup>23</sup> comments that by using *regio egestatis*, Augustine likens himself to the prodigal son's emptiness after having realized his nihility outside his father's domain. Such emptiness, "in the sense of evacuating oneself of oneself in exchange for precisely nothing," is aggravated even more when compared to the emptying of Christ.<sup>24</sup> L. C. Ferrari recognizes the theme of the Prodigal Son being intertwined in the narrative of Book II.<sup>25</sup> He posits that it is probably because Augustine found himself in the person of the lost son. J. J. O'Donnell, quoting the idea of A. Mandouze, views the *adulescentia* of Augustine as corresponding to the third of creation wherein the world was in turmoil, devoid of order.<sup>26</sup> J. van Oort looks into the possible similarities between Augustine's understanding of *concupiscentia sexualis* with that of the Manicheans.<sup>27</sup> However, the influence of Mani on Augustine can be delimited if, according to J. van Oort, archaic Jewish-Christian elements that were possibly present and were still strong during the younger years of Augustine, had played an important role in the formation of Augustine's vision of *concupiscentia*

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<sup>22</sup> cf. *Lc.* 15, 14; *Aug., conf.* 2, 10, 18 (CSEL 33, 43, linn. 11-13); cf. *qu. eu.* 2, 33, 1; *s. Caillau* 2, 11, 1; *en. Ps.* 118, 5, 2; *en. Ps.* 123, 9; *en. Ps.* 138, 5; see also A. Solignac, *Notes Complémentaires*, in *Bibliothèque augustinienne* 13 (Oeuvres de saint Augustin 2), 664-665; N. Goodrick, *The Gospel According to Augustine: Augustine's Use of the Gospels in the Confessions*, in *Anthós* 1 (1996), 5-21; F. Heim, *Parabole évangélique et images néoplatoniciennes dans l'évocation des fautes (Confessions I-IV)*, in *Saint Augustin et la Bible. Actes du colloque de l'université Paul Verlaine-Metz* (7-8 avril 2005) (éd. par G. Nauroy & M.-A. Vannier), Bern u.a. 2008 (Recherches en littérature et spiritualité 15), 277-284. In Book 7, 10, 16, *regio egestatis* turns into *regio dissimilitudinis*, land of unlikeness; it will be contrasted with *regio ubertatis*, land of abundance, in Book 9, 10, 24.

<sup>23</sup> J. C. Cadavini, *Book Two: Augustine's Book of Shadows in A Reader's Companion to Augustine's Confessions*, edd. K. Paffenroth – R. P. Kennedy, London 2003, 25-34.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-27.

<sup>25</sup> L. C. Ferrari, *The Theme of the Prodigal Son in Augustine's Confessions*, in *Recherches Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 12 (1977), 105-118.

<sup>26</sup> J. J. O'Donnell, *Augustine*, 104.

<sup>27</sup> J. V. Oort, *Augustine and Mani on Concupiscentia Sexualis*, in *Augustiniana Traiectina. Communications présentées au Colloque International d'Utrecht, 13-14 novembre 1986*, edd. J. den Boeft – J. van Oort, Paris 1987, 137-152.

*sexualis*.<sup>28</sup> On delight and pleasure being the ambit wherein Augustine views his understanding of sin in Book II, M. R. Miles offers a contrast between the pleasure of disordered desire and the true delight and pleasure, as narrated by Augustine in his confessions.<sup>29</sup> She notes that for Augustine real pleasure requires rest, peace, and equilibrium held together with emotional intensity and permanence.<sup>30</sup> For this to happen, proper ordering is necessary which includes proper use of means. The real rest, however, can truly be found in God. The permanence and equilibrium are nowhere to be found and cannot be found in *concupiscentia carnis*. The contrast thus sheds light to the fact that in *concupiscentia carnis* there is only vacillation of the self.

Book II begins with *recordari volo* which sets the structure of his remembrance, that is, remembering the past events, their value and gravity, while being mindful of God's persistent presence throughout his personal history. This act of remembering makes *regio egestatis* a concrete description of the self, having lost himself in the mud of sin. As to how Augustine achieved the genius of narrating in a most personal way this particular episode, L. C. Ferrari suggests that his study of the Sacred Scriptures allowed him to look into this youthful episode; in fact, it was his deep knowledge of the Scriptures that put into context his re-examination of his past.<sup>31</sup> On how he found himself in *regio egestatis*, Augustine recalls three particular events of his youth: the first is his sexual awakening, the second is the neglect of his parents, and the third is the pear incident.<sup>32</sup>

## Sexual Awakening

Augustine puts the narrative of his sexual escapade within his attempt to search for delight and pleasure. He asks the question, *Et quid erat, quod me delectabat, nisi amare et amari?* The problem begins,

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<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>29</sup> M. R. Miles, *Desire and Delight: A new reading of the Augustine's Confessions*, New York 1992.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>31</sup> L. C. Ferrari, *The Pear-Theft in Augustine's Confessions*, in *Revue d'Etudes Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 16 (1970), 233-242; id., *The Barren Field in Augustine's Confessions*, in *Augustinian Studies* 8 (1977), 55-70.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. J.B. White, *Let in the Light: Learning to read St. Augustine's Confessions*, New York 2022, 123-138.

however, when to love and to be loved is not properly regulated, “as in the union of mind with mind, where a bright boundary regulates friendship.”<sup>33</sup> Augustine seems to suggest that the meaning of “the union of mind with mind” is the conformity of the mind with the law of God.<sup>34</sup> In fact, without this conformity, he wandered away,<sup>35</sup> abased by his own pride,<sup>36</sup> which he defines as “pleasing myself and winning favor in the eyes of men”<sup>37</sup> and “wearied by my restlessness.”<sup>38</sup> Such deviation from the law of God allows the rise of *concupiscentia carnis*, that is, the fleshly desire, *libido, illicitas iucunditates*,<sup>39</sup> that makes it difficult for him “to distinguish the calm light of love from the fog of lust.”<sup>40</sup> The *transactas foeditates meas et carnales* corrupted his soul to the point that he was deafened by the clanking chain of his mortal state which was the punishment for his soul’s pride.<sup>41</sup> It is interesting to note that in remembering this particular stage of his life, Augustine describes himself as *colligens me a dispersione*, suggesting that *concupiscentia carnis* shuttered the harmony of the self, established by God himself. In fact, Augustine considers sexual desire as one powerful force that hinders the integration of man, opposing reason and will at the same time.<sup>42</sup> Blinded by the uncontrolled eruption of his adolescence, Augustine drowned himself in the intoxication of his perverse desire, blotting God out from his life, and preferred created realities instead.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Aug., *conf.* 2, 2 (CSEL 33, 29-30, linn. 16-17 – 1-4).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 10 (CSEL 33, 37, linn. 2-10): *et tamen in cuncta haec adipiscenda non est egrediendum abs te, Domine, neque deviandum a lege tua... Propter universa haec atque huiusmodi peccatum admittitur; dum immoderata in ista inclinatione, cum extrema bona sint, meliora et summa deseruntur, tu, Domine Deus noster, et veritas tua et lex tua.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 2 (CSEL 33, 30, linn. 10-14).

<sup>36</sup> *Id.*, *ciu.* 14, 28; Aug. *Simp.* 1, 2, 18.

<sup>37</sup> *Id.*, *conf.* 1, 1 (CSEL 33, 29, linn. 1).

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 2 (CSEL 33, 30, linn. 12-13).

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 4 (CSEL 33, 31, linn. 14-15).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> *Id.*, *c. Iul.* 4, 13, 71; *ciu.* 14, 16.

<sup>43</sup> *Id.*, *conf.* 2, 6 (CSEL 33, 33, linn. 7-12): *Quin immo ubi me ille pater in balneis uidit pubescentem et inquieta indutum adulescentia, quasi iam ex hoc in nepotes gestiret, gaudens matri indicauit, gaudens uinulentia, in qua te iste mundus oblitus est Creatorem suum et creaturam tuam pro te amauit, de uino inuisibili peruersae atque inclinatae in ima uoluntatis suae.*

It is, however, important to note that *concupiscentia carnis* is an effect of *peccatum originis* inherited by man generated after the fall of Adam. The *peccatum originis* inflicts ignorance in man. For this, Augustine declares that he could have chosen to be a eunuch if only he “had listened attentively to those words” referring to the counsel of Paul in 1 *Cor.* 7, 1. 32-33.<sup>44</sup> Here, Augustine proposes that ignorance led him to throw himself to sin. This ignorance, however, is only relative. Every creature is endowed with its proper law, thus following that which is ordained from the beginning. For men, this law is the universal desire for happiness, for pleasure, to love and to be loved. But since this desire is disordered, that is, without its proper restraints,<sup>45</sup> it is oriented towards created realities instead of *ad Deum*. Moreover, Augustine argues that there is a law written in the human heart that even sin cannot erase, although he speaks of this law in relation to theft.<sup>46</sup> Augustine also confesses that he willfully did not listen “to words spoken to me by my mother” which he considers no other than the words of God spoken through her.<sup>47</sup>

One specific description of *concupiscentia carnis* is fornication. In general, Augustine considers sin as an act of fornication. He explains that when the soul turns away from God and seeks apart from God that which it can never find in pure and limpid form except by returning to God himself, it lapses into fornication.<sup>48</sup> This is an allusion to *Ps.* 72 (73), 27. In his commentary on v. 27, Augustine writes that fornication is opposed to *amor castus*. He further explains that *amor castus* is no other than loving the spouse of the soul.<sup>49</sup> This recalls the union of

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 2, 3 (CSEL 33, 31, linn. 9-10): *Has ergo uoces exaudirem uigilantior et absceisus propter regnum caelorum felicior expectarem amplexus tuos.*

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 2 (CSEL 33, 29-30, linn. 16-17 – 1-4).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 4, 9 (CSEL 33, 35, linn. 19-21).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 3, 7 (CSEL 33, 33-34, linn. 19-21 – 1): *Et cuius erant nisi tua uerba illa per matrem meam, fidelem tuam, quae cantasti in aures meas? Nec inde quidquam descendit in cor, ut facerem illud.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 6, 14 (CSEL 33, 40, linn. 8-9): *Ita fornicatur anima, cum auertitur abs te et quaerit extra te ea quae pura et liquida non inuenit, nisi cum redit ad te.*

<sup>49</sup> *Id.*, en. *Ps.* 72, 33 (CSEL 94/3, 95-96, linn. 5-11): *Huic fornicationi contrarius est amor castus. Quis est amor castus? Amat iam anima sponsum suum. Quid ab illo quaerit, ab sponso suo, quem diligit?... Absit! Iste ipsum solum amat, gratis amat, quia in ipso habet omnia. Unde in ipso habet omnia? Quia per ipsum facta sunt omnia. Perdidisti inquit omnes qui fornicantur abs te.*



mind necessary in order to restrain<sup>50</sup> human desire and direct it *ad Deum*. Along with fornication, Augustine also recalls how his mother admonished him to never commit adultery.<sup>51</sup>

A curious inclusion of two specific sins is found in *Conf.* 2, 3, 7. These are envy and lie; the latter proceeds from the former. Augustine narrates that from his recklessness and blindness, he rushed headlong into immoralities. Blindness here is to be understood within the context of ignorance. His blindness brought in him the sense of envy upon hearing the immoralities of other youths. The envy of being a lesser depraved than the others pushed him to lie, claiming to have accomplished obscenities worthy of applause. In *Conf.* 2, 6, 13, Augustine defines envy as being contentious over the rank accorded to others. This definition allows Augustine to emphasize the depravity of his envy and the lie that proceeded from it since it was never an imitation of God in a perverse way but an imitation of perversity itself.<sup>52</sup>

As mentioned above, Augustine defines sins as falling away from God by choosing and preferring created realities. This preference for lower created realities creates a distance between God and Augustine. This distance is expressed in his constant use of the adverb *longe*. His use of this adverb is found primarily related to the narrative of his sexual depravity. L. C. Ferrari explains that the significance of this adverb in the mind of Augustine transcends the simple meaning of spatial distance. In the context of Book II, Augustine intends to present the relationship of the soul with God.<sup>53</sup> By choosing the created realities over and above the Creator, Augustine distances from God like the prodigal son who traveled far away from his father's land. The *longe* also indicates the disintegration of the self, and the farther he goes away from God, the more shattered he becomes. S. Macdonald suggests that the narrative of sexual promiscuity as the first part of his sin narrative can be understood as demonstrating sexual sin as a metaphor to sin in general,<sup>54</sup> defined as the going away from God and choosing created realities.

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<sup>50</sup> Id., *conf.* 2, 2 (CSEL 33, 29-30, linn. 16-17 – 1-4).

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 3, 7 (CSEL 33, 34, linn. 2-3).

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 6, 14 (CSEL 33, 40, linn. 10-11).

<sup>53</sup> L. C. Ferrari, *The Theme of the Prodigal Son*, 107-109.

<sup>54</sup> S. Macdonald, *Petit Larceny, the beginning of all Sin: Augustine's Theft of the Pears*, in *Augustine's Confessions, Critical Essays*, ed. W. E. Mann, Oxford 2006, 46-47; see also W. E. Mann, *God, Belief, and Perplexity*, 37-51.



Augustine is dramatic and poetic in describing his sins of the flesh. He calls them by many names: *umbrosis amoribus* or furtive love affairs (2, 1. 1), *limosa concupiscentia carnis* or mud of my fleshly desires (2, 2. 2), *caligine libidinis* or fog of lust (*Ibid.*), *spinarum* or thorns (2, 2. 3) which may suggest that he is referring to the *peccatum hereditarium*, *omnes illicitas iucunditates* or all unlawful pleasures (2, 2. 4), *libidinis licentiosae per dedecus humanum*, *illicitae autem per leges tuas* or lust licensed by disgraceful human custom, but illicit before laws (*Ibid.*), *excesserunt caput meum vepres libidinum* or thorn bushes of lust shot up higher than my head (2, 3. 6), *inquieta indutum adulescentia* or the unquiet adolescence (*Ibid.*), *vino invisibili perversae atque inclinatae* or the unseen wine of perversity and inclination (*Ibid.*), *dissolutionem affectionum variorum* or various disreputable amours (2, 3. 8). He even describes them as if roaming the streets of Babylon and reeled in its filth as though basking amid cinnamon and precious ointments.<sup>55</sup>

In summary, Augustine speaks of *concupiscentia carnis* as one particular disordered desire that offers him unlawful pleasure masquerading itself as if he were basking amid cinnamon and precious ointments. Such unrestraint desire provoked in him the sense of envy that led him to pretend to have committed depraved acts. In reality, however, it led him into the *regio egestatis*.

### Failures of his Parents

Augustine also recalls how his parents failed to help him from descending into *illicitas iucunditates*. He recalls that no one from his family made an attempt to avert his ruin by arranging a marriage, noting their reason that their only concern was that he excelled in rhetoric and persuasive speech.<sup>56</sup> He recounts that when his father saw his *pubescentem et inquieta indutum adulescentia*, his father became excited at the prospect of having grandchildren.<sup>57</sup> Augustine explains that his father was more concerned about his intellectual progress than guiding

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<sup>55</sup> Aug., *conf.* 2, 3, 8 (CSEL 33, 34, linn. 17-19): *Ecce cum quibus comitibus iter agebam platearum Babyloniae et volutabar in caeno eius tamquam in cinnamidis et unguentis pretiosis.*

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 2, 4 (CSEL 33, 32, linn. 1-4): *Non fuit cura meorum ruentem excipere me matrimonio, sed cura fuit tantum, ut discerem sermonem facere quam optimum et persuadere dictione.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 3, 6 (CSEL 33, 33, linn. 8-12).

and cultivating him chaste in the eyes of God.<sup>58</sup> He further notes that his father thought next to nothing about God and only vain things about his son.<sup>59</sup> With regard to his mother, he notes that she saw the twisted paths he was following, the path which he describes as trodden by people who turn their backs to God, not their faces.<sup>60</sup> His mother, he recalls later on, was the voice of God, the voice he never listened to. She cautioned him against adultery, but he shut his ears. However, Augustine seems to suggest that to a certain degree, his mother was not as persuasive as she should have been in helping him to avoid fornication. This is notable when he recalls the respective reasons of his parents, recounting that his mother regarded the customary course of studies as no hindrance, and even a considerable help toward gaining God eventually,<sup>61</sup> even if this meant being in the company of those who roamed the streets of Babylon. J. C. Cadavini comments on this particular episode noting that it is in this part of the *Confessiones* that Augustine manifests his subtle contempt for his father, while he treats his mother as an oracle.<sup>62</sup> To some degree, it seems that Augustine blames his parents for his eventual descent into the *regio egestatis*.

Augustine recognizes importance of parental supervision in the formation of their children. In a letter sent to Boniface, he highlights the importance of parental responsibility as formative and destructive when it is wanting.<sup>63</sup> He wrote to Boniface that parents' neglect can harm their children and can even cause a spiritual homicide for a baptized child being brought to or involved in anything profane by his parents.<sup>64</sup> If the failures of his parents are to be scrutinized under these words, one may consider that Patricius and Monnica had committed a grave sin for allowing Augustine to plunge himself into sin. One might even infer that his parents had chosen the worldly creatures over the Creator by putting first his intellectual progress.

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 3, 5 (CSEL 33, 32-33, linn. 18-20 – 1-3).

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 3, 8 (CSEL 33, 35, linn. 10-13).

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 3, 6 (CSEL 33, 33, linn. 12-14).

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 3, 8 (CSEL 33, 35, linn. 6-10).

<sup>62</sup> J. C. Cadavini, *Book Two: Augustine's Book of Shadows*, 25.

<sup>63</sup> Aug., *ep.* 98 (CSEL 34/2, 520-533).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 (CSEL 34/2, 523, linn. 6-8): *Verumtamen recte dicuntur parentes, uel quicumque maiores, filios seu quoslibet paruulos baptizatos daemoniorum sacrilegiis obligare conantes, spiritaliter homicidae.*

In the mind of Augustine, he could have been helped from descending into the *regio egestatis*, if only his parents had arranged a marriage for him.<sup>65</sup> He describes marriage as *suavitatibus metas*.<sup>66</sup> He argues that the energy of his youthful desire could have been curved if it were diverted into useful chances. This refers to the curative property of marriage. It is good to note that, although this is not the place to discuss the nature of marriage, what he calls fornication is actually non-sin if they are done within the realm of marriage.<sup>67</sup> For Augustine, such failure to arrange a marriage for him was one of the reasons why he fell into *regio egestatis*.

### The Pear Incident: Theft

Augustine qualifies theft as one of the grave sins.<sup>68</sup> He remembers the incident by admitting that beyond question, theft is punishable by the law God has written in the human hearts.<sup>69</sup> Augustine admits right away that it was not the joy of possessing what he had stolen that gave him delight, rather it was the act of stealing, to enjoy the theft for its own sake.<sup>70</sup> They had more than enough food and their food was even tastier than those of his neighbor's. Augustine also admits that the pleasure proceeds from the fact that it was forbidden. Another important factor is the pleasure of the company in doing what is forbidden. In fact, he discloses that he would not have done it if he were alone.<sup>71</sup>

In his reflection on the motives of his actions, Augustine repeats his basic principle, that is, the natural inclination of man

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<sup>65</sup> Id., *conf.* 2, 2, 2.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 2, 3 (CSEL 33, 30-31, linn. 14-20 – 1): *Quis mihi modularetur aerumnam meam et novissimarum rerum fugaces pulchritudines in usum verteret earumque suavitatibus metas praefigeret, ut usque ad coniugale litus exaestuarent fluctus aetatis meae, si tranquillitas in eis non poterat esse fine procreandorum liberorum contenta, sicut praescribit lex tua, Domine, qui formas etiam propaginem mortis nostrae, potens imponere lenem manum ad temperamentum spinarum a paradiso tuo secluserum?*

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Id., *b. coniug.* (CSEL 41, 187-231).

<sup>68</sup> Id., *exp. Gal.* 48; *f. et op.* 25; *cont.* 9; *ep.* 29, 6; 93, 48; *s.* 37, 28; 162, 1.

<sup>69</sup> Id., *conf.* 2, 4, 9.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 4, 9 (CSEL 33, 36, linn. 1-4): *Nam id furatus sum, quod mihi abundabat et multo melius, nec ea re volebam frui, quam furto appetebam, sed ipso furto et peccato; cf. M. Edwards, The Problem of Evil in the Ancient World: Homer to Dionysius the Areopagite, Eugene 2023, 251-252.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 9, 17.

towards what is beautiful.<sup>72</sup> However, he explains that among created realities lies temptation by reason of a certain measure and harmony of all beautiful things of lower degree.<sup>73</sup> To this measure and harmony, Augustine acknowledges, he found himself motivated with *immoderata inclinatione*. This is a re-affirmation of what he has declared at the beginning of Book II about the unrestrained desire.<sup>74</sup> He then raises the question as to why some criminal acts are committed. For Augustine criminal acts are always sinful. In the following narrative, he examines the general motives in committing crimes and his motive in stealing his neighbor's pears.

Augustine explains that, in general, it is not the very sin itself that motivates the person. In fact, it is the good that is perceived to be had which according to the circumstance of the person can only be gained by committing a crime.<sup>75</sup> This goes back to Augustine's conception of the *immoderata inclinatione* towards creation. If this is true, he asks, is this applicable to the act of stealing his neighbor's pears?<sup>76</sup> In an effort to answer this question, Augustine writes an analysis of the object of sin and sin itself. The pears, he recalls, were beautiful. A short excursion is necessary here to understand how Augustine understands creation. Created realities are good, in contrast to Manicheans' concept, and ordered with measure, number and weight,<sup>77</sup> a quotation from *Sap.* 11, 21 which Augustine loves to evoke in reference to the order of creation and its beauty. In the *Conf.* 13, Augustine defines beauty not according to how man perceives it but in relation to how God looks at his creation as good. It is enough, however, to reiterate the observation of M. C. Beardsley that the key elements in Augustine's theory of beauty are unity, number, equality, and proportion.<sup>78</sup> Regardless of their unique

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<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 5, 10 (CSEL 33, 36, linn. 19-22): *Etenim species est pulchris corporibus et auro et argento et omnibus, et in contactu carnis congruentia valet plurimum ceterisque sensibus est sua cuique accommodata modificatio corporum.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, (CSEL 33, 37, linn. 3-6): *Et vita, quam hic vivimus, habet illecebram suam propter quemdam modum decoris sui et convenientiam cum his omnibus infimis pulchris.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 2.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 5, 11.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 6, 12:

<sup>77</sup> *Id.*, *Gn. litt.* 4, 3, 7; *nat. b.* 21-23. The use of this verse is found in many other works of Augustine; it is however prominent in *De Genesi ad litteram*.

<sup>78</sup> M. C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics from Classical Greece to the Present: A Short History*, Tuscaloosa (1966), 92-98.

beauty, according to Augustine, they failed in comparison to God who is Beauty himself. The object itself is a created beauty, but to such beauty, Augustine declares that he was never drawn to since he had plenty of better ones. His point is that the pears were never the reason for his sins. He then proceeds to analyze the motive of his action.

Augustine states that the crime is never desired for its own sake, but the advantages gained by doing it. It is within this ambit that Augustine tries to investigate the act of stealing if there is anything beautiful in it.<sup>79</sup> To his surprise, he cannot find any beauty in it. He acknowledges that he feasted on the sin and nothing else. In addition, its depravity lends flavor to the inferior taste of the pears. There is nothing to be found seductive in itself. Augustine turns to the idea of camaraderie with his fellow thieves as the possible beauty that he must have loved in stealing the pears. In the end, even the camaraderie with fellow thieves was nothing at all.<sup>80</sup> He concludes that his theft lacks even the tiniest and faintest beauty with which vice can allure him.<sup>81</sup> Since it was the object that was desired, Augustine finally concludes that it was theft itself that he loved committed in the company of other thieves.<sup>82</sup> Reflecting on

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<sup>79</sup> Aug., *conf.* 2, 6, 12 (CSEL 33, 38, linn. 8-11); cf. H. Bernhard Schmid, *The Guise of the Bad in Augustine's Pear Theft*, in *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 21 (2018), 71–89.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 8, 16; cf. I. Hadot, *Amicitia*, in *Augustinus-Lexikon*, vol. 1, ed. C. Mayer, Basel 1986-1994, 287-293; N. Lefler, *Saint Augustine's Hermeneutics of Friendship: A Consideration of De Utilitate Credendi, 10-13, with Special Reference to Confessions, Book VIII*, in *Augustinian Studies* 41 (2010), 423-434; J. McEvoy, *Friendship and mutual Deception in Book IV of the Confessions of Augustine*, in *Eklogai: Studies in Honour of T. Finan & G. Watson*, ed. K. McGroarty, Maynooth 2001, 3-19.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* (CSEL 33, 38-39, linn. 10-24 – 1-3): *Et nunc, Domine Deus meus, quaero, quid me in furto delectauerit, et ecce species nulla est: non dico sicut in aequitate atque prudentia, sed neque sicut in mente hominis atque memoria et sensibus et uegetante uita, neque sicut speciosa sunt sidera et decora locis suis et terra et mare plena fetibus, qui succedunt nascendo decedentibus; non saltem ut est quaedam defectiua species et umbratica uitii fallentibus.*

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* (CSEL 33, 42, linn. 4-11): *Quid est, quod mihi venit in mentem quaerere et discutere et considerare, quia si tunc amarem poma illa, quae furatus sum, et eis frui cuperem, possem etiam solus, si satis esset, committere illam iniquitatem, qua peruenirem ad uoluptatem meam, nec confricatione consociorum animorum accenderem pruritum cupiditatis meae? Sed quoniam in illis pomis uoluptas mihi non erat, ea erat in ipso facinore, quam faciebat consortium simul peccantium;* cf. W. E. Mann, *God, Belief, and Perplexity*, New York 2016, 27-36.

such friendship, he writes, "What an exceedingly unfriendly form of friendship that was! It was a seduction of the mind hard to understand, which instilled into me a craving to do harm for sport and fun".<sup>83</sup>

In exploring his motives, Augustine demonstrates his understanding of vice. Initially, he writes that in vice lurks a counterfeit beauty. This counterfeit beauty, he explains, is an attempt to imitate God but in a perverse way.<sup>84</sup> His treatment of vice is set within his attempt to explore the reason for stealing. For L. Asher, the *perverse imitatus* can be considered as the ambit wherein the theft can be understood.<sup>85</sup> He suggests that for Augustine, the act of stealing is an imitation of God's omnipotence.<sup>86</sup> He adds that the act of stealing was a deviation to what man is naturally inclined, that is, the inclination to pleasure. He calls this deviation a "negative transcendence," borrowing the idea from L. Trilling. Through this "negative transcendence", L. Asher infers that Augustine and his cohorts were able to satisfy their "higher" aims of freedom and power.<sup>87</sup> With regard to the social dimension of their crime, L. Asher suggests that by neglecting the object of theft – the pears – Augustine succeeded in stripping theft down to its essence, allowing the crime to become an act of pure exhibitionism among his friends.<sup>88</sup> This calls to mind the same tendency that Augustine had succumbed to, fueled by envy, that is, pretending to have done sexual perversities for applause and admirations.

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<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 9, 17 (CSEL 33, 43, linn. 1-4): *O nimis inimica amicitia, seductio mentis inuestigabilis, ex ludo et ioco nocendi auuiditas, et alieni damni appetitus, nulla lucri mei, nulla ulciscendi libidine.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 6, 14 (CSEL 33, 40, linn. 8-11).

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 6, 14 (CSEL 33, 40, linn. 8-21): *Ita fornicatur anima, cum auertitur abs te et quaerit extra te ea quae pura et liquida non inuenit, nisi cum redit ad te. Peruerse te imitantur omnes, qui longe se a te faciunt et extollunt se aduersum te. sed etiam sic te imitando indicant creatorem te esse omnis naturae et ideo non esse, quo a te omni modo recedatur. quid ergo in illo furto ego dilexi et in quo dominum meum uel uitiose atque peruerse imitatus sum? an libuit facere contra legem saltem fallacia, quia potentatu non poteram, ut mancam libertatem captiuus imitarer faciendo impune quod non liceret tenebrosa omnipotentiae similitudine? ecce est ille seruus fugiens dominum suum et consecutus umbram. o putredo, o monstrum uitae et mortis profunditas! potuitne libere quod non licebat, non ob aliud, nisi quia non licebat?; L. Asher, *The Dangerous Fruit of Augustine's Confessions*, in *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 66 (1998), 227-255*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 239.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 240.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 241.

Augustine enumerates these perverse imitations as follows:<sup>89</sup> pride as sublimity; flirtatiousness as to arouse love contrary to charity; curiosity as pretending to seek for knowledge; ignorance or stupidity as masquerading simplicity and innocence; sloth as pretending to aspire for rest; and extravagance as bogus generosity. Augustine further adds: avarice as wanting to amass possession for oneself; envy as being contentious of other's rank; timidity as being worried about the threat to things being loved; and finally, sadness as dreading the loss of something from which one derives pleasure. Augustine considers these vices, masquerading themselves as virtues, as influences that turn the soul away from God and lead it to fornication.<sup>90</sup>

L. C. Ferrari explores the possible background on why Augustine puts great emphasis on the guilt he had in the act of stealing the pears.<sup>91</sup> The author notes two important influences: the first is his Manichean background, and the second is his deep knowledge of the Christian Scriptures. For the Manicheans, trees sprung from the semen of demons. Even if it came from demons, the seed was rich with light elements. The plucking of fruits is sinful for the Manicheans, but such an act could be forgiven if the fruits were given to the "elects" and they, in turn, would pray for the ones who plucked them. But if the fruit is given to a lower form of creation, the sin is aggravated. The use of the fruit, therefore, played a vital role in setting the degree of sin and its possible remission.<sup>92</sup> The most influential factor, however, Ferrari notes, is Augustine's immense reading of the Scriptures, especially of the Book of Genesis. The emphasis on the immensity of his guilt springs from the comparison between the fall of Adam and Eve by eating the forbidden fruit and his nocturnal crime. Ferrari further argues that Augustine considers the pear-stealing incident as his "original sin."<sup>93</sup> This explains why Augustine writes the narrative of his *Confessiones* in a way that it reflects the biblical story of fall and salvation. The story of his fall and

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<sup>89</sup> Aug., *conf.* 2, 6, 13 (CSEL 33, 38-39, linn. 9-24 – 1-3).

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 6, 14 (CSEL 33, 40, linn. 8-9).

<sup>91</sup> L. C. Ferrari, *The Pear-Theft in Augustine's Confessions*, 233-242. Another article on this subject is that of M. Stróżyński, *The Fall of the Soul in Book Two of Augustine's Confessions*, in *Vigiliae Christianae* 70 (2016), 77-100.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 235-236.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.



salvation is completed when he recounts the scene of his deliverance under the fig tree in the famous *tolle et lege* event in a garden in Milan.<sup>94</sup>

In another article, Ferrari traces in Augustine's pear-stealing incident the theme of Prodigal Son in the gospel of Luke.<sup>95</sup> Ferrari explains that Augustine likens himself to the Prodigal Son in the gospel.<sup>96</sup> The pear, according to Ferrari, is likened to the wealth squandered by the prodigal son. Like him, Augustine likens the pear to the wealth, his intelligence,<sup>97</sup> that he labored so much to achieve but squandered it in a disorderly manner. Ferrari traces this interpretation in *Quaestionum evangeliorum* (ca. 399/400) of Augustine.<sup>98</sup> Instead of eating the pears, Augustine recalls that they throw them to the pigs. Pigs, according to him, are *aliquid immundum*.<sup>99</sup> Ferrari concludes that the pear incident which led Augustine into the *regio egestatis* is necessary since it represented the gravity of his fall leading him, like the prodigal son, to rethink his life and the desire to return to the safety of his father.<sup>100</sup> In another article, L. C. Ferrari also presents the symbolism of the garden in Book II as place of dispersion in contrast to the garden in Milan where the *tolle et lege* event happened.<sup>101</sup> In Book II, he suggests that Augustine sees himself as a well-cultivated garden but later on defaced by the encroaching of thorns which is an allusion to the biblical symbolism of thorns.<sup>102</sup> Viewing Augustine from a different angle, B. Hopkins evaluates this particular episode with the psychoanalysis proposed by D. W. Winnicott.<sup>103</sup> B. Hopkins notes that the pear stealing can be explained, as proposed by D. W. Winnicott, as Augustine

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<sup>94</sup> Aug., *conf.* 8, 12, 29; L. C. Ferrari, *The Pear-Theft in Augustine's Confessions*, 240-241.

<sup>95</sup> L. C. Ferrari, *The Theme of the Prodigal Son*, 105-118.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 105. Here Ferrari made a list of select works of Augustine where one can find reference to the Prodigal Son.

<sup>97</sup> *Id.*, *The Theme of the Prodigal Son*, 106.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 107; See Aug., *qu. eu.* 2, 33.

<sup>99</sup> Aug., *en. Ps.* 141, 1 (CSEL 95/5, 26, linn. 26-27): *porcus significat aliquid immundum*.

<sup>100</sup> L. C. Ferrari, *The Theme of the Prodigal Son*, 118.

<sup>101</sup> *Id.*, *The Symbols of Sinfulness in Book II of Augustine's Confessions*, in *Augustinian Studies*, 2 (1971), 93-104; cf. M. Stróżyński, *The Fall of the Soul in Book Two of Augustine's Confessions*, in *Vigiliae Christianae* 70 (2016), 77-100

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 95-57.

<sup>103</sup> B. Hopkins, *St. Augustine's "Confessions": The Pear-Stealing Episode*, in *American Imago* 38 (1981), 97-104.



missing his mother, and that the act of stealing and the motives behind it is the possible desire to reacquire the deceptive sense of omnipotence.<sup>104</sup> B. Hopkins also traces some correlations that appeared between the psycho-analysis of D. W. Winnicott and Augustine.

In other words, the pear incident was not just a simple youthful episode for Augustine. It bears a great significance in his analysis of sin. It allows him to look into sin methodically and at the same time to present it as the story of his personal fall. Sin has dimensions: personal and social. His personal depravity and the camaraderie in sin, at the end, led him into the state of *regio egestatis*.

As observed above, the unity of mind is necessary to Augustine. In Book II, it can be understood in two ways: first is the unity of God and man which allows the latter to follow the law of the former; the second is the unity of men choosing creatures over the Creator. The first unity brings about harmony; while the second leads to mutual destruction. The first is governed by love and true friendship, a proper inclination towards the Creator which leads to permanence and harmony in man himself. The second, however, is governed by a disordered desire towards creatures. In the first unity, love is the dynamic force that maintains the harmony; while in the second, it is envy, lie and false camaraderie that drive the unity. The first unity allows man to experience God's sweetness, but the second leads him into the *regio egestatis*.

## Conclusion.

From what has been presented, the following conclusions are drawn. First, Book II is Augustine's analysis of his youthful years reevaluated under the light of his Christian faith and an attempt to present the story of his personal fall that prefaces his eventual return. Scholars have also pointed out many other influences in this specific narrative, namely Manicheanism, Platonism, and even an ancient African tradition. Second, Augustine defines sins as wandering away from God and preferring creatures over their Creator. From time to time, this definition is simply replaced with the term "fornication." This same definition is applied to the sin-narratives found in Book II, namely: sins of the flesh, the failure of his parents, and the pear incident. Another

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<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

notable definition employed by Augustine is found in relation to vice; sin, he explains, is an imitation of God in a perverse way. Third, the concept of *regio egestatis* seems to serve as the over-arching storyline of his narrative. The reason for this is to present *regio egestatis* not solely as a negative state but a unique locus where, like the prodigal son, he realized how far he had wandered away and, at the same time, the point from which he must go back to his father's house. Moreover, Augustine also wants to present his personal *regio egestatis* illumined by divine providence: that God never abandons His creature, and darkness is permitted in order to teach His wandering sheep. And lastly, the overall tone of Book II is not of despair and loss. Augustine's appreciation of his youthful years, although darkened by his immoralities, allows him to find and value the beauty he has been searching for so long a time, the beauty so ancient yet so new: God himself.

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# The Holy Eucharist as a Sacrament of Unity

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Jhoben M. Rodriguez, OAR

## *Abstract*

*The primary purpose of this article is to revisit the fundamental aspects of the Holy Eucharist as a sacrament of unity, with a focus on the details of its major parts. Through a meticulous analysis, it becomes evident that the celebration itself, namely the Mass, is a sacrament of unity, as it represents God's initiative to save and bring everyone into communion with Himself. This sacrament indiscriminately gathers all individuals, regardless of their background, and invites them to participate in worship within the centrality of Christ, as manifested in the reception of the Word and the Eucharist. A substantial exegesis of the theology of the Holy Eucharist through its significant parts inherently reveals its characteristics as a sacrament of unity or communion.*

## **Introduction**

It is about time to rediscover the parts of the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrament of Unity by examining parts and seeing the reason for it to be a Sacrament of Unity. This article is presented in an expository manner by explaining the parts of the Mass. One value that can be seen going through the parts of the Holy Eucharist is the community spirit which is unity. The coming together every Sunday in order to celebrate the Holy



Eucharist is the celebration of being one Christian community, of being one Church and of fostering family ties.<sup>1</sup>

### Introductory Rites

The Introductory Rites is the part of the Mass before the Liturgy of the Word. It is characterized by the character of beginning, introduction, and preparation. This is to make sure that the faithful who are gathered as one communion are disposed in the celebration of the Liturgy of the Word and the Eucharist. The Introductory Rites is composed of the Entrance, Greeting, Act of Penitence, *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, and Collect.<sup>2</sup> This part commences when the people start to gather around the altar of Christ. The altar in the celebration is esteemed as the symbol of Jesus Christ according to St. Ambrose. “For what is the altar of Christ if not the image of the Body of Christ? ... The altar represents the Body of Christ and the Body of Christ is on the altar.”<sup>3</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church provided:

The altar, around which the Church is gathered in the celebration of the Eucharist, represents the two aspects of the same mystery: the altar of the sacrifice and the table of the Lord. This is all the more so since the Christian altar is the symbol of Christ himself, present in the midst of the assembly of his faithful, both as the victim offered for our reconciliation and as food from heaven who is giving himself to us...The liturgy expresses this unity of sacrifice and communion in many prayers.<sup>4</sup>

In the course of history, there have been developments in the rites. In the mid-second century, the Holy Mass was separated from within the setting of the regular meal. The celebration is preceded usually by the Reading of the Scriptures wherein the Lector proclaims the readings. Prior to that is the observance of silence by all who are gathered, which is preserved in the Roman Liturgy during Good Friday. There has been gradual developments of various Introductory Rites in order to give a

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<sup>1</sup> Anscar J. Chupungco, OSB, *Liturgy and Inculturation* in Handbook for Liturgical Studies II: The Fundamental of Liturgy (Philippines: Claretian Publications, 2004), 345

<sup>2</sup> *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* Third Typical Edition Liturgy Documentary Series 2 #46 §1 (Washington, DC: USCCB, 2003), 27.

<sup>3</sup> Ambrose, *De Sacramentis* 4:2, 7 and 5:2, 7.

<sup>4</sup> *Catechism for Filipino Catholics* Special Subsidized Edition for Filipino Catechists (Philippines: CBCP, 2005), #1383.

definite starting point and to experience an initial experience of prayer. For example, St. Augustine in Africa in the 5th Century greeted the people before the Proclamation of the Scripture.<sup>5</sup>

The community is composed of people from various socio-economic backgrounds, male and female, with differing moral excellence and educational backgrounds from all walks of life.<sup>6</sup> Before Vatican II, the Order of the Mass begins with “*Sacerdos paratus...*” which means “The Priest prepares...” In other words, it starts when the celebrant is ready. In the revised Missal, there is a shift to “*Populo congregatio.*” The Second Vatican Council now highlights the active participation of the faithful. Before there was so much focus on the responsibilities of the ministers in the rubrics; now, there is an acknowledgement of the participation of everyone.<sup>8</sup> This is an imagery of unity for all the faithful gathered.

In attending the Sunday Mass, there is a good impression of the beauty of the Church “coming together.” It is observed that during the celebration the poor and the rich, the uneducated and the educated, the housekeeper and the grande dame are side by side inside the Church worshipping God. While the fallen world is marked by stratification, separation, and division the Church upholds inclusivity. All are one in the gathering in the Holy Mass. This is contrary to the world full of the attitude of exclusivism. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is no male and female,” according to St. Paul. In Christ all are one and this anticipation of this vision is being perfected in the Mass.<sup>9</sup> The faithful, who, coming from various places and from the rigorous weeks of working, gather together to celebrate the faith and receive the sustenance as they carry on with life.

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<sup>5</sup> Lawrence J. Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass* Revised Edition (Washington, DC: FDLC, 2006), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Barron, *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2011)172-173.

<sup>7</sup> *Sacerdos paratus cum ingreditur ad altare, facta illi debita reverentia.* (The Priest prepares as he ascends to the altar, making his due reverential) Jeffrey A Zuñiga, “The Rubrics of the Extraordinary and Ordinary Forms of the Mass” in *Quaerens: Journal of Theology and Pastoral Life* Vol. 14 No.1 June 2019 Special Issue (Philippines: Recoletos School of Theology, 2019), 23.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Turner, *At the Supper of the Lamb: A Pastoral and Theological Commentary on the Mass* (USA: Liturgy Training Publications, 2011), 2.

<sup>9</sup> Barron, *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith*, 174.

## People Gathered Together

In many Churches the ringing of the bells is an announcement of the scheduled Mass. This signifies the calling of the faithful to worship. The ancient meaning of the bells is articulated in Psalm 95: “Come let us sing joyful songs to the Lord and shout with joy to the rock who saves us...Enter, let us bow down in worship; let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God and we are his people, the sheep of his flock.”<sup>10</sup> This gathering means being ready, and coming together with a purpose. Thus, the Mass begins when the people have gathered.<sup>11</sup> Here comes in the communal act of prayer. There is an element of “worshipping with help,” i.e., the intercession in the Catholic faith, a faith which is communal.<sup>12</sup> This explains that the Mass is a gathering and never a solitary act. Even when a priest celebrates alone,<sup>13</sup> he is really not alone, for he is in the presence of the Triune God and all the saints and angels.<sup>14</sup>

## Entrance Chant and Procession

Other rites follow as the faithful are gathered, and the Entrance Chant is sung led by the choir. The singing accompanies the procession. As it is stated in the General Instructions of the Roman Missal (GIRM): During the procession to the altar, the Entrance Chant takes place.<sup>15</sup> The singing of the opening song is not merely incidental and decorative. The harmony of voices is a concrete expression of how Christians should live as God’s children in unity.<sup>16</sup> The harmony in singing is also seen as a profound mystery of unity:

To illustrate this profound mystery, let us take the example of a choir of many singers. A choir is composed of a variety of men, women and children, of both old and young. Under the direction of

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<sup>10</sup> Donald Wuerl and Mike Aquilina, *The Mass: The Glory, The Mystery, The Tradition* (USA: Crown Publishing Group, 2011), 93.

<sup>11</sup> Turner, *At the Supper of the Lamb: A Pastoral and Theological Commentary on the Mass*, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Barron, *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith*, 174.

<sup>13</sup> A priest can never celebrate the Holy Eucharist alone. Just few exceptions e.g. the priest has a communicable disease. There must be at least one server. This shows that the celebration is always communitarian, indeed the Mass is Sacrament of Unity. GIRM 254, 87.

<sup>14</sup> Wuerl and Aquilina, *The Mass: The Glory, The Mystery, The Tradition*, 66.

<sup>15</sup> GIRM #121, 57.

<sup>16</sup> Barron, *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith*, 175.

one conductor, each sings in the way that is natural for him: men with men's voices, boys with boys' voices, old people with old voices, young people with young voices. Yet all of them produce a single harmony. Or consider the example of our soul. It moves our senses according to their several functions so that in the presence of a single object they all act simultaneously: the eye sees, the ear hears, the hand touches, the nose smells, the tongue tastes, and often the other parts of the body act as well as, for example, the feet may walk.<sup>17</sup>

It can be observed that the procession of ministers takes place at this moment of singing. However, looking back at history, the early Christians did not have a procession since the Eucharist took place in homes, and it was only until the celebration was moved to churches that developments occurred in the procession. The procession symbolizes<sup>18</sup> that all are pilgrims in this world toward heaven; this is the meaning of the movement from one point going to the altar. This is also along the journey of Christian life they are accompanied, a procession of a family as represented by the ministers and the priest. Procession<sup>19</sup> being carried out in a dignified pacing is rich in meaning.<sup>20</sup> While the singing enlivened Christian worship, in the development of the liturgy, there comes a time that Entrance Antiphons were specific for each celebration.<sup>21</sup> The original purpose of chant is to foster unity<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Athanasius, *A Discourse Against the Pagans*, Nn. 42-43: PG 25, 83-87.

<sup>18</sup> "The entrance procession is a visual representation of the people being a liturgical community, of being together as a people, a people who have gathered in response to God's invitation. It is not only a practical gesture solemnly welcoming the priest and other ministers to the sanctuary; it is also a visual expression of the people being a liturgical community, of being together as a people, a people who have gathered in response to God's invitation." Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*, 3.

<sup>19</sup> Processions were adapted from Regal practices.

<sup>20</sup> Wuerl and Aquilina, *The Mass: The Glory, The Mystery, The Tradition*, 93-95.

<sup>21</sup> Turner, *At the Supper of the Lamb: A Pastoral and Theological Commentary on the Mass*, 2-3.

<sup>22</sup> "So in your harmony of mind and heart the song you sing is Jesus Christ. Every one of you should form a choir, so that, in harmony of sound through harmony of hearts, and in unity taking the note from God, you may sing with one voice through Jesus Christ to the Father. If you do this, he will listen to you and see from your good works that you are members of his Son. It is then an advantage to you to live in perfect unity, so that at all times you may share in God." Ignatius of Antioch, *A Letter to the Ephesians*, Nn. 2, 2-5, 2: Funk 1, 175-177.

of the assembly, to open the celebration, to introduce the mystery of the celebration, and to accompany the minister. Accordingly, in lieu of singing, should there be none, the Entrance Antiphon may be recited.<sup>23</sup>

### Sign of the Cross and Greetings

What follows the procession when the chant has concluded is that the priest makes the profound bow, venerates the altar and incenses the cross and the altar and then proceeds to the presidential chair where the celebrant will make the Sign of the Cross.<sup>24</sup> The Sign of the Cross is the beginning of the ritual proper of the liturgy invoking the Triune God to whom all those gathered belong. While the world says that man by himself is the pursuer of his own happiness in accordance with his own rights, each person essentially belongs to no one but to himself. The Sign of the Cross is a contradiction to what modernism imposes and dictates that man is self-sufficient on his own: self-directing and self-determining. Whenever it is done, Catholics affirm what St. Paul says: “None of us lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself. If we live, we live with the Lord...” (Romans 14:7-8); therefore, Catholics say “your life is not about you.”<sup>25</sup> The Sign of the Cross is the most universal expression of Christians. This most profound gesture is a reminder of the formula used in Baptism, the Trinity, and the Redemption through the Cross of Christ. This sign is the same as swearing, that the believers gathered promise that they come to Mass to be witnesses and active participants, and not as spectators in the worship.<sup>26</sup> This invocation reflects the Church being always connected to God. Thus, when praying, they are not only praying to God but also praying in God.<sup>27</sup> Pope Benedict XVI expressed this simple action as: “a kind of synthesis of Christian Faith.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *GIRM* #47 & #48, §2, 28.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* #122- 124 §1, 28.

<sup>25</sup> Barron, *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith*, 175.

<sup>26</sup> Scott Hahn, *The Lamb's Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 43-45.

<sup>27</sup> Barron, *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith*, 175.

<sup>28</sup> See: Wuerl and Aquilina, *The Mass: The Glory, The Mystery, The Tradition*, 96. See also: In the Homily of Pope Benedict XVI he pointed out to the great mystery of God's love sending his only begotten son. People are invited to adore Christ who sacrifice for mankind's sake. This act of love allows each person to be drawn to Christ and give thanks to God. Benedict XVI, *Homily of His Holiness Benedict XVI Eucharistic Celebration on the Occasion of the 150th Anniversary of the Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Sunday, 14 September 2008) (Date retrieved: December 13, 2021) [http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2008/\\_documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_hom\\_20080914\\_lourdes-apparizioni.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/homilies/2008/_documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20080914_lourdes-apparizioni.html).

The sign of the cross, a traditional prelude to prayer, is a form of self-blessing with strong baptismal overtones: in the rite of Christian initiation a person is signed with the cross, for it is from the victorious Cross of Jesus Christ that salvation comes to us. Moreover, every Christian has been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The community at worships first and foremost a baptismal community, and for this reason can gather to celebrate the Lord Jesus.<sup>29</sup>

This is the expression of faith to Jesus Christ who died on the cross for the salvation of mankind. The work of salvation is the work of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and this is also true to the sacrament wherein the Triune God continuously communicate to all who believe.

Let us not then be ashamed to confess the Crucified. Be the Cross our seal made with boldness by our fingers on our brow, and on everything; over the bread we eat, and the cups we drink; in our comings in, and goings out; before our sleep, when we lie down and when we rise up; when we are in the way, and when we are still. Great is that preservative; it is without price, for the sake of the poor; without toil, for the sick; since also its grace is from God. It is the Sign of the faithful, and the dread of devils: for He triumphed over them in it, having made a shew of them openly; for when they see the Cross they are reminded of the Crucified; they are afraid of Him, who bruised the heads of the dragon. Despise not the Seal, because of the freeness of the gift; out for this the rather honor thy Benefactor.<sup>30</sup>

This sign explains why believers come to attend and participate in the Holy Eucharist. The reason for this is to participate in the mystery of salvation and redemption and in the resurrection of Christ. This participation is taking also what Jesus did on the cross so that believers may relate the cross to their own lives, a life of suffering and offering one with Jesus.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*, 11.

<sup>30</sup> Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catechetical Lecture* 13, 36.

<sup>31</sup> Jean-Yves Garneau, *Discovering the Eucharist: According to a Rich Ritual Approach* (Makati City, Philippines: St. Paul Publications, 1991), 37.

The Sign of the Cross is followed by the greeting from the Sacred Scriptures<sup>32</sup> from the Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians: “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Corinthians 13:14)”, and the people respond “And with your Spirit.” The response of the faithful is the acknowledgement of the Holy Spirit in the Mass. The second form is “Grace to you and peace from God our Father...” based on biblical texts.<sup>33</sup> The third form is the simplest: “The Lord be with you.”<sup>34</sup> This Greeting is the desire of the people to experience the Lord’s presence in the assembly. It is more than the friendly greeting.

### **Penitential Act, Gloria and Collect**

What follows the introduction of the Mass is the Penitential Act, the Gloria (depending on the celebration) and the Collect.

What the Church celebrates in the Liturgy is Christ and our life in Christ; yet nonetheless its members cannot fail to acknowledge sin and guilt. And so in the Act of Penitence the whole assembly, proclaiming itself sinful before a merciful and forgiving God, shows that it is a community ever converting, ever in need of reconciliation with God and others. The people are not called to make an “examination of conscience” but rather to make a proclamation of faith in a God who is loving, kind, and the source of all reconciliation and healing. The focus is not on us but on the merciful God.<sup>35</sup>

This is an act of being a beggar before the Lord.<sup>36</sup> In the first letter of John 1:8-9: “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” It is an acknowledgment of one’s sinfulness and asking sorry for it for us to have a chance to rise again. In this rite, the faithful looks at one’s own fallen nature. In every celebration of the liturgy, the assembly, with a penitential spirit, comes before the

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<sup>32</sup> Wuerl and Aquilina, *The Mass: The Glory, The Mystery, The Tradition*, 98.

<sup>33</sup> Romans 1:7, 1; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Galatians 1:3; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; 2 Philippians 1:2, 2 Thessalonians 1:2 and Philemon 3.

<sup>34</sup> Turner, *At the Supper of the Lamb: A Pastoral and Theological Commentary on the Mass*, 6-7.

<sup>35</sup> Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*, 14.

<sup>36</sup> Barron, *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith*, 176.



altar, before the Church, and before Christ.<sup>37</sup> In this part, the priest calls upon the faithful to take part in the Penitential Act then a short pause is observed before the *Confiteor*<sup>38</sup> or other formulas. This is followed by the absolution that is said by the priest but not tantamount to that of the efficacy of the Sacrament of Confession.<sup>39</sup>

Weakness and a tendency to sin have, unfortunately, been part of our human condition, ever since the sin of our first parents, Adam and Eve. And so we come before the altar, we come before the Church, we come before Christ in a penitential spirit, and we express our sorrow in the traditional prayers. In the pages of the bible, so many people acknowledge their weakness with the words "Lord have mercy" (Matthew 17:15 and Matthew 20:31); and so we do the same. The Church has used this simple prayer since ancient times, sometimes as part of the long litany of petitions at the beginning of Mass...The Penitential Rite gives us a chance to recognize our failings and ask God to cleanse us of all that might hold us back from the celebration of the Eucharist.<sup>40</sup>

It is when we meet God at the Mass that we approach him with right dispositions, i.e., to put on a Sunday heart. This is not to out dichotomy to other days but just to focus on the importance of the penitential rite in order to participate in the communion with God after listening to his words. This rite is not meant to make the believers feel guilty or to discourage them, rather it is part of the Holy Eucharist to help them situate themselves before God. This part opens a faithful to the merciful love of the Triune God. In other words, it is God who allows each to experience a Sunday heart.<sup>41</sup> On Sundays outside the season of Advent and Lent, during Solemnities and Feasts and other celebrations

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<sup>37</sup> Wuerl and Aquilina, *The Mass: The Glory, The Mystery, The Tradition*, 101-102.

<sup>38</sup> "If we're on the witness stand, then who's on trial? The Penitential Rite makes it clear: We are. The earliest liturgical guidelines we have, the Didache, say that an act of confession should precede our participation in the Eucharist. The beautiful thing about the Mass, though, is that no one rises to accuse us but we ourselves. 'I confess to Almighty God...that I have sinned through my own fault.'" Hahn, *The Lamb's Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth*, 45.

<sup>39</sup> GIRM, #51 §1, 29 See also: GIRM # 40, 45, 125, 189 and 275.

<sup>40</sup> Wuerl and Aquilina, *The Mass: The Glory, The Mystery, The Tradition*, 99-101.

<sup>41</sup> Garneau, *Discovering the Eucharist: According to a Rich Ritual Approach*, 43-44.



of a more solemn character, the Gloria is sung.<sup>42</sup> Gloria was originally the song of all the faithful gathered when set to simple melodies. The people participate in the singing of the Angelic Hymn for it is noticeable that the first lines are from the angels in Bethlehem (Luke 2:14). It contains a series of acclamations as a hymn anthem mentioning the Triune God. The content is about praising God.<sup>43</sup> This is a proclamation of the prayer of peace, and it has also been in existence since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>44</sup> Being one of the magnificent prayers in the liturgical tradition, this contains the whole Catholic theology, but it is focusing on the first line. The giving to God all glory is explained to be the formula of a happy life.<sup>45</sup>

Then the priest prays the Collect by inviting all to pray while saying *Oremus* with his hands joined together and observing a moment of silence. The priest then extends his hands as he reads the Collect<sup>46</sup> assigned for the day, which is then responded by the people with "Amen".<sup>47</sup> The prayer uttered by the priest is on behalf of the people, and the silence is integral after the prayer for those who are gathered. The faithful should articulate their prayers in their hearts, particularly the prayers they offer for that Mass. The Roman Collect contains invocation mentioning God (i.e. what God has done and who God is). It is carefully constructed for the celebration of the day.<sup>48</sup>

In the liturgical renewal after Second Vatican Council, an effort has been made to restore certain elements of the earlier unique function of the Collect, which is one of the three "presidential orations" in the Mass, by having it follow a time for silent petition and also stipulating that it is not to be followed by additional requests

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<sup>42</sup> *GIRM*, #53 §2, 29 cf. *GIRM* # 40, 45, 125, 189 and 275.

<sup>43</sup> Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*, 18.

<sup>44</sup> Hahn, *The Lamb's Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth*, 46.

<sup>45</sup> Barron, *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith*, 176-177.

<sup>46</sup> "The presence of this prayer or oration (from the Latin *orare*, i.e., to pray), which has no exact equivalent in ancient non-Roman liturgies, dates from at least the fifth century. In Gaul the prayer was known as the *collecta*, a prayer which 'gathers together' the intentions of the faithful." Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*, 20.

<sup>47</sup> Zuñiga, "The Rubrics of the Extraordinary and Ordinary Forms of the Mass," 122.

<sup>48</sup> Turner, *At the Supper of the Lamb: A Pastoral and Theological Commentary on the Mass*, 22-23.

or commemorations. After an invitation being aware that they are in the presence of God, the assembly silently expresses its needs and desires which is then gathered up by the celebrant and presented to the Father through the Son and in the Holy Spirit.<sup>49</sup>

## Liturgy of the Word

After having gone through the opening rite of the Holy Eucharist that are explained in several smaller rites, it should also be noted that there is a need to see the purpose of how they form a whole after having known the meaning of each individually. The dynamics therefore is to gather, to become recollected and to enter into prayer.<sup>50</sup> What follows is the Liturgy of the Word after going through the dynamics of the Opening Rite. It is in the Liturgy of the Word that the faithful gather to listen to the Word of God being proclaimed. It is when the scriptures are read that God speaks to his people, where Christ is present through God's Word, and the believers are being nourished. The proclamation of the Word of God should touch, move, and make the heart be transformed by the readings.<sup>51</sup> The parts of the Liturgy of the Word are stated in GIRM: The readings from Sacred Scripture, as well as the chants that exist within them, form the bulk of the Liturgy of the Word. This portion of the Mass, however, is established and concluded by the homily, Profession of Faith, and Prayer of the Faithful. For, as stated in the homily, God communicates to his people through the readings, opening the mystery of redemption and salvation to them and giving spiritual nourishment; and Christ himself is present in the midst of the faithful in his Word proclaimed. People make God's word their own through their silence and music, and they even pledge their commitment to it through the Profession of Faith. After being fed by it, they pour out their prayers in the Prayer of the Faithful for the needs of the whole Church and the salvation of the whole world.<sup>52</sup> The Vatican II emphasizes the great importance of the reading of the Sacred Scriptures in the celebration

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<sup>49</sup> Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*, 20-21.

<sup>50</sup> Garneau, *Discovering the Eucharist: According to a Rich Ritual Approach*, 53-54.

<sup>51</sup> Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*, 29-30.

<sup>52</sup> GIRM, #55, 29 See also: SC # 33 and #7.

of the Liturgy. From the Scripture, the lessons are being read, and it is in the homily that the word is explained. There is a need to promote essentially the warm and living love for the Word of God.<sup>53</sup>

The God in whom we believe is not a silent God. He contacts those he created and speaks to them...No doubt how much concentration is needed to perceive this intimate voice of God who makes himself heard within us. Many times however, God spoke in a more explicit way. All the words of God are precious. Carefully, they have been collected and compiled in the Bible. The Church has made this book its point of reference.<sup>54</sup>

### Readings

Everyone is seated to listen to God's Word; it is said by St. Paul that the faith comes from hearing (Romans 10:17). On a Sunday, there is first reading, which is usually from the Old Testament, then the responsorial psalm, and this is followed by the second reading from the New Testament Epistle. After second reading is the Gospel reading which is arranged by theme depending on the occasion or season. The Gospel is always related to the first reading.<sup>55</sup> Since the first reading is always related to the Gospel, it illustrates the symphony of the Old Testament and the New Testament. The responsorial psalm serves as the response to the readings. The second reading is continuous and is spread in a three-year cycle.<sup>56</sup> It is stipulated in the *Sacrosanctum Concilium* that, in the prescribed year, the treasures of the Bible will be provided for the people at the table of God's word. Being opened lavishly, a more representative portion and a richer fare may be provided to the people.<sup>57</sup>

The Liturgy of the Word is not just to be seen as always in relation to the celebration of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. They are two aspects of the same mystery. Therefore, this implies that the Liturgy of the Word is not just a preparation for the partaking of the Eucharist.<sup>58</sup> To be able

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<sup>53</sup> Paul VI, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #10 (December 4, 1963) (Philippines: St. Paul Publications, 1993), #24, 10.

<sup>54</sup> Garneau, *Discovering the Eucharist: According to a Rich Ritual Approach*, 57.

<sup>55</sup> Barron, *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith*, 178.

<sup>56</sup> Lucien Deiss, *The Mass*, trans. Michael S. Driscoll (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1992), 31-32.

<sup>57</sup> Paul VI, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #51, 17.

<sup>58</sup> Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*, 30.

to show the intimate connection between the Word of God and the rites being performed in the sacred celebrations, there is a need for the suitable readings from the scriptures to be proclaimed.<sup>59</sup> As stipulated in the *Dei Verbum*, the divine Scriptures are always venerated by the Church like that of the veneration of the Body of Jesus. The Church receives and offers to all the believers the bread of life both from the Table of the Word (God's Word) and the Table of the Eucharist (Christ's Body). The main reason is that it is in the sacred books that God the Father meets his children as he speaks to them with great love. God's Word stands as the support and energy of the Church expressed as the food of the soul which is the source of spiritual life pure and everlasting. The Word of God is imparted without change and it resounds the voice of the Holy Spirit as the words of Apostles and prophets are proclaimed.<sup>60</sup> What was written in the *Dei Verbum* #21 is an echo of ancient teaching.

One of the great Scripture scholars of the early Church, Origen (third century), urged Christians to respect Christ's presence in the Gospel as they respected his holy presence in the Host. "You who are accustomed to take part in the divine mysteries know, when you receive the body of the Lord, how you protect it with all caution and veneration lest any small part fall from it, lest anything of the consecrated gift be lost. For you believe, and correctly, that you are answerable if anything falls from there by neglect. But if you are so careful to preserve his body, and rightly so, how do you think that there is less guilt to have neglected God's word than to have neglected his body."<sup>61</sup>

The two parts of the Mass form but one single act of worship as they are closely connected.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, in order to assimilate Jesus Christ fully and to have an intimate relationship with him, there is a need to be fed from both the Word and the Eucharist. Both are necessary, for they both complement each other.<sup>63</sup> The Church is built on and grows in hearing God's word; there is nourishment of the faithful through the Word of God.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Paul VI, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #35 §1, 12.

<sup>60</sup> Paul VI, Dogmatic Constitution on the Divine Revelation *Dei Verbum* #21 (November 18, 1965) (Pasay Philippines: St. Paul Publications, 1986), 10.

<sup>61</sup> Hahn, *The Lamb's Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth*, 48.

<sup>62</sup> Paul VI, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #56, 18.

<sup>63</sup> Garneau, *Discovering the Eucharist: According to a Rich Ritual Approach*, 87-88.

<sup>64</sup> Vengco, Jr., *On the Eucharist*, 129.

## Homily

The Homily is given by priest or deacon. By this, the mysteries of faith and the guiding principle of the Christian life are articulated and explained from the sacred text. It is not to be omitted especially when there are faithful gathered on Sundays and feasts of obligations unless for a serious reason. Therefore, this part is a highly esteemed part of the liturgical celebration.<sup>65</sup> It is a moment of grace in articulating the faith. It is on this part that the faithful mature and grow with the aid of the preacher guided by the Holy Spirit. It is the part of explaining the readings wherein the preacher gives practical applications of the Christian faith. It is even regarded that the effect of the homily is not so much of the work of the homilist for it is the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>66</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, in his letter *Sacramentum Caritatis*, articulates that the homily should be catechetical and paraenetic (ethical instruction to believers). Thematic homilies should be given explaining themes on Christian faith based on the four pillars of faith written in the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the recent Compendium. The four pillars are the profession of faith, celebration of the Christian mystery, life in Christ, and Christian Prayer.<sup>67</sup>

Etymologically speaking, “homily” means conversation, colloquy or informal discourse. Its purpose: relationship to the word, mystery celebrated and the assembled community. It is an efficacious instrument of evangelization and special form of catechesis in a liturgical context. Thus, there is a need for careful preparation, with attention to the word, the celebration and the experience of Christian people. It is not only an accessory or a digression, nor simply an explanation of readings...<sup>68</sup>

## Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Liturgy of the Eucharist is arranged in the celebration based on the words and actions of Christ. It is composed of the Preparation of the Gifts, the Eucharistic Prayers, and the Communion Rites. These

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<sup>65</sup> Paul VI, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #52, 17.

<sup>66</sup> Wuerl and Aquilina, *The Mass: The Glory, The Mystery, The Tradition*, 124.

<sup>67</sup> Benedict XVI, Post-Synodal Exhortation On the Eucharist as the Source and Summit of The Church's Life and Mission *Sacramentum Caritatis* #46 (February 22, 2007) (Philippines: St. Paul Publications, 2007), 64.

<sup>68</sup> Domenico Sartore, CSJ, *The Homily* in Handbook for Liturgical Studies III: The Eucharist, Ed. Anscar J. Chupungco, OSB (Philippines: Claretian Publications, 2004), 189, 196-197, 199.

are actions based on the Last Supper of Christ Jesus that he instituted. He instituted the Paschal Sacrifice and banquet.<sup>69</sup> The Eucharist as the Sacrament of Communion in Christ's body and blood is for St. Justin Martyr:

“We call this food the Eucharist...not as a common bread or as common drink we receive these, but just as through the word of God, Jesus Christ, our Savior, became incarnate and took on flesh and blood for our salvation, so...the food over which we give thanks has been given by the prayer of His word, and which nourishes our flesh and blood by assimilation, is both the flesh and blood that incarnate Jesus.”<sup>70</sup>

### Preparation of the Gifts

It is the offertory which signals the start of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. This action is an act of commitment of the believers. In the early Church, the faithful were the ones baking the bread and bringing the wine for the celebration, and they bring it forward during this part. The bringing of the bread, wine, and monetary amount is in support of the works of the Church. This is an important part of the celebration of offering the self as well so that God may take the temporal and make it eternal-- what is human is made divine. The very act of the priest of pouring wine and a bit of water<sup>71</sup> to the chalice expresses the great

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<sup>69</sup> *GIRM* #72, 37.

<sup>70</sup> Justin martyr, *Apologia* I 66 2 *Prex Echaristica: Textus e Variis Liturgiis Antiquioribus Selecti*, The Eucharist English translation, ed. D. Sheerin.

<sup>71</sup> "Why does the priest mix a little bit of water with wine? There is a practical, historical reason and symbolic interpretations. The historical fact is that was the custom for most Mediterranean people living in the time of Jesus Christ. They stored wine in concentrated form, and then diluted it at mealtime. Most of the ancient descriptions of the Passover meal describe the mixing of water with wine. The Church, however, insisted on retaining this gesture long after the customs of wine storage had changed. As a symbol, it had a staying power. First of all it provided a historical connection with the Passover *seder* meal, which Christians were eager to preserve. But there's still more. In the second century, Saint Irenaeus of Lyon, in France, saw that mixture as a symbol of the union of the human and divine nature in Jesus Christ; like the water and wine, they were close as to be inseparable. Some decades later, Saint Cyprian, a North African, saw the mixture as a symbol of the communion of Christ with the Church -- again so close to be indistinguishable from one another. And of course, down the centuries, many saints have seen the mixture of wine and water as vivid image of the blood and water that poured forth from the pierced side of Christ on the cross" (see John 19:34) Wuerl and Aquilina, *The Mass: The Glory, The Mystery, The Tradition*, 144-145.

mystery, when he prays:<sup>72</sup> “By the mystery of this water and wine, may we come to share in the Divinity of Christ, Who humbled Himself to share in our humanity.”<sup>73</sup> The prayer means that there is a union of Christ’s divinity and people’s humanity. In other words, in the offertory is shown the union of men’s gifts with the perfect gift of Christ himself.<sup>74</sup> There is an offering of the laity being mentioned in the Vatican II:

Their works, prayers, and apostolic endeavors, their ordinary married and family life, their daily occupations, their physical and mental relaxation, if carried out in the Spirit, and even their hardships of life, if patiently borne -- all these become spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Together with the offering in the celebration of Eucharist. Thus, as those everywhere who adore in holy activity, the laity consecrate the world itself to God.<sup>75</sup>

In the preparation of the Lord’s Table, the corporal is placed on the altar and other linens and vessels are being prepared on the altar. Then the offerings are brought to the altar, and it is recommended that the bread and wine are carried by the faithful and handed to the priests. After being accepted, they are brought to the altar. In the past, the people brought their own baked bread and their own wine, as mentioned in the earlier discussion. The mere fact that a representative carries the bread and wine during offertory rites is a forceful expression containing spiritual significance.<sup>76</sup> The gifts being brought to the altar, i.e., bread and wine are a representation of the entire creation. The wheat and vine are implications of the earth, soil, water, wind, and sunshine; or generally, the cosmos. When the priest takes bread and then the wine, the priest prays: “Blessed are you Lord God of all creation...”<sup>77</sup> That is the *Berakah* prayer. God is blessed. It is the manner of the giving back to the giver, the bread and wine, which God returns to the assembly

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<sup>72</sup> Hahn, *The Lamb’s Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth*, 51.

<sup>73</sup> *Postea sacerdos, accipit calicem eamque ambabus manibus aliquantulum elevatum super altare tenet, submissa voce dicens.* Zuñiga, “The Rubrics of the Extraordinary and Ordinary Forms of the Mass,” 139.

<sup>74</sup> Hahn, *The Lamb’s Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth*, 52.

<sup>75</sup> Paul VI, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* #34 (November 21, 1964) (Philippines: St. Paul Publications, 1986), 51-50.

<sup>76</sup> *GIRM* #73, 38.

<sup>77</sup> *Benedictus es Domine, Deus universi, quia de tua largitate accepimus...* See: Zuñiga, “The Rubrics of the Extraordinary and Ordinary Forms of the Mass,” 139.



as the Body and Blood of Jesus.<sup>78</sup> After this, when incense is used and followed by the incensation, which signifies the prayers and offerings of the Church rising to God like the incense, the priest washes his hands,<sup>79</sup> which is an expression of interior purification.<sup>80</sup> With the people, the priest asks that gifts be transformed by God. The transformation includes not only the bread and wine offered but the assembly gathered and the world as well. Therefore, when bread and wine are offered, the faithful should see to it that they offer themselves so that they may also be transformed by God. The conscious offering of the self to God includes the offering of one's own works, prayers, family, leisure, even hardships, basically everything.<sup>81</sup> The presentation of gifts should not be taken as a kind of interval between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. In this part, as God invites men to participate in fulfilling God's handiwork, the sacrifices made by the faithful find their authentic meaning, for these are united in the sacrifice of Christ through the celebration of the Eucharist.<sup>82</sup> This is a challenge to every believer who celebrates the Holy Mass. CCC explains it briefly:

The presentation of the offerings (the Offertory). Then, sometimes in procession, the bread and wine are brought to the altar; they will be offered by the priest in the name of Christ in the Eucharistic sacrifice in which they will become his body and blood. It is the very action of Christ at the Last Supper – “taking the bread and a cup.” “The Church alone offers this pure oblation to the Creator, when she offers what comes forth from his creation with thanksgiving.” The presentation of the offerings at the altar takes up the gesture of Melchizedek and commits the Creator's gifts into the hands of Christ who, in his sacrifice, brings to perfection all human attempts to offer sacrifices.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Barron, *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith*, 183.

<sup>79</sup> The washing of hands, originally a purely hygienic practice in the Roman rite, which is now interpreted as desire for interior purification. It was lack of historical perspective and exaggerated emphasis on the sacrificial aspect of the Mass that led Amalar Metz to interpret rituals in the context of the Passion narrative. Chupungco, OSB, *Cultural Adaptation of the Liturgy*, 6.

<sup>80</sup> GIRM #75-76, 38

<sup>81</sup> Wuerl and Aquilina, *The Mass: The Glory, The Mystery, The Tradition*, 146.

<sup>82</sup> Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis* #47, 65.

<sup>83</sup> CCC, 1350, 376-377.



This Rite is concluded when the prayer over offerings is said after the preparation of the bread and wine, the altar, and the community gathered. The prayer articulates the sacrificial character of the celebration, which depends on the occasion being celebrated, that means there are proper prayers written in the missal. The content of the prayer over the offerings is concise, and it always includes the request for God to accept the gifts and the desire of the assembly to be united with the offering. The response of the faithful expresses the link of the minister to those who are gathered and that of the expression of the certain duality of aspect in the Liturgical Celebration that is God is being worshipped and the assembly is sanctified.<sup>84</sup>

### Eucharistic Prayer

The Eucharistic Prayer is the center and summit of the whole Mass. It begins when the priest inviting the people to lift their hearts to the Lord in thanksgiving and prayer. This part calls all to listen intently to every word with utmost reverence and silence.<sup>85</sup> Within this period, the assembly is to visibly express their active participation, thus, they are to respond to the following parts that are prescribed. Their participation is expected, and silence is the most expected part, this is for them to be able to listen intently. Thus, the faithful must associate themselves with the priest with faith and silence.<sup>86</sup> This is a reminder of the Trinitarian Eucharistic worship that can also be seen in the prayers:

But to whom is our thanksgiving offered? Eucharistic prayer begins: “We come to you Father, with praise and thanksgiving, through Jesus Christ your Son.” Eucharistic Prayer II prays that the Spirit both “come upon these gifts to make them holy,” and “bring together in unity all who share the body and blood of Christ.”<sup>87</sup>

The following are the chief elements which make up the Eucharistic Prayer: Thanksgiving (preface), Acclamation, *Epiclesis*, Institution Narrative and Consecration, *Anamnesis*, Offering,

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<sup>84</sup> Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*, 73.

<sup>85</sup> *GIRM* #78, 40.

<sup>86</sup> Zuñiga, “The Rubrics of the Extraordinary and Ordinary Forms of the Mass,” 145.

<sup>87</sup> *CFC* #1682, 416.

Intercessions and the Final Doxology.<sup>88</sup> In reality, however, the Eucharistic Prayer is essentially one. The abovementioned structural parts contain explicit themes spread throughout the entire prayer.<sup>89</sup> In the Catholic Liturgy, the Eucharistic Prayer with its content and function is hailed to be a splendid prayer. It is a priestly prayer addressed to God the Father through his son Jesus Christ. This prayer is a prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification. It is more than just a prayer, for it is the celebration of the sacrifice of the New Law in the manner instituted by Christ to the people during the Last Supper. Thus, the people are to acknowledge that, as a whole congregation gathered around the Altar, they are conscious of the works of God and in the offering of sacrifice. It consists of action and word, not just simply the recitation of prayers, but more attentive to the work of the people's redemption brought about by Christ.<sup>90</sup>

### Thanksgiving and Acclamation

Thanksgiving as expressed in the Preface corresponds to the day, season or festivity being celebrated. In the name of the entire holy people, the priest leads the glorification of God the Father and the act of thanksgiving for the whole work of salvation.<sup>91</sup> This is an invitation as the celebration approaches the most sacred part of the Eucharist. There are various prefaces depending on the liturgical seasons or celebrations. This is a thanksgiving for the great events in the history of salvation. This part opens a phrase that echoes the last part of the dialogue,<sup>92</sup> and it commences with a line that leads to the *Sanctus*. In other words, it bridges the dialogue and the *Sanctus*.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> *GIRM* #79, 40.

<sup>89</sup> Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*, 76.

<sup>90</sup> Joseph Lionel, *New Missal same Mass: Understanding the English Translation of the New Roman Missal* (India: Asian Trade Corporation, 2010), 72.

<sup>91</sup> *GIRM* #79 §2, 40.

<sup>92</sup> "Priest: The Lord be with you. People: And with your Spirit. Priest: Lift up your heart. People: We lift them up to the Lord. Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. People: It is right and just. This part is a preparation. The exchange of words is preparing the minds and hearts of the faithful as they are called to lift up their hearts to the Lord i.e. to think nothing but the Lord. Then the priest invites all to give thanks to God." Donald Wuerl and Mike Aquilina, *The Mass: The Glory, The Mystery, The Tradition*, 148.

<sup>93</sup> Turner, *At the Supper of the Lamb: A Pastoral and Theological Commentary on the Mass*, 67.

Acclamation is sung by the entire assembly. The *Sanctus* is part of the Eucharistic Prayer which is sung together with all the celestial beings.<sup>94</sup> *Sanctus* is a text inspired by the version of the Prophet Isaiah 6:2-3.<sup>95</sup> With one voice, the entire communion of saints glorifies God. “Blessed is he who comes” can be found in Matthew 21:9,<sup>96</sup> which is the greeting to acclaim Christ Jesus in his solemn entry to Jerusalem.<sup>97</sup> *Sanctus* is like the *Gloria*. It is a hymn of the angels. It can also be seen in the New Testament, particularly in the Book of Revelation 4:8. St. John expresses his own mystical experience of heaven. There is an interpretation that the thrice -holy is related to the Blessed Trinity, a communion of the three Divine Persons.<sup>98</sup>

### Epiclesis

*Epiclesis* is the invitation of the Church imploring the third person of the Trinity -- the Holy Spirit so that the gifts offered be consecrated. That is to become Christ’s Body and Blood, which is to become the spotless Victim.<sup>99</sup> It is the interior soul of the Eucharist. *Epiclesis* is an appeal to the Holy Spirit to come down and make holy the gifts. This is to bring into completion what is in the anamnesis. It is a prayer of God’s blessing related to the Hebrew *beraka* or Greek *eucharistia*.<sup>100</sup> This prayer for the sending of the Holy Spirit is from the Greek word *epiclesis* which is “call over here,” “invocation,” and “to call upon.” God the Father is being asked by the priest to send down the Holy Spirit. This is an essential prayer because by human effort there will be no transformation of the gifts. This prayer affirms God’s power, through the hovering of the Spirit,<sup>101</sup> to make holy the gifts that they

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<sup>94</sup> GIRM #79 §4, 40.

<sup>95</sup> Seraphim were stationed above; each of them had six wings; with two they veiled their faces, with two they veiled their feet, and with two they hovered aloft. “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of host!” They cried one to the other. “All the earth is filled with his glory!” *New American Bible* (2004).

<sup>96</sup> See: Matthew 23:39.

<sup>97</sup> Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*, 81.

<sup>98</sup> Wuerl and Aquilina, *The Mass: The Glory, The Mystery, The Tradition*, 150-151.

<sup>99</sup> GIRM #79 §3, 40.

<sup>100</sup> Vengco, Jr., *On the Eucharist*, 13-14.

<sup>101</sup> The Holy Spirit can make holy or sanctify. The Holy Spirit as the Sanctifier. Romans 15:16.

become Jesus' body and blood. This part affirms the primacy of God's work in the Mass. Therefore, without the Holy Spirit, mass will not be Mass.<sup>102</sup> This is one of the ancient elements of the Eucharistic Prayer -- the invocation of the Holy Spirit.<sup>103</sup> This preliminary calling of the Holy Spirit is flowing from the theme of fullness, which is in the *Sanctus* (i.e. heaven and earth are full of God's glory). The extension of the hands of the priest to the bread and wine while saying the formula is the ancient gesture which means the giving of the Spirit. It is through the third person of the Holy Trinity that the Church constantly becomes the body of Christ. The Church is nourished and fortified by the Holy Spirit's presence in the Eucharist. Thus, the gifts and the assembly are transformed by the Holy Spirit's power and this brings about unity.<sup>104</sup> It is the Holy Spirit that makes the difference, as it is working with great power in the epiclesis. In other words:

In the epiclesis, the Church asks the Father to send his Holy Spirit (or the power of his blessing) on the bread and wine, so that by his power they may become the body and blood of Jesus Christ and so that those who take part in the Eucharist may be one body and one spirit (some liturgical traditions put the epiclesis after the anamnesis).<sup>105</sup>

### **Institution Narrative and Consecration**

Institution narrative and consecration means that the sacrifice instituted during the Last Supper is carried out when Christ offered, through the bread and wine, his precious body and blood through His very words and actions. This is to perpetuate the mystery that he gave to the Apostles.<sup>106</sup> This is a part of the whole Eucharistic prayer, an action which extends from the preparation of the gifts to the Communion.<sup>107</sup> In every Mass, the words of the priest over the bread and wine are not

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<sup>102</sup> Wuerl and Aquilina, *The Mass: The Glory, The Mystery, The Tradition*, 157-159.

<sup>103</sup> Lionel, *New Missal same Mass: Understanding the English Translation of the New Roman Missal*, 73.

<sup>104</sup> Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*, 83-84.

<sup>105</sup> CCC 1353 §1, 377.

<sup>106</sup> GIRM #79 §4, 41.

<sup>107</sup> Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*, 86.

parts of cryptic or magical formula. The consecratory words “This is my body...” (Luke 22:19) and “This is my blood...” (Luke 22:20) are the significations of one and the same event, which is Christ the Son of God loved each one that he gave himself for all and his very presence in the Eucharistic Celebration.<sup>108</sup> It is stipulated in the CCC that:

In the institution narrative, the power of the words and the action of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit, make sacramentally present under the species of bread and wine Christ’s body and blood, his sacrifice offered on the cross once for all.<sup>109</sup>

The words uttered by Jesus is divine Word; therefore, it is not merely descriptive but transformative. Looking into the consecratory prayers, there is a shift in the first person quotation. This means that the priest is no longer speaking in his own person but that of the person of Christ who consecrates the bread and wine in every celebration. The word of Jesus creates, sustains and changes the reality at the most fundamental level, which means that those words coming from him are transformative.<sup>110</sup> The words used in the new Passover (as it differs from the Passover liturgy Exodus 12) “effect what they signify.” An emphasis is given that what the priest does during the celebration is not merely narration, but he is speaking in the person of Christ. By the virtue of ordination, the apostles and the successors, it states: “Do this in remembrance of Christ” (1 Corinthians 11:25).<sup>111</sup> Here Jesus expresses his climactic self-disclosure of himself at the table. It is when Christ offered his body and blood that the Christians believe they encounter the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist in the form of bread and wine. There is a good note on it because Jesus here is showing hospitality as the true host of the celebration. This offering of the self is divine hospitality.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Vengco, Jr., *On the Eucharist*, 9.

<sup>109</sup> CCC 1353 §2, 377.

<sup>110</sup> Barron, *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith*, 192.

<sup>111</sup> Hahn, *The Lamb’s Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth*, 53.

<sup>112</sup> Gerald W. Schlabach, *A Pilgrim People: Becoming a Catholic Peace Church* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2019), 203.

### *Anamnesis*

*Anamnesis* is the fulfillment of the commands received by the Church from Christ Jesus through the Apostles (i.e. the keeping of the memorial of Christ). This is the remembrance of Christ's blessed Passion, glorious Resurrection and Ascension to heaven.<sup>113</sup> This explains the Catholic understanding of the Eucharist not as repetition or addition to the death of Christ on the cross. "Do this in remembrance of me"<sup>114</sup> is the memorial that makes present what had happened in the past, specifically the death and resurrection of Christ.<sup>115</sup>

The description "remembrance" and "memory" in English hardly does justice to the terms used in the original language.<sup>116</sup> It can be understood clearly by looking into the Greek as *anamnesis*, in Latin it is *memoria* and in Hebrew it is *zikkaron*. This is a liturgical actualization or "making present." Here God makes himself available.<sup>117</sup> It is the part of the liturgy wherein "calling to mind" or *anamnesis* the mystery of Christ's salvific action (the Paschal Mystery).<sup>118</sup> This makes a difference from the Jewish Passover wherein the work of Salvation is carried out when the Church celebrates the Eucharist. The unity of all believers who form one body in Christ is fulfilled in the celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharistic Bread.<sup>119</sup> This is the very sharing of Christ body, blood, soul, and divinity in the Eucharist, wherein the sign of self-giving of Christ is made present on the altar. This is the establishment of enjoying God's presence in this celebration.<sup>120</sup> CCC says:

In the *anamnesis* that follows, the Church calls to mind the Passion, resurrection, and glorious return of Christ Jesus; she presents to the Father the offering of his Son which reconciles us with him.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> *GIRM* #79 §5, 41.

<sup>114</sup> 1 Corinthians and Luke 22:19

<sup>115</sup> Schlabach, *A Pilgrim People: Becoming a Catholic Peace Church*, 203.

<sup>116</sup> Hahn, *The Lamb's Supper: The Mass as Heaven on Earth*, 54.

<sup>117</sup> Vengco, Jr., *On the Eucharist*, 12-13.

<sup>118</sup> Aidan Nichols, OP, Conciliar Octet, A Concise Commentary on the Eight Key Texts of the Second Vatican Council (USA: Ignatius Press, 2019), 31.

<sup>119</sup> Paul VI, *Lumen Gentium* #3, 5.

<sup>120</sup> Wuerl and Aquilina, *The Mass: The Glory, The Mystery, The Tradition*, 166.

<sup>121</sup> CCC 1354 §1, 378.

## Offering, Intercessions and Final Doxology

The last three parts of the Eucharistic Prayer before communion are as follows: offering, intercessions and final doxology. Offering is made by the whole Church gathered wherein the Spotless Victim is offered to the Father in the Holy Spirit. This offering is interconnected to the offering of the self of every faithful. This is the intention of the Church as Christ, the pure and holy victim, is also offered. This means that each day one is consummated through Christ Jesus the Mediator and brings about unity with God and with every faithful, and in the end, God may be all in all.<sup>122</sup> This is the offering action in the Mass, and it is celebrated during the Eucharistic Prayer. This part is a call to offer the self with Christ.<sup>123</sup> What follows are the intercessions, the intercessions are those for which the whole Church prays during the Eucharist. In prayer, the whole Church, all of its members are united.<sup>124</sup> CCC clarifies that it is in the intercession that:

...the Church indicates that the Eucharist is celebrated in communion with the whole Church in heaven and on earth, the living and the dead, and in communion with the pastors of the Church, the Pope, the diocesan bishop, his presbyterium and his deacons, and all the bishops of the whole world together with their Churches.<sup>125</sup>

With the aid of the Holy Spirit, the gathered assembly recalls the Virgin Mary, the Apostles, the Martyrs, and all the Saints in the intercession.<sup>126</sup> In the final doxology God is glorified and in the conclusion the acclamation of the ecclesial community is Amen.<sup>127</sup> This part summarizes the Eucharistic prayer wherein the Church offers praise and honor to Christ the high priest who is truly present in the memorial sacrifice.<sup>128</sup> This happens when the priest elevates both the chalice and

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<sup>122</sup> GIRM #79 §6, 41.

<sup>123</sup> Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*, 91.

<sup>124</sup> GIRM #79 §7, 41.

<sup>125</sup> CCC 1354 §2, 378.

<sup>126</sup> Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*, 93.

<sup>127</sup> GIRM #79 §8, 41.

<sup>128</sup> Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*, 96.

the paten containing the body and blood of Jesus while saying: "Through him, with him, and in him..."<sup>129</sup>

### **Communion Rite and Rite of Peace**

Communion Rites follow the Eucharistic Prayer. Since the Eucharistic Celebration is the Paschal Banquet, it is desirable that the faithful who are properly disposed receive the Lord's flesh and blood as spiritual food in accordance with Christ's command. This is how the fraction and other preparatory rites lead the assembly gathered to Communion.<sup>130</sup> The purpose is anchored towards the reception of the Communion, which is the climax of the Eucharistic celebration. The participation in the Body and Blood of Jesus, shared in a communal fashion, brings each person mutual love and reconciliation.<sup>131</sup> Communion is both personal and ecclesial. Thus, the participation of the faithful calls for the obligation to love as demanded by Christ's presence being received. Eucharistic communion entails not only social application of faith or following an ethical demand but also that salvific reality be fulfilled and the assembly becomes committed to one another. This is about "being for God and being for one another." This is geared towards gathering and unity, which is called communion.<sup>132</sup>

The anthropological grounding for Eucharistic celebration is to be found primarily in the Communion rite. This is actually implicit in the GIRM VI, 283, when it says that to be a true sign the bread is to look indeed like bread. This followed up by a recommendation that the fraction be a visible breaking of the one bread be a visible sign of the breaking of the one bread, to be shared among the many in sign of the charity that binds them as one body.<sup>133</sup>

The Lord's Prayer contains a plea for daily food, which for Christians, mostly applies to Eucharistic bread, as well as for purification from sin, so that what is precious may be given to those who are holy. The priest says the invitation to prayer, and all the faithful join him.

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<sup>129</sup> Zuñiga, "The Rubrics of the Extraordinary and Ordinary Forms of the Mass", 164.

<sup>130</sup> GIRM #80, 42.

<sup>131</sup> Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*, 98.

<sup>132</sup> Vengco, Jr., *On the Eucharist*, 26-27.

<sup>133</sup> Power, OMI, *Theology of Eucharistic Celebration*, 335.davu



The priest alone adds the embolism, which the people complete with a doxology. The embolism, which expands on the Lord's Prayer's final petition, begs liberation from the power of darkness for the whole community of the faithful.<sup>134</sup> In fact, the early Christians' most cherished prayer, the Our Father, is given a prominent place in the Mass. Knowing God as Creator or Lord is different from that of knowing him as Father for it means a familial relationship. Thus, from this prayer as the start of communion rites it is a call to be brothers and sisters, for God is the Father of the faithful. This implies that to call God "Our Father" means that each member has responsibilities to each other, being a faith community.<sup>135</sup>

The Rite of Peace happens before receiving the Sacrament. The faithful express their ecclesial fellowship and common charity in the ritual of peace, in which the Church calls for peace and harmony for herself and the whole human race.<sup>136</sup> The Eucharist is a sacrament of peace by itself. This part of the Eucharistic mystery is expressed in the sign of peace at Mass. This symbol is unquestionably valuable. This act has been especially eloquent in the times of terror and strife, as the Church has become profoundly aware of her duty to pray insistently for the gift of peace and salvation for herself and the whole human race. Every spirit, without a doubt, harbors an insatiable desire for peace.<sup>137</sup> All those present will exchange a sign of peace. The invitation is extended to those who have assembled by the deacon if there is one or by the priest. Then everybody gives peace to those who are next to them.<sup>138</sup>

The Fraction of the Eucharistic Bread is done by the priest, aided, if necessary, by a deacon or a concelebrant. Christ's gesture of breaking bread at the Last Supper, which gives the entire Eucharistic Action its name in apostolic times. This means that by taking Communion from the Bread of Life, Christ, who died and rose for the good of all the faithful, are made one body. The fraction or breaking of bread begins after the sign of peace, and it is performed with appropriate respect, but it should not be too extended or given excessive value. This ritual is

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<sup>134</sup> GIRM #81, 42.

<sup>135</sup> Wuerl and Aquilina, *The Mass: The Glory, The Mystery, The Tradition*, 182-183.

<sup>136</sup> GIRM #82, 42.

<sup>137</sup> Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis* #49, 67.

<sup>138</sup> Turner, *At the Supper of the Lamb: A Pastoral and Theological Commentary on the Mass*, 133.

only performed by the priest and deacon.<sup>139</sup> The priest breaks the host and mingles a small part<sup>140</sup> with the holy Blood of Christ in the chalice as the faithful are praying the Lamb of God. The sacrificial action is accomplished, and all that is left for the Victim, our sacrificial Lamb, is to be consumed. The prayers of the Church identify the Lamb with the bread, like the words of St. Paul and St. Luke.<sup>141</sup> When the early Christians spoke about the Lamb of God, they also spoke about the Suffering Servant mentioned from the book of the Prophet Isaiah, the one who saved many people by his sufferings and patience. This suffering servant is compared to the lamb by the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 53:7). People recognized him as a representation of Christ Jesus dying on the Cross.<sup>142</sup>

Communion follows *Agnus Dei*. The priest prays quietly to prepare himself to receive Christ's Body and Blood in a fruitful way. The faithful do the same. The priest then presents the Eucharistic Bread to the faithful, keeps it above the paten or above the chalice, and invites them to Christ's banquet. He then performs an act of modesty with the faithful using the prescribed words from the Gospels.<sup>143</sup> All of the prayers served are to prepare the faithful for Holy Communion. Most of the Mass's expression has been exalted, and the movements have become more elaborate. The rite becomes simple and plain as the drama progresses. In its simplicity, it is both beautiful and profound. It is, however, straightforward. In the reception of the body and blood of Christ, the Eucharist has more appearance of a meal. Here Jesus' body, blood, soul and divinity are received.<sup>144</sup> The purpose of Christian sacrifice is unity because it is for the Church when it is offered on the altar. This is the sacrifice of the Church, of the whole church, for the salvation of the whole world.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> GIRM #83, 42-43.

<sup>140</sup> The Practice of reserving part of the consecrated bread from the general Communion appears in the letter of Innocent Decentius, but even before that, Irenaeus (+202) spoke of sending Eucharist to other churches. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 5:2, 15; SChr 41:7.

<sup>141</sup> Wuerl and Aquilina, *The Mass: The Glory, The Mystery, The Tradition*, 189. See: GIRM #83, §2, 189.

<sup>142</sup> Garneau, *Discovering the Eucharist: According to a Ritual Approach*, 151.

<sup>143</sup> GIRM #84, §1-2, 43.

<sup>144</sup> Wuerl and Aquilina, *The Mass: The Glory, The Mystery, The Tradition*, 189. See: GIRM #83, §2, 195

<sup>145</sup> Henri de Lubac, *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 102-103.

## Concluding Rites

The Concluding Rites are the part of the Mass after the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The Concluding Rites are composed of the brief Announcements, Greetings and Blessings, Dismissal of the People, and the Kissing of the Altar and Profound Bow of Ministers.<sup>146</sup> In the part of the blessing it is understood that a person is requesting God to continue his generosity, while to bless God is to praise him for his goodness and wonderful gifts. In this final blessing the minister prays that the greatest of all benefits may be given in abundant measure to those who have shared in God's word and Christ's Body. The basis of this action is from Luke 24:50 when Christ before going to heaven "raised his hands, and blessed the apostles."<sup>147</sup> This part, which is also called the sending forth, this happens after the communion rites wherein those who received the communion are being blessed and commissioned. After being gathered as one family around the altar, hearing God's Word being proclaimed, professing the Creed, praying for one another, offering sacrifice to God the Father, and receiving Jesus' Body and Blood, the faithful are now called to be transformed and be the catalyst of change to the world. This is what it means when the priest exclaims: "Go forth, the Mass is ended."<sup>148</sup> This is what is meant by the Apostolic Letter *Dies Domini*: "The Eucharistic Celebration does not stop at the Church door."<sup>149</sup> Pope Benedict XVI said that what is celebrated in the Sacrament is not something which is kept to the self. The nature of the Mass is for it to be shared. Here comes in the Church as a missionary. An essential part of the Eucharistic form of Christian living is being missionary. Thus, whenever the faithful approach the Eucharistic table, they are drawn into a mission which is to reach out to all the people.<sup>150</sup> The Eucharist

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<sup>146</sup> GIRM #90, 45.

<sup>147</sup> Johnson, *The Mystery of Faith: A Study of the Structural Elements of the Order of the Mass*, 133.

<sup>148</sup> Barron, *Catholicism: A Journey to the Heart of the Faith*, 193-194.

<sup>149</sup> John Paul II, Apostolic Letter on Keeping the Lord's Day Holy *Dies Domini* #45 (May 31, 1998) (Date accessed: February 2, 2021) [http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_letters/1998/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_apl\\_05071998\\_dies-domini.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1998/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_05071998_dies-domini.html).

<sup>150</sup> Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis* #84, 109.

is a lived reality.<sup>151</sup> The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist constitutes the social dimension.<sup>152</sup>

Since the Eucharist makes us one in Christ, it strengthens our love and respect for one another. Having been nourished by the Lord Himself, we should, with an active love, strive to eliminate all prejudices and obstacles to brotherly cooperation with others. We eat in order to be able to sacrifice ourselves for our neighbor's good.<sup>153</sup>

There are options for the dismissal given by the deacon or the priest. These are the following options: Go forth, the Mass is ended; Go, announce the Gospel of the Lord; Go in peace; Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life. These recommendations from the synod of the bishops of Rome are the options given which imply that the Mass is a call to enter the world of mission bearing witness through Christian Life and not simply leaving the church building. Therefore, it is not static.<sup>154</sup>

## Conclusion

The rituals reflect a communal Spirit of Catholics when it comes to prayer, gathering, worship, and being a Church. The entire celebration speaks about how God works in each rite and how the people are expected to be active participants of the Holy Eucharist. This shows the diversity within the Church wherein people are coming from various backgrounds in life and are coming together as one Church. The coming together as one assembly in Christ is followed by listening to God's Word and reaches its culmination in the partaking of the Body and Blood of Jesus and commences with the challenge to the faithful to live out what they have celebrated and prayed for. It is significant

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<sup>151</sup> John Paul II, Encyclical Letter On the Eucharist in its relationship to the Church *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* #61 §3 (April 17, 2003) (Pasay Philippines: St. Paul Publications, 2003), 65.

<sup>152</sup> As the Eucharist inspires us with the memory of Christ's Passion and Death, when He offered His Body and Blood for our Salvation, so, when we eat this Bread of Life, we, too, will be able to practice charity. *A Walk through the Mass*, (Date accessed: July 22, 2020) [https://presentationparish.org/sites/pparish/files/uploads/documents/a\\_walk\\_through\\_the\\_mass.pdf](https://presentationparish.org/sites/pparish/files/uploads/documents/a_walk_through_the_mass.pdf).

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Lionel, *New Missal same Mass: Understanding the English Translation of the New Roman Missal*, 128.

to note that, in the entire discussion of this study, the faithful are led to communion with God through the same sacrament and Jesus is truly made present in the form of bread and wine. After reading the article one may say so what's the novelty of this presentation? Is there really something new about the Holy Eucharist in all its rites as a Sacrament of Unity? This is just but an introduction to the next article about the Holy Eucharist as a Sacrament of Unity and the Filipino Hapag, wherein there will be discussions on the theology and correlation of the Filipino Meal and the Holy Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist is a Sacrament of Unity wherein whenever it is celebrated one is drawn to pray, believe and live the same faith always in the context of the community of believers. In other words, the Mass draws people together in prayer, in one creed and to live out the same faith i.e. to love others through the graces that spring from the real presence of Jesus.

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# A Christological Reading of the Last Judgment

Radni L. Caparas, OAR



Fig. 1 "The Last Judgment," 1536-1541, 13.7 m x 12 m (539.3 in x 472.4 in)  
Michelangelo\*

**Abstract**

*The “Last Judgment”<sup>1</sup> is Michelangelo’s personal credo. He intended the painting for the learned who have sufficient knowledge of the Christian faith. Thus, to appreciate and understand the meaning of the painting, it is necessary to know its background and context and to use a special method of reading the painting. Thus, this article reads the Last Judgment with a Christological lens to recognize the nuances of meanings whether intended or not in the fresco. Interpreting the painting with the Christological key will help us better appreciate the wisdom behind the Beardless Christ. It will help the reader to understand the notion of divine judgment and the nature of the Judge. Reading the Beardless Christ in the context of classical Greek mythology will help the reader recognize the human and divine love radiating from Christ. Meditative reading of the painting with the person of Christ will shed light on the road and destiny of the Christian viewer.*

Keywords: Christ, Beardless Christ, Michelangelo, Judgment, and Last Judgment

**Introduction**

The "Last Judgment" is not merely one painting made for its own sake. The fresco was based on the Scriptures, Michelangelo's insights and faith, and his theological advisers at the court of Julius II.<sup>2</sup> The conceptualization, commissioning, six years of intense labor, controversies, and politics behind the fresco demand something from every contemporary viewer. Ponder on and contemplate the painting. A longer look at the fresco can inspire the viewer to gain knowledge of oneself and the divine purpose of the beholder. The more we contemplate the fresco, the more we will gain faith and inspiration. God intends the masterpiece for the growth of our faith.

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<sup>1</sup> \*see this link for better resolution of the fresco ://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\_Last\_Judgment\_(Michelangelo)

<sup>2</sup> Ashton Townsley, MICHELANGELO'S "LAST JUDGMENT" AND ITS AESTHETIC IMPLICATIONS, *Franciscan Studies*, 1972, Vol. 32 (1972), 220.

The "Last Judgment" is filled with meanings beyond the author's intention. We can gain fresh meanings if we approach it using other frameworks of interpretation. Chloe Reddaway proposed some techniques on how to look at images or paintings, a method of visual reading of images based on a biblical hermeneutical text reading.<sup>3</sup> Chloe suggested an approach for the theological interpretation of images and how to look at frescos.<sup>4</sup> The "Last Judgment" can be read using the lenses of culture, theology, sacred space, etc.

In this article, we will read the "Last Judgment" from the Christological point of view. We will explore Michelangelo's faith in Christ, implied in his masterpiece. Note that the Christological reading may indicate the intentional meaning the artist conveys. However, some meanings can surface as we focus on the painting. Michelangelo may not have intended such meanings, but they can be significant for a richer understanding of Christ.

### **The Last Judgment as Divinely Inspired?**

The "Last Judgment" is Michelangelo's monumental personal credo. At the unveiling of the "Last Judgment" on the Eve of All Saints Day 1541, Pope Paul III knelt spontaneously, begged for God's mercy, and prayed: "Lord, charge me not with my sins when you come on the Day of Judgment."<sup>5</sup> Some criticized the fresco for its nudities. Some saw it as pornographic material;<sup>6</sup> hence, it did not fit in the Pope's chapel. The Master of Ceremonies of Pope Paul III requested its destruction. Pope Paul IV saw the fresco as a mere slew of vulgar nudes.<sup>7</sup> There were mixed reactions within the Church authorities.

The Italian painter, Giorgio Vasari commented,

Michelangelo labored on this work for eight years and unveiled it... to the wonder and amazement of all of Rome, or rather, of the

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<sup>3</sup> See, Chloe Reddaway, *Transformations in Persons and Paint: Visual Theology, Historical Images, and the Modern Viewer*, Belgium; Brepols Publishers, 2015, 19-40.

<sup>4</sup> See, Chloe Reddaway, 38-40.

<sup>5</sup> Howard Hibbard, *Michelangelo: Icon Editions*, 2nd ed., NY: Taylor and Francis, Routledge, 2018, Kindle Edition, 241, 252.

<sup>6</sup> Hibbard, *Michelangelo*, 252.

<sup>7</sup> Hibbard, *Michelangelo*, 252.

entire world, and that year, when I was living in Venice, I went to Rome to see it, and I was stupefied by it...<sup>8</sup>

Vasari saw the fresco as divinely inspired, which can be an effective tool to transmit God's message to humankind. He said:

The *Last Judgment* must be recognized as the great exemplar of the grand manner of painting, directly inspired by God and enabling mankind to see the fateful results when an artist of sublime intellect infused with divine grace and knowledge appears on earth. Behind this work, bound in chains, follow all those who believe they have mastered the art of painting; the strokes with which Michelangelo outlined his figures make every intelligent and sensitive artist wonder and tremble, no matter how strong a draughtsman he may be. When other artists study the fruits of Michelangelo's labors, they are thrown into confusion by the mere thought of what manner of things all other pictures, past or future, would look like if placed side by side with this masterpiece.<sup>9</sup>

What could be our reaction today if we took a longer look at the "Last Judgment"? As Christian believers, seeing the fresco for an hour or more is not fair. Michelangelo labored for eight years, and we behold it for hours? This article is not sufficient to give justice to Michelangelo's hard labor. It is worth taking a serious look at this monumental work of art.

Michelangelo died at the age of 88 (1475-1564).<sup>10</sup> During his time, you are lucky if you reach 50 years old. The average life span of a person was around 40 years old. God must have had a purpose for Michelangelo to reach almost 89. He finished the "Last Judgment" in his mid-sixties. According to Giorgio Vasari, Michelangelo is a God-given creature. Vasari narrated:

...the most benevolent Ruler of Heaven mercifully turned His eyes towards earth, and, witnessing the hopeless quantity of such labors, the most fervid but fruitless studies, and the presumptuous opinion of men who were further from the truth than shadows from the light, He decided, in order to rid us of so many errors, to send

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<sup>8</sup> Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists: Oxford World's Classics*, trans., Conaway Bondanella and Peter Bondanella, Oxford University Press, New York, 1991, Kindle Edition, 464.

<sup>9</sup> Hibbard, *Michelangelo*, 254.

<sup>10</sup> Hibbard, *Michelangelo*, 9.

to earth a spirit who, working alone, was able to demonstrate in every art and every profession the meaning of perfection in the art of design, how to give relief to the details in paintings by means of proper drawing, tracing, shading, and casting light, how to work with good judgment in sculpture, and how to make buildings comfortable and secure, healthy, cheerful, well proportioned, and richly adorned with various decorations in architecture.<sup>11</sup>

God inspired Michelangelo to relay His message in the world of aesthetics. Even Michelangelo himself, in his later years, came to believe that God called him to be in Rome. God placed him in Rome to work in the Sistine Chapel and design the St. Peter's Basilica. According to Romain Rolland, Michelangelo received a letter from

Paul III, dated January 1, 1547, and renewed by Julius III in 1552. He had been appointed governor and architect of St. Peter's with full power to carry on the construction. He accepted this heavy task as a sacred duty and refused to take any pay for it. In 1557, he wrote to his nephew Lionardo, "Many people believe, as I do myself, that I have been placed at this post by God. I will not leave it because I am serving for the love of God and put all my hope in Him."<sup>12</sup>

Michelangelo is an aesthetic theologian. His theology and faith can enrich our faith. What could be Michelangelo's theological message in the "Last Judgment" today? Is the fresco's Christological, spiritual, and eschatological content still valid to the modern mind?

In the context of evangelization at that time, critics say that Michelangelo's epic work was ineffective for an ordinary Christian mind. Those who cannot read or write can not understand the message of the "Last Judgment". Religious arts are meant for ordinary believers. Religious arts are books for the illiterate. However, Dr. Esperanza Camara says the "Last Judgment" is intended for sophisticated or educated believers.<sup>13</sup> Michelangelo composed the fresco with the

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<sup>11</sup> Giorgio Vasari, 414.

<sup>12</sup> Romain Rolland, *Michelangelo*, trans by Frederick Street, NY: Duffield & Co., 2010, The Project Gutenberg eBook of Michelangelo; [https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/32762/pg32762-images.html#Footnote\\_86\\_86](https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/32762/pg32762-images.html#Footnote_86_86)

<sup>13</sup> Dr. Esperanza Camara, "Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel," <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/renaissance-reformation/high-ren-florence-rome/michelangelo/a/michelangelo-last-judgment/> accessed/2/11/2024



influence of Dante Alighieri's "Inferno". He included mythological characters like Minos and Charon. Thus, the painting must be read with careful reflection and critical understanding. It demands from the viewer time and pre-understanding to appreciate its value.

The fresco must be read beyond its face value. The naked images were purposely drawn nude due to the creation story. The nudities are theologically correct if one judges them from an eschatological context. At the Parousia, the resurrected body will be naked, not clothed. Michelangelo depicted the restored body in heaven in its ideal form as created by God. Thus, judging the painting as mere pornographic material is theologically wrong. The Master of Ceremony, Biagio Martinelli da Cesena, proposed the destruction of the painting. For him, it is more of a pornography than a painting. Michelangelo knew Biagio's intent. Consequently, he drew Minos (Prince of the Devil) with the face of Biagio da Cesena. Biagio protested to the pope and appealed to have it removed. But Pope Paul III said his authority does not extend to hell.<sup>14</sup> Michelangelo saw in Biagio's protest a wrong judgment about the fresco. Thus, Michelangelo composed the figure of Minos with long ass ears, symbolic of his bad judgment.<sup>15</sup>

### Christ's Ambiguous Gesture

Pope Paul III's spontaneous prayer before the fresco denotes the need for mercy. The painting provoked the pope to assess himself. The "Last Judgment" compelled him to judge himself in front of the fresco. Did the Pope see Christ as a judge?

In what form did Michelangelo depict Christ as a judge? Based on the creed, Jesus will come to judge the living and the dead. John Dixon Jr. said that Michelangelo's contemporaries, Vasari and Condivi, saw Christ in the "Last Judgment", wrathfully condemning the guilty and banishing them to eternal fire.<sup>16</sup> However, Dixon argued that Christ

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<sup>14</sup> Leo Stienberg, "A Corner of the Last Judgment," *Daedalus*, Spring, 1980, Vol. 109, No. 2, Intellect and Imagination: The Limits and Presuppositions of Intellectual Inquiry, 214; <https://about.jstor.org/terms>

<sup>15</sup> Leo Stienberg, 229.

<sup>16</sup> John Dixon, Jr., (1987). The Christology of Michelangelo: The Sistine Chapel. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 55(3), 518; <https://doi.org/10.1017/002187180001464068> accessed/ 2/14/2024; Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, 462



**Fig 2 Beardless Christ detail**

does not show a furious face. He is neither sitting nor standing. His hands do not suggest condemnation.<sup>17</sup> M. Angelo said that Christ raises his left hand not to threaten but to point to his wounds.<sup>18</sup> His gesture suggests neither vindictiveness nor punishment. His face is calm but does not project wrathful authority. In short, Christ's figure as a judge is ambiguous.<sup>19</sup> (See Fig 2)

If Christ's posture is ambiguous, then it is possible He does not inflict judgment on the damned. Christ came to redeem and not to condemn. He offers salvation, not condemnation. Christ will not judge according to the human method of judgment. Divine justice is not human justice. Christ's "ambiguous posture" is an act neither of judgment nor of wrathful eternal condemnation of the guilty. Michelangelo's Christ is simply a revelation of the Risen Jesus exposing the wounds of mercy and love. The Risen Jesus is the standard of fidelity, love, and life. The individuals judge themselves based on Christ. The second coming of Christ is identified as judgment. Jesus sends no one to eternal fire. Hell is a choice of the individual. Hell is a choice not to love Jesus.

Dixon rejects Vasari's and Condivi's conception of Christ as a wrathful judge since there is no trace of anger in Christ's countenance. Dixon points to the influence of Dante regarding Michelangelo's Christ. For Dante, according to Dixon, judgment is not a matter of God's acting at all. Judgment is a personal choice.<sup>20</sup> Christ's appearance means a

<sup>17</sup> John Dixon, Jr., *The Christology of Michelangelo*, 518.

<sup>18</sup> Angelo, M. "The Last Judgment," *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, 3(1), 79; <https://doi.org/25665676>

<sup>19</sup> John Dixon, Jr., *The Christology of Michelangelo*, 518.

<sup>20</sup> John Dixon, Jr., *The Christology of Michelangelo*, 519.



judgment to each person. Judgment, said Pope Benedict XVI, is the manifestation of truth. The Risen Jesus is the criterion of truth.<sup>21</sup> There is no need for Michelangelo to paint a wrathful face of Christ. The ideal form of Christ and the wounds speak the truth. Sins will be made known upon the appearance of Christ. Pope Benedict XVI said, Christ does not allot damnation. Humans set a boundary to salvation.<sup>22</sup> The rejection of God's love paves the way to eternal punishment.

Looking at Christ, there is no sign of judgment. There are no traces of anger and terror. According to Dixon, there is only the drama of human choice in the whole scene. Christ's gesture and posture escape definition. It is those who looked and decided to follow Christ that defines. In the drama of the "Last Judgment", one's choice determines one's identity.<sup>23</sup> The option to love and follow Jesus defines us. Love transforms us into new, beautiful human beings. We gain form the moment we choose to love Christ. It is not what we say and physical looks that define us. It is the way of incorporating the teachings and following Jesus that defines us.

Dixon described Christ's ambiguous gesture. His hands communicate either blessing or curse. It depends on the state or disposition of the worshipper.

The hands can be seen as blessing or damning, receiving or rejecting, according to the disposition of those who perceive them. The mighty up-flung hand can be seen as a terrible rejection or a summons upward to the vision of God. The gesture of invitation can be felt by those who chose to do so as a gesture of damnation. The expression of compassion can be seen as wrath by those who reject compassion.<sup>24</sup>

Christ's left hand pointing toward His wound can be interpreted with multiple meanings. Christ can be communicating the violence done unto Him. It is also a valid interpretation that Christ is pointing towards His merciful love for those who follow Him up to Calvary.

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<sup>21</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 1988, 206.

<sup>22</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, 207.

<sup>23</sup> John Dixon, Jr., *The Christology of Michelangelo*, 522.

<sup>24</sup> John Dixon, Jr., *The Christology of Michelangelo*, 522.

For the present viewers of the fresco, Christ summons us to a life of love and fellowship with Him and reject sin. We are called to interiorize Jesus to gain beautiful transfigured bodies in the New Heavens and New Earth. The rejection of Jesus leads us to deformation or the lack of identity. The figure of Minos is less of a human being. The snake's tail forms into a question mark. The choice to reject Jesus does not define, but it deforms one into ugliness. That is the lack of beauty, goodness, unity, and love.

### **Christ as a Merciful Judge and Totus-Christus**

In the drama of human choice and the ambiguous image of Christ as a judge, there is a need for a correct belief of Christ as a merciful judge. The ambiguous gesture does not mean Christ's indifference or indecisiveness. Indeed, there will be judgment at the second coming. Christ is both just and merciful. Judgment and mercy should be seen in a balanced way. If we see Christ as infinitely merciful and forget about eternal punishment, some would no longer strive for holiness. Why do some sacrifice if God will wipe away our offenses anyway?

St. Augustine recommends the need for a healthy symbiosis of mercy and judgment. We should not indulge in sin because we believe in God's mercy and compassion. In one's Christian life, think of the divine mercy rescuing us from the chords of death and beware of the judgment to come. In his Sermon 9.1, St. Augustine said:

*The Lord is merciful and compassionate, long-suffering, very merciful and true.* All the sinners and lovers of this world are delighted to hear that the Lord is merciful and compassionate, that he is long-suffering and very merciful. But if you love him being so very merciful, be afraid too of the last thing, "he says there: and true. If, you see, he had only told you, "*The Lord is merciful and compassionate, and very merciful,*" it's as though you would already be devoting yourself to your sins with a feeling of security and impunity and freedom. You would do what you like, you would enjoy the world as much as you were allowed to, or as much as your lusts dictated to you. And if anyone tried to scold and frighten you with some good advice into restraining yourself from the intemperate and dissolute pursuit of your own desires and your abandonment of your God, you would stand there among the scolding voices.

As though you had heard the divine judgment with a shameless look of triumph on your face, you would read from the Lord's book: "Why are you trying to scare me about our God? He is merciful and compassionate and very merciful." To stop people saying that sort of thing, he added one phrase at the end, which says, and true. Thus, he ruled out the smugness of misplaced presumption and prompted the anxiety of sorrow for sin. *Let us by all means rejoice at the Lord's mercy, "but also fear the Lord's judgment.* (emphasis mine) He spares — but he doesn't say nothing. Yes, he does say nothing, but he won't always say nothing. Listen to him while he is refraining from saying nothing in words, or you will have no time to listen while he is refraining from saying nothing in judgment.<sup>25</sup>

Pope Benedict XVI said that judgment consists of the removal of the mask of death. The judgment is the nakedness of the truth.<sup>26</sup> The well-proportioned naked bodies of the saints, with the proof of their fidelity and love for Christ, can be seen as the manifestation of the truth of Christ's disciples. For example, St. Peter entrusts the keys to Jesus, St. John the Baptist wears camel's hair, St. Lawrence with the gridiron, St. Andrew with the X cross, and St. Sebastian holds a bunch of arrows. They lived their lives Christologically. The nakedness of the saints reveals the enfleshed teachings of Christ. The saints are the alter ego of Christ. They unmask the naked truth about Christ. In this case, the saints are our judges as well.<sup>27</sup>

The martyrs, for example, are an emphatic reminder of humanity's violence and rejection of Christ. Ashton said,

We see St. Sebastian kneeling and shaking loose from a cloth, the many darts that pierced his naked body. At the same time, he mimics the gesture of an archer as if to ensure the memory of his horrendous murder. He is an emphatic reminder of man's inhumanity as he displays all the darts to make a specific iteration; instead of just one dart effectively shot into his body, an excessive number was also leached.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> St. Augustine, *Essential Sermons: The Works of St. Augustine, A translation for the 21st Century*, trans. Edmund Hill, ed. Boniface Ramsey, New City Press, 2007, Kindle Edition.

<sup>26</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, 206.

<sup>27</sup> Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, 207..

<sup>28</sup> Ashton Townsley, MICHELANGELO'S "LAST JUDGMENT" AND ITS AESTHETIC IMPLICATIONS, 221.

From the perspective of Totus-Christus (Whole Christ), Michelangelo could have pondered the gospel of Matthew 25 31-46. In this gospel, Jesus identified Himself with the poor and marginalized. Jesus can be seen and served through His disciples and followers. Thus, the acceptance or rejection of His Body (disciples, poor, and marginalized) has a consequence of a blessing or damnation. Christ in the company of the saints is a judgment. The Body of Christ reveals the various forms of violence and rejection done against Jesus, for example, the grilling of St. Lawrence, St. Bartholomew being skinned alive, St. Andrew being crucified upside down, the broken spike wheel used to kill St. Catherine of Alexandria, and so on. Enduring these forms of torture can mean fidelity and undying love for Christ, and a judgment toward the persecutors.

Instead of looking at the beautiful bodies of the saints from an aesthetic perspective or a malicious lens, one must contemplate one's eternal destiny. Their beautiful, restored bodies manifest the incarnated beauty of following Christ.

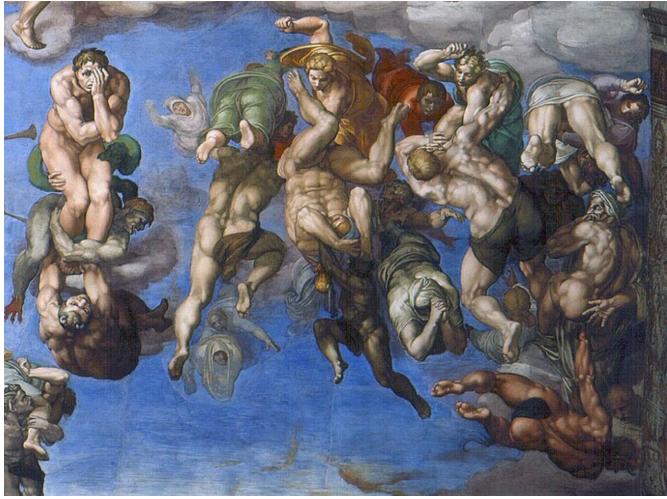
### **Eternal Punishment**

Is eternal punishment fair? Human sin is finite and limited. Why be given an everlasting punishment for sins done in a span of time? Is Christ just and merciful, then? The eternal punishment of the dumb contradicts divine justice and mercy. If Christ is just, perpetual punishment is unfair for sinners. If Christ is merciful, forgiveness must extend beyond purgatory. Dixon argues that Michelangelo takes a cue from Dante's imagination. For Dante, "divine justice has nothing to do with human justice, and there is no quantitative measure of sin that causes damnation. Damnation or salvation is what each soul chooses, out of free will and desire, and God only confirms the choice."<sup>29</sup> Sinners become their sins and remain for all eternity. The eternal punishments in Hell are not the product of a punishing God. They are sins manifest in their true nature. Eternal punishments are unmasked sins.<sup>30</sup> They are the result of the series of rejection of God's love. Every eternal punishment is an embodiment of sin. Hence, the eternal punishment is a choice of those to be in Hell forever.

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<sup>29</sup> John Dixon, Jr., *The Christology of Michelangelo*, 520.

<sup>30</sup> John Dixon, Jr., *The Christology of Michelangelo*, 520.



**Fig 3. Detail of some deadly sins**

Based on Dante's insight on perpetual punishment as a manifestation of sins, Michelangelo depicted the seven deadly sins, taking inspiration from Dante's "Inferno". The seven deadly sins were below the right of the seven angels with their trumpets.<sup>31</sup> Dr. Ezperanca identified pride, greed, and lust in the Last Judgment scene. The embodiment of avarice is pummeled by an angel and dragged by a demon. A money bag and two keys dangle from his chest. At the same time, the sin of pride is personified by the soul, which fights back and protests against divine judgment. At the far right, whose scrotum pulled by a demon represents the sin of lust.<sup>32</sup> (See Fig 3) Likewise, Minos could be seen as the personification of lust.

In addition to understanding eternal punishment in connection with Dante's conception of time, for Dante, the "Last Judgment" subdues time. At the Last Judgment, there is only a state of being that is timeless and unchanging.<sup>33</sup> Death is the unmasking of the choices we make during our lifetime. The byproduct of those choices would be subdued by eternity. Hence, there is no time to decide in the realm of the "Last Judgment". There is no more time to repent after death. If we choose to be angry and refuse to forgive, then we will become the

<sup>31</sup> Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, 462.

<sup>32</sup> Dr. Esperanza Camara, "Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel," [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org)

<sup>33</sup> John Dixon, Jr., *The Christology of Michelangelo*, 521.

embodiment of hatred forever. The result would be a non-ending protest and anger in the realms of hell. The constant expression of envy on earth will result in the personification of envy.

### The Beardless Christ

Michelangelo's beardless Christ is a unique portrayal of the Risen Jesus. What could be its intended meaning? Many art critics say that Michelangelo was influenced by classical art. His Christ significantly resembles the Greek god Apollo. Michelangelo knew the figure and the Greek's belief about Apollo. He knew Apollo as the second in rank to Zeus. Apollo was a terrible god, the archer, the shooter, the healer, the awesomeness of the sun, the power of light as the source of life, the condition of life.<sup>34</sup> Greeks likewise view the sculpture of *Apollo Baldevere* for its ideal beauty and grace.<sup>35</sup>

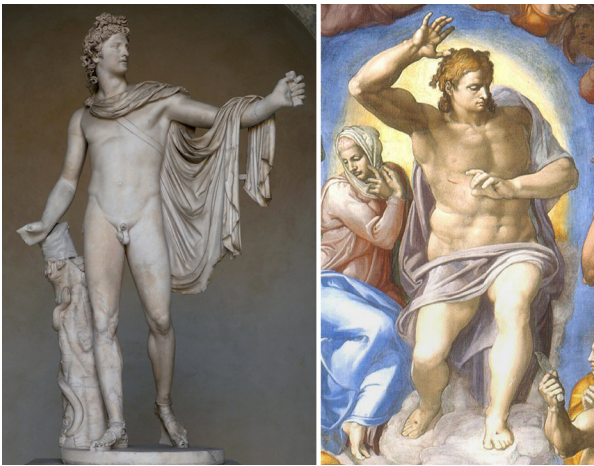


Fig 4 Apollo Baldevere and Beardless Christ

Michelangelo composed the figure of the beardless Christ based on the figure of Apollo. (See Fig 4 ). He saw similarities between the figure of Apollo and Christ. Some comment that Christ is more of an Apollonian version than the traditional portrait of Christ. It may be

true when seeing the head of Christ and His gracefulness. However, the body, proportions, and almost square chest muscles are typical of Michelangelo's style.<sup>36</sup> Thus, Michelangelo did not draw his Christ in the absolute Greek style. He critically used the Greek ideas about

<sup>34</sup> John Dixon, Jr., *The Christology of Michelangelo*, 522-523; Mark P.O. Morford & Robert Larnardson, *Classical Mythology*, 7th Ed. NY: Oxford University Press, 2003, 237.

<sup>35</sup> Dr. Esperanza Camara, "Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel; John Dixon, Jr., *The Christology of Michelangelo*, 523.

<sup>36</sup> John Dixon, Jr., *The Christology of Michelangelo*, 523.



Apollo to construct the Beardless Christ. Therefore, the outcome is a superior form of beauty and grace, the Beardless Christ. Michelangelo baptized Apollo Baldevere and transposed him into the image of Christ. The beardless Christ is the perfection of beauty and fullness of grace, the product of Michelangelo’s creative imagination.

If we consider the image of Apollo<sup>37</sup> and his similarities to Christ, we will see more insights about the figure of the Beardless Christ. See the Table below.

Apollo	Christ
Son of Zeus	Son of God
Second in rank	Second Person
Sun God	The Light
Condition of life	The Life
Pierced by an arrow by Eros/Cupid straight to the heart	Pierced by a lance straight to the heart
Pursued Daphne with abundance of love	Seeks the lost sheep out of love
Herdsmen and shepherd (protected the flock among wolves)	Good Shepherd
Embraced the Tree, with laurel leaf, (Daphne)	Embraced the Tree (cross) with crown of thorns
Young, beardless, naked, ideal beauty and grace	Young, beardless, naked, ideal beauty and grace
Bow a symbol of distance, death, terror, and awe	Merciful but feared by the devil
Lyre symbol of his gentle side, proclaimed the joy of communion with Olympus through music, poetry and dance	Christ the reason of communion in Heaven
Killed the she-dragon/serpent	Defeated the Dragon/Serpent (satan)
Communicated with mortals through prophets and oracles, his knowledge of the future and the will of his father	The prophet who revealed the will of God the Father
Terrible god, even gods fear him	Merciful but feared by the devil

<sup>37</sup> See, Morford & Larnardson, *Classical Mythology*, 226-254.

Apollo is a mythological son of the high god Zeus. Christ is believed to be the Son of God. The saints drawn towards Christ testify to the divinity of Christ. Their lives served as witnesses to Christ's divinity. Being the Son of God, Christ is the second person of the Trinity but is not second in rank in the realm of the gods like Apollo. The Beardless Christ is divine and consubstantial with the Father but not second in rank in the divine realm. Thus, His Judgment is not human but divine. His judgment is not the same as that of Apollo's. Let us see Apollo's judgment on Marsyas.



**\*Fig 5 Apollo punished Marsyas**

Michelangelo does not see Christ as a New Sun God but as the Sun of Justice or righteousness.<sup>38</sup> His judgment differs from Apollo's. In the mythological story of Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*, Marsyas is a satyr who became highly skilled in playing the flute. The flute was invented and discarded by the goddess Athena. The goddess severely punished Marsyas for taking the flute. But the satyr persevered and became a proficient flute player. However, he became so proud and challenged the god of music, Apollo, to a music contest. Apollo accepted the challenge but with the condition of any form of punishment for the loser. It is no surprise Marsyas lost. The sun god Apollo skinned Marsyas as punishment for his pride and arrogance. Marsyas protested against the unjust sentence. He argued, "Why are you stripping me of my very self? The flute is not worth this torture."<sup>39</sup> Marsyas must have weighed the judgment imposed on him by Athena and Apollo. Athena's punishment made him a better flute player, while Apollo's punishment killed him. The terrible punishment made the earth and Olympus weep.<sup>40</sup> (See Fig 5<sup>41</sup>)

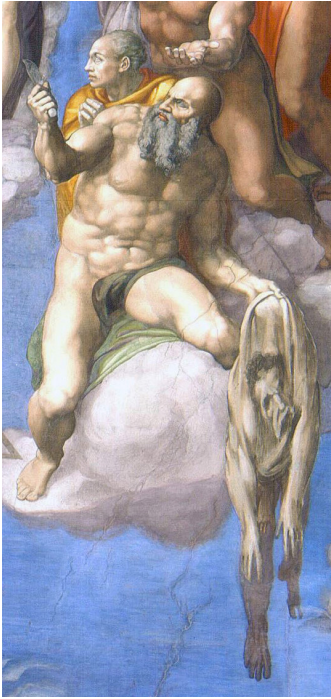
<sup>38</sup> Dr. Esperanza Camara, "Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel.

<sup>39</sup> Morford & Larnard, *Classical Mythology*, 242-243.

<sup>40</sup> Morford & Larnard, *Classical Mythology*, 243.

<sup>41</sup> \* <https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/401060>





**Fig 6 St Bartholomew with Michelangelo's face Detail**

Michelangelo could identify himself with Marsyas' pride. Michelangelo became proud due to his talents in the field of arts. His contemporaries named him "Il Divino," the divine. He can rival God himself in giving form to the human body. Michelangelo became proud, which led him to focus on art's beauty instead of his soul's salvation.<sup>42</sup> He directed his energies to find happiness and consolation in the world of aesthetics. He overlooked putting the colors of love and humility into his soul. It was his pride that triggered him to sign the Pietà. Afterward, he lamented such pride. He vowed not to sign his work of art.

Michelangelo underwent a process of religious conversion. With the help of Victoria Colonna, Michelangelo was stripped of his proud self. Thus, the flayed skin bearing Michelangelo's face conveys his "Il divino self," while his new self is identified with St. Bartholomew. Michelangelo's skin could symbolize his acknowledgment of his sin of pride, and an act of repentance left him hanging between heaven and hell. His last will explicitly manifests his conversion. Vasari states that Michelangelo consciously pronounced his last will in "three sentences, leaving his soul in the hands of God, his body to the earth, and his property to his closest relatives, admonishing his closest friends to recall to him in his passing from this life the suffering of Jesus Christ."<sup>43</sup>

Michelangelos' Christ is not a terrible god like Apollo. He believed in the mercy and love of Christ, who suffered for him. Christ did not punish him to death for his pride. Instead, Christ pursued him with love and mercy. Thus, Michelangelo's Christ is not a punishing God but a merciful and just One.

<sup>42</sup> Dr. Esperanza Camara, "Last Judgment, Sistine Chapel.

<sup>43</sup> Giorgio Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, 470.

Christ has a similar feature to the Apollonian sun god, who sheds light and the condition of life. Christ is the Light and the source of life, superior to the Titan god. On the one hand, all the saints' gazes are directed to Christ since, without the Light, they will die. On the other hand, the damned were repelled against the light. They are deprived of life and light forever in the fires of hell. Christ the Light is necessary to receive life and be recreated in the new creation. Just like in the Genesis story, God first created the light, so Christ will be the light and the life of all the saints in the new creation.

The Beardless Christ points to His wounded side. St. Sebastian is holding a bunch of arrows but does not have wounds. Does Michelangelo convey a sense of judgment to those who rejected Him? In Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, Apollo was pierced by Eros, known as Cupid, the little god of love. Michelangelo could have deeply contemplated the love story of Apollo and Daphne. The drama of the love story reveals the depth of Christ's love for humanity. It is good to return to the story.

...Eros is the son of Venus, the goddess of love and beauty, whom he attended. He was never without his bow and quiver of arrows. Whoever was hit by one of his magic arrows straightway fell in love. The wound was at once a pain and a delight. Some traditions say that he shot blindfolded—his aim seemed often so at random. Sometimes, the one whom he wounded was apparently least susceptible to love. Indeed, Cupid had the reputation of being a rather mischievous fellow, fond of pranks.

One of these was at the expense of Apollo, the great sun god. Apollo was himself a mighty archer and had slain the python of Delphi with his arrows. Proud of his victory, he mocked Eros, saying, "You should be content with kindling the fires of love in some mortal with your torch; do not try to share my glory." Eros vexed at the taunt, replied threateningly, "Although your arrows may pierce every target, Apollo, mine shall pierce you." So saying he drew from his quiver two arrows, one of gold, to excite love, and one of lead, to repel it. With the golden one, he shot Apollo through the heart; with the leaden, he shot the nymph Daphne. Straightaway, Apollo became madly in love with Daphne, but the maid fled from him in horror.

Apollo loved her; he saw her and desired to marry her. The god burned with all-consuming fire and fueled his love with fruitless

hope. Apollo said, “Love makes me pursue.” He pursued her, aided by the wings of love, and when he was close to her, she turned into a laurel tree. Even in this form, Apollo loves her; placing his hand on the trunk, he felt the heart beating beneath the newly formed bark. Embracing the branches like human limbs, he kisses the wood, yet the wood shrinks from his kisses. Apollo said, “Since you cannot be my wife, you shall be my tree.”<sup>44</sup>

Pope Benedict XVI explains the Greek notion of eros. It is a kind of intoxication, the overpowering of reason by a “divine madness” that tears man away from his finite existence and enables him, in the very process of being overwhelmed by divine power, to experience supreme happiness.<sup>45</sup> Eros is a kind of human ascending love that seeks eternal happiness. Pope Benedict XVI added that the reality of love is ecstatic but not in the sense of madness or foolishness. Love is a journey away from self-centeredness.<sup>46</sup> It is a liberation from the “I, me, mine world.” Love seeks to embrace both time and eternity. Thus, the true meaning of love is a perfect combination of eros and agape. Pope Benedict XVI said, “Even if eros is at first mainly covetous and ascending, a fascination for the great promise of happiness, in drawing near to the other, it is less and less concerned with itself, increasingly seeks the happiness of the other, is concerned more and more with the beloved, bestows itself and wants to ‘be there for’ the other.”<sup>47</sup>

Such a meaning of love resonates with the love story of Apollo and Daphne. Apollo is god. His love for Daphne is comparable to human love. Thus, his love for Daphne is human and divine. Being hit by Eros straight to the heart, his love for Daphne becomes “erotic,” a divine madness. His heart was fueled and driven by the consuming love.<sup>48</sup> Even if Daphne turned into a laurel tree, he embraced her with love. Even in death, Apollo’s love is undying. It seeks the beloved beyond death.

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<sup>44</sup> Estelle M. Hurl, *Michelangelo: A Collection of Fifteen Pictures and a Portrait of the Master, with Introduction and Interpretation*, Cambridge: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1900, ebook project Gutenberg, pp. 74-75.

<sup>45</sup> Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 4.

<sup>46</sup> Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 6.

<sup>47</sup> Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 7.

<sup>48</sup> Morford & Lenardon, *Classical Mythology*, 236-237.

The wounded heart of Christ conveyed Apollo's erotic love. Christ personified the true image of love. Michelangelo demythologized Apollo's love and gave love's meaning in the image of the Beardless Christ. The pierced heart of Christ is the source of eros-agapic love.<sup>49</sup> Christ seeks us not because an arrow of love struck him but because He is love. Like Apollo, Christ's love is human and divine. Christ's love makes Him pursue humanity even if they run away from Him.

Christ's love perfected the erotic love of Apollo. The timing of the wounding of the heart sets the difference between the love of Christ and the love of Apollo. Apollo was pierced first by Eros. It is only then that he pursued Daphne. His love came from an outside force. Christ embodied the love that comes from within. The soldier pierced Christ's heart after death. Thus, the wounded heart of Jesus in the "Last Judgment" can mean the eternal love of Christ for humanity since He was pierced beyond death. The love of Christ reaches beyond death. His love can purify even those dwelling in the realm of death or purgatory.

Apollo's compelled love resulted in the death of Daphne. Christ's agape love for humanity resulted in His death on the cross but eternal life for humanity. He manifested the face of love on the cross. He gave His life for His friends. Apollo took the tree to be his possession. Christ embraced the cross (tree of life) so that we will receive divine life. Apollo put the "laurel leaf" on his head to reward and satisfy himself. Christ received the crown of thorns as punishment for sins we have done.

Apollo is known as a skilled archer. The symbols of his bow were distance, death, terror, and awe. He killed a she-dragon with his mighty arrows. In *Metamorphosis*, Ovid narrates the defeat of the dragon-serpent, which embodies the face of death.

As for the she-dragon, whoever opposed her met the fatal day of death until lord Apollo, the far-shooter, struck her with a mighty arrow. Racked by bitter pain, she lay gasping frantically for breath and writhing on the ground. An unspeakable and terrifying sound arose as she twisted and rolled in the forest; breathing out blood, she gave up her life, and Phoebus Apollo vaunted over her: "Now rot

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<sup>49</sup> Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, 7.

here on the ground that nourishes mortals. You shall not live any longer to be the evil ruin of human beings who eat the fruit of the all-fostering earth and who will bring perfect hecatombs to his place.<sup>50</sup>

The beardless Christ conveys the victory of the Risen Lord over evil represented by the dragon-serpent. Just as Apollo killed the she-dragon, so Christ defeated the dragon-serpent (Rev.12). His victory is not by the skill of an arrow but by accepting that his heart be pierced with a lance so that the flow of love and mercy will forever gush forth towards human beings. Christ defeated the dragon-serpent with His wounded heart.

Apollo's lyre is a symbol of communion in Olympus. The myth of Apollo says that whenever Apollo plays his lyre, his music makes the immortal gods rejoice in their mighty hearts.<sup>51</sup> On the right side of Christ, there seems to be a "lyre" held by a man (King David?). If it is so, then the "lyre" points to the image of Christ as the source of unity, a harmony, and happiness in heaven. Christ himself is the object of happiness in the second coming.

### Christ is Telos

In the context of the fresco's intended place and position, Christ is the goal of everyone who goes inside the Sistine Chapel. According to Dixon, the usual position of the "Last Judgment" painting was over the entrance of the Church. The theology behind it is that the Church is the City of God. And those who enter the Church will be undergoing the Last Judgment. Michelangelo changed the image of the Church. By placing the fresco behind the Altar, the Church now becomes the barque of St. Peter. Those who enter the Church will be included in the journey towards Christ. The Church becomes the path to salvation.<sup>52</sup>

The fresco behind the altar directs the movement of the Eucharistic assembly toward Christ. The fresco becomes the platform that aids the assembly in lifting their hearts to the heart of the painting, Christ. Dixon said that the upward gestural movements direct the eyes toward the figure of Jesus. All the compositional movements, in their

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<sup>50</sup> Morford & Larnard, *Classical Mythology*, 249.

<sup>51</sup> Morford & Larnard, *Classical Mythology*, 249.

<sup>52</sup> John Dixon, Jr., *The Christology of Michelangelo*, 524.

intricate and varied web, cohere in the figure of Jesus.<sup>53</sup> The Eucharist celebrated on the altar becomes a path towards Christ. The viewer is drawn towards Christ in the Eucharist in the Sistine Chapel. Christ draws us towards Himself as we participate in the Eucharist. Michelangelo depicted the words of Christ, "*And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself*" (Jn 12:32 NASB).

## Conclusion

Reading the "Last Judgment" in the context of Christology reveals knowledge and insights of Michelangelo's faith. Some insights may not be intended directly by Michelangelo but by the theological advisers. Michelangelo's faith in Christ is deeply inspiring. Other insights can be explored and recognized if read through a different lens or method of reading.

Michelangelo's Christ is a merciful and loving God. Christ's gesture is not an act of judgment. Such observation contradicts that of Vasari and Condivi. The ambiguity of Christ's action points to the drama of human choice. Christ does not judge according to the human method of judgment. Christ's "ambiguous posture" is neither an act of judgment nor a wrathful condemnation of the guilty forever. Michelangelo's Christ is simply a revelation of the Risen Jesus exposing the wounds of mercy and love. The Risen Jesus is the standard of fidelity, love, and life.

The saints incarnated the person of Christ in their lives by following Jesus up to death. The saints are judges since they reveal the truth about Christ in their beautiful and proportionate bodies. The beauty of Christ's love radiates in their bodies.

Michelangelo's Beardless Christ is carefully pondered and composed using classical Greek mythology. It has similarities and dissimilarities with the sun god Apollo. Understanding the myth of Apollo is vital to a better understanding of the Beardless Christ. Christ is not the sun god but the Son of Righteousness, the face of justice. The nature of Christ's love as a perfect interplay of eros and agape can be traced to the love of Apollo and Daphne.

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<sup>53</sup> John Dixon, Jr., *The Christology of Michelangelo*, 518.

The location of the "Last Judgment" changed the image of the Church as a path leading to salvation. The Eucharist links the congregation towards eternity.

The "Last Judgment" facilitates a religious experience. It is a beautiful way towards the embodiment of beauty and grace, Christ. Michelangelo's "Last Judgement" is a beautiful vehicle that ushers viewers towards the spiritual realm.

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## The Filipino Expression *Bahala Na* as A Revelatory and Salvific Experience: A Study Through Schillebeeckx's Theological Hermeneutics of Suffering

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Patrick Meryll J. Garcia and Reginaldo M. Mananzan

### *Abstract*

*Bahala na as a cultural expression has its influence among Filipino Catholics. Whenever the expression is evoked in times of suffering, bahala na projects certain traits that portray Christian values, such as an attitude of that through God's mercy they will eventually experience a better future. However, in some instances, the same expression also reveals attitudes that are inconsistent with the Christian message, such as indifference, complacency, nonchalant, and passive resignation. In effect, this could potentially draw them farther from the realization of the message of salvation. With this, the paper endeavors to bring to light how the nuances of bahala na distort the Filipino Catholics' understanding of some biblical concepts while, at the same time, drawing from the Filipino expression the emancipative message of Jesus. Henceforth, with the use of Edward Schillebeeckx's theological hermeneutics of suffering, the ambivalence of bahala na can become instrumental in understanding the truths of faith necessary for the message of salvation. His methodology which begins with the observation of human experience, necessitates the*

*contemporary reinterpretation of the scriptures. In this case, bahala na, as an expression drawn from lived experiences, is analyzed as both a revelatory and salvific experience for Filipino Catholics.*

Keywords: *Bahala Na*, Culture, Hermeneutics, Salvation, Suffering

## INTRODUCTION

*Bahala na* is a Filipino expression usually evoked in moments of uncertainty, struggles, or suffering.<sup>1</sup> Most of the time, it is viewed ambivalently, for it reveals traits and attitudes among Filipinos that could either be a positive or a negative response to suffering. The expression can be translated into English as “come what may,”<sup>2</sup> pointing to a determined attitude, yet in some cases, it could point to an attitude of indifference to what the future may hold. Another English translation of the expression is “let it be,” which could either have a defeatist tendency<sup>3</sup> or, in some cases, it could be more of an attitude of trust in someone or something. Speaking of trust, “*bahala na* has (also) become a paradigm of folk spirituality and functions as a theodicy in the Philippine society through which one could lessen the pain of his or her adverse circumstances.”<sup>4</sup> The expression could reveal an attitude of dependence and confidence in a transcendental reality. It could project an inclination to call out higher powers to save one from suffering and bring clarity in times of confusion.

With this transcendental dimension, *bahala na* also finds its place among Filipino Catholics as the cultural traits and attitudes it reveals have similarities with Christian values. Considering this, it can be said that *bahala na* reveals with it a message from the Gospel. However,

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<sup>1</sup> See Alfredo V. Lagmay, “Bahala Na,” *Philippine Journal of Psychology* 26, no. 1 (1993): 32.

<sup>2</sup> Rolando Menardo Gripaldo, “Bahala Na: A Philosophical Analysis,” Retrieved: January 23, 2021 from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238082707\\_BAHALA\\_NA\\_A\\_PHILOSOPHICAL\\_ANALYSIS1](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238082707_BAHALA_NA_A_PHILOSOPHICAL_ANALYSIS1), 195.

<sup>3</sup> See Gripaldo, 198.

<sup>4</sup> Tereso C. Casiño, “Mission in the Context of Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na as a Case in Point,” *Seoul Consultation, Study Commission IX* (2015): 87.

there are authors who discussed the inconsistencies of *bahala na* with Christian message and tradition due to its multiple nuances of meaning, some of which contradict each other. Casiño wrote that without critical reflection and theological objections, *bahala na* can be easily confused with the Christian message and can eventually pose a danger to theology.<sup>5</sup> In effect, this could result in the distortion of the Christian message of salvation.

Moreover, considering that *bahala na* is deeply cultural, this could have been an opportunity early on for evangelization as it draws its very meaning from the actual experiences of the Filipinos. “Evangelization loses much of its force and effectiveness if it does not take into consideration the actual people to whom it is addresses [sic], if it does not use their language, their signs and symbols, if it does not answer the questions they ask, and if it does not have an impact on their concrete life.”<sup>6</sup> That is why this study attempts to discover the message of Jesus within *bahala na*. It is possible with the use of Schillebeeckx’s theological hermeneutics of suffering. Henceforth, through this methodology, the expression is analyzed as an experience of Filipino Catholics that enriches their understanding of the Gospel message. Below is the discussion of the said methodology.

## SCHILLEBEECKX’S THEOLOGICAL HERMENEUTICS OF SUFFERING

Edward Schillebeeckx affirms the necessity of human experience in the revelation<sup>7</sup> of God and of the salvific plan.<sup>8</sup> It serves as the medium for the message to become present in history<sup>9</sup> as it is communicated to and interpreted for humankind—Interpretation is an intrinsic element

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<sup>5</sup> See Casiño, 87.

<sup>6</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 63.

<sup>7</sup> See Edward Schillebeeckx, *Church: The Human Story of God*, trans. John Bowden (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1990), 15.

<sup>8</sup> See *Dei Verbum*, 6.

<sup>9</sup> See Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Schillebeeckx Reader*, ed. Robert Schreiter (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1985), 77.

of experience.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, as the revelation enters space and time, it permeates the experiences of the people and finds its expression in their culture.<sup>11</sup> In other words, Divine Revelation cannot avoid borrowing the elements of culture because the salvific plan is intended for humankind whose lives are profoundly linked to a culture.<sup>12</sup> Thus, it is within culture that Divine Revelation could be experienced and, therefore, be interpreted.<sup>13</sup>

Revelation comes from God's initiative, and while it can only be perceived and be meaningfully affirmed in and through human experience, but it takes place in the long process of unfolding of historical events.<sup>14</sup> Schillebeeckx recognizes that the distance in time created by this long process of interpretation can become a problem. He observes that the interpretative elements that were once appropriate and evocative can become meaningless in new situations.<sup>15</sup> To address this, he incorporated the principles of new hermeneutics into his theological methodology.<sup>16</sup> These principles are from Martin Heidegger's *historicity of being* and Hans-Georg Gadamer's *fusion of horizons*. The former explains that as human journeys in time, s/he gradually secures possibilities of understanding the world. With this, Schillebeeckx argues that understanding biblical texts objectively is an undertaking that takes time. The distance in time makes it possible for interpreters to distinguish the present hermeneutical situations<sup>17</sup> from those of the past. He identifies the past hermeneutical situations as the original source experience paving the way to traditions of meaning, while that of the present are new situations wherein the traditions have to be reinterpreted to make sense of the meaning of the Gospel.

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<sup>10</sup> Cf., Aloysius Rego, *Suffering and Salvation: The Salvific Meaning of Suffering in the Later Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx* (Leuven: Peeters Press, 2006), 112-113.

<sup>11</sup> Cf., Rego, 112-113.

<sup>12</sup> Cf., *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 20.

<sup>13</sup> Cf., Rego, *Suffering and Salvation*, 112-113.

<sup>14</sup> Cf., Edward Schillebeeckx, *Interim Report on the Books Jesus and Christ*, trans. John Bowden (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1981), 13-14.

<sup>15</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *Interim Report*, 16.

<sup>16</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *Schillebeeckx Reader*, 99.

<sup>17</sup> Hermeneutical situation pertains to an interpretative framework or 'horizon of experience' within which new experiences are interpreted. See Schillebeeckx, *Church*, 15.

Hence, he affirms that the attempt to make the message of the Gospel intelligible to the contemporary world requires ‘an interpretation of an interpretation’—a reinterpretation of the same message according to the questions of the present situation.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the second principle addresses the problem of the potential distortion of the Gospel message along the process. The fusion of the horizons is seen as the confrontation between the interpreter’s submission to the authority of the text (transmitted by tradition), and the text being bound within the interpreters’ preunderstandings<sup>19</sup> (brought about by the new situation).<sup>20</sup> Schillebeeckx argues that besides the submission to the text, understanding the Gospel also requires the interpreters’ awareness of their preunderstandings. Being conscious of these, the interpreters are able to identify what is inconsistent with the Gospel and those that are not, which, therefore, could amplify and contextualize the message. This allows the continuous development of tradition which is eventually passed on to the next generation of Christians for further reinterpretation.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, Schillebeeckx notes that this development does not create a new truth, but only uncovers aspects of it that have always been objectively present in the message. Hence, it is through reinterpretations in the light of the present that the truth of the Gospel can be continuously understood.<sup>22</sup>

However, Schillebeeckx further observes that new hermeneutics is not enough in doing theology because it only offers theoretically verifiable interpretations<sup>23</sup> which are insufficient in identifying practices that systematically distort the Gospel message and are used to maintain unjust social structures.<sup>24</sup> Consequently, new hermeneutics also neglects

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<sup>18</sup> Cf., Edward Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, trans. N.D. Smith (New York: Sheed and Ward, Inc., 1968), 24-29.

<sup>19</sup> Preunderstandings (or presuppositions) pertain to ideas and assumptions surrounding a person about a concept that is presented to him/her to be interpreted or understood. See Randy L. Maddox, “Contemporary Hermeneutic Philosophy and Theological Studies,” *Religious Studies* 21, no. 4 (1985): 522-523.

<sup>20</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, 25-26.

<sup>21</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, 26-27.

<sup>22</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, 32-33.

<sup>23</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *Understanding of Faith*, 59, 142.

<sup>24</sup> See Mary Catherine Hilkert, “Hermeneutics of History in the Theology of Edward Schillebeeckx,” *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review* 51, no. 1 (1987): 121.

the future, which is of primary importance from a biblical point of view. The latter points to 'the promise' that must bring something new into one's being, and not simply something to be theoretically reinterpreted. In other words, Schillebeeckx claims that theological hermeneutics should be a hermeneutics of praxis.<sup>25</sup> To complement the said insufficiencies, he appropriates some principles of critical theory into his theological hermeneutics, namely, the *theory-praxis dialectics* of Jürgen Habermas and the *negative dialectics* of Theodor Adorno. With the theory-praxis dialectics, Schillebeeckx affirms that an orthodox interpretation can be identified by the way it is oriented towards praxis as the Gospel message which it interprets is essentially emancipative for it is already realized through Jesus. Hence, praxis precedes, informs, and shapes theory.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, to draw and understand these interpretations, he employs Adorno's negative dialectics which provides the universal hermeneutical situation, i.e., the experience of suffering and the natural desire to emancipate the *humanum*<sup>27</sup> from such experience.<sup>28</sup> Schillebeeckx develops these principles into his own which he has termed as the *negative contrast experience*.<sup>29</sup> He identifies the negative experience as human suffering that threatens the *humanum*. He terms this as meaningless suffering because it oppresses and violates human dignity leading to a loss of freedom and hope. He distinguishes this from meaningful suffering, where one embraces the situation freely as it leads him/her to the fulfillment of the *humanum*.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, according to Schillebeeckx, this meaningless suffering has a contrast-experience, i.e., dissent or protest against the situation where the *humanum* should not be. This experience is not sheer negativity but is geared toward praxis. With the Gospel message to be reinterpreted according to this hermeneutical situation, the 'no' to meaningless suffering finds its 'yes'

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<sup>25</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, 36-37.

<sup>26</sup> Cf., Rego, *Suffering and Salvation*, 69, 100.

<sup>27</sup> "*Humanum*: a term borrowed from Max Horkheimer, of the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, refers to all that which is truly human and worthy of humankind." Rego, *Suffering and Salvation*, 52.

<sup>28</sup> Cf., Edward Schillebeeckx, *The Understanding of Faith: Interpretation and Criticism*, trans. N.D. Smith (London: Sheed and Ward, 1974), 64-65.

<sup>29</sup> Cf., Rego, *Suffering and Salvation*, 85.

<sup>30</sup> Cf., Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord*, trans. John Bowden (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1980), 724-725.

to the promise of salvation. Hence, the contrast experience becomes a revelatory moment. With a praxis that strives to overcome meaningless suffering creating a new future, this negative experience becomes a salvific experience presenting the *humanum* as the kingdom of God—already here, but not yet.<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, looking into the context of Filipino culture, the expression *bahala na* shows significant elements where Schillebeeckx's theological hermeneutics could be employed. To explore the expression as a hermeneutical situation, the discussions below present it as both a revelatory and salvific experience for Filipino Catholics.

### THE REVELATORY EXPERIENCE: *BAHALA NA* AS A HERMENEUTICAL SITUATION

With interpretation as intrinsic to human experience, it is clear that Divine Revelation is essentially interpreted according to the experiences of those who have received it.<sup>32</sup> The first recipients of the revelation have expressed its meaning based on their situation. Schillebeeckx terms this initial interpretation as the 'first order' expression.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, as history unfolds, a different situation emerges causing changes in how people experience reality. Accordingly, these experiences necessitate reinterpretations of the 'first order' allowing the truth it communicates to be uncovered and be understood further.<sup>34</sup> This creates a development of tradition which becomes the basis of further reinterpretations.<sup>35</sup> Schillebeeckx terms this as the 'second order' expression. Here belong the written accounts of the message, like the Gospels, and all other reinterpretations of the same message.<sup>36</sup> In other words, human experience, with the changing hermeneutical situations,

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<sup>31</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, 136, 196-197.

<sup>32</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *Interim Report*, 13.

<sup>33</sup> Cf., Lieven Boeve, "Divinising Experience: Essays in the History of Religious Experience from Origen to Ricoeur," vol. 23, *Studies in Philosophical Theology* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 209-210.

<sup>34</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *Interim Report*, 11-12.

<sup>35</sup> Cf., Boeve, "Divinising Experience," 210.

<sup>36</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *Interim Report*, 14-16.



becomes a revelatory experience as it continuously uncovers the meaning of the Divine Revelation.<sup>37</sup> In the context of Filipino Catholics, a hermeneutical situation that draws this revelatory experience is the cultural expression *bahala na*.

*Bahala na*, as an experience, serves as a hermeneutical situation for some Filipino Catholics because they believe that it allows them to understand what God has to say to them or the future that He may hold for them. An example of this is the *Gulong-ng-Palad* worldview which projects one of the nuances of *bahala na*.<sup>38</sup> Considering the connotation suggested by the term *gulong* (wheel), it influences how Filipino Catholics perceive the notion of the Divine Plan. It forms a belief that the situation one is experiencing speaks on behalf of God, i.e., if things are presently bad, it is a manifestation that the situation will eventually get better; if things are presently good, it is a warning for the worse days to come.<sup>39</sup> *Bahala na*, in this case, becomes an expression that contains this revelatory experience for Filipino Catholics. However, this experience, in some ways, appears to be superstitious and tends to deviate from the Christian understanding of God's plan for humankind<sup>40</sup> because it "expresses a cyclical conception of life and history in contrast to the Judeo-Christian outlook that is linear."<sup>41</sup> If *bahala na* is revelatory, then it should communicate the truths of the Gospel rather than distort them. For this reason, Schillebeeckx's theological hermeneutics is employed to analyze the expression as a hermeneutical situation giving a proper reinterpretation of the Gospel message.

### ***Bahala Na*, A Distortion and Realization**

With Schillebeeckx's appropriation of the principles of new hermeneutics into his theological methodology, understanding biblical texts objectively is viewed as an undertaking that unfolds

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<sup>37</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *Interim Report*, 11.

<sup>38</sup> Cf., Casiño, "Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na," 85. This is discussed further below.

<sup>39</sup> Cf., José De Mesa, *And God Said, "Bahala Na!": The Theme of Providence in the Lowland Filipino Context* (Quezon City: Maryhill School of Theology, 1979), 88-89.

<sup>40</sup> Cf., Casiño, "Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na," 88.

<sup>41</sup> De Mesa, *And God Said, Bahala Na*, 89.

in history.<sup>42</sup> Alongside this historical development comes a number of preunderstandings conditioned by different contexts.<sup>43</sup> Filipino Catholics, as historical beings, exist in time and space, and it follows that drawing the message of the Gospel is a hermeneutical task that warrants understanding certain hermeneutical situations, such as the complexities of their tradition and culture.<sup>44</sup> As a Filipino expression, *bahala na* serves as a hermeneutical situation for it carries with it the tradition and culture through which the message of the Gospel has been interpreted and eventually passed on to generations of believers.<sup>45</sup> With this, the expression serves as an avenue ‘in time’ to pass on the interpreted meaning of the texts conditioned by a particular ‘space’ that provides different preunderstandings in the forms of the expression’s nuances and dynamics.<sup>46</sup> These preunderstandings make up *bahala na*’s theoretical or mental framework which, in effect, based on Habermas’s theory-praxis dialectics, manifests in human activities.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, Schillebeeckx adds to this that the relationship between theory and praxis is co-constitutive of knowledge itself,<sup>48</sup> i.e., while theory directs human activity, this theory has been informed by praxis realized historically. Hence, while *bahala na*’s theoretical framework influences Filipino Catholics’ practice of their faith, in retrospect, this framework has been informed and conditioned historically by their culture and tradition. Nevertheless, it has to be taken into account that these preunderstandings have the tendency of distorting, inasmuch as they could realize, the promises that the Gospel message entails. To have better analyses of how these preunderstandings affect this message, below is the discussion of the reinterpretation of the message according to Filipino culture and tradition.

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<sup>42</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, 24.

<sup>43</sup> Cf., *Encyclopedia of Theology: A Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, 2004 ed., s.v. “Hermeneutics”

<sup>44</sup> Cf., Hans-Helmuth Gander and Jeff Malpas, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Hermeneutics* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 118.

<sup>45</sup> Cf., Casiño, “Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na,” 86-87.

<sup>46</sup> Cf., Casiño, 83-86.

<sup>47</sup> See Rego, *Suffering and Salvation*, 89.

<sup>48</sup> See Rego, 100.

## On Suffering and Salvation: The Reinterpretation of the Gospel Message According to the Filipino Culture and Tradition

In employing Gadamer's fusion of horizons into his theological hermeneutics, Schillebeeckx makes a way to filter the understanding of the biblical concepts to identify the preunderstandings that could cause distortions and highlight those that could realize the message of salvation.<sup>49</sup> Thus, looking at the preunderstandings that surround *bahala na*, they show in certain ways how they influence the Filipino Catholics' understanding of their faith, specifically the notions of suffering and salvation, and consequently, prevent the realization of the Gospel message. To explore these influences, proceeding discussions are the reinterpretations of some biblical concepts, such as Divine Will, providence, and discipleship, according to *bahala na*'s nuances and dynamics.

### *Divine Will: 'Thy Will Be Done' vis-à-vis Fatalism*

The Christian concept that *bahala na* is commonly associated with is the notion of Divine Will which can be expressed in the prayer language 'Thy will be done' taken from the Lord's Prayer.<sup>50</sup> However, the meaning of the concept has been equated by Filipino Catholics to *bahala na*'s fatalistic nuance.<sup>51</sup> As Casiño observes,

The spread of Catholic Christianity in the Philippines did not correct the traditional fatalistic Filipino concept of *bahala na*. In many instances, Filipinos who have been converted to Christianity (whether Catholic or Protestant) retain the traditional concept of *bahala na*. Interestingly enough, many Filipinos have adopted the concept without critical objection and seem to interpret it as equivalent to the Christian notion of 'Thy will be done.'<sup>52</sup>

This understanding poses problems to the autonomy of human will and God's role in human suffering and salvation. Filipino fatalism which is portrayed in the *gulong-ng-palad* worldview implies that human will is irrelevant to the experience of authentic existence as human action means too little or nothing at all.<sup>53</sup> Hence, when it comes to the experience of suffering there is nothing Filipinos can do but embrace the experience

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<sup>49</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, 26-27.

<sup>50</sup> See Mt. 6:9-13.

<sup>51</sup> Cf., Casiño, "Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na," 86-87.

<sup>52</sup> Casiño, 86.

<sup>53</sup> See Casiño, 89.

for everything that is happening is destined by God.<sup>54</sup> Their actions or efforts are rendered meaningless as they have “resigned to the notion that they lack the power to counter-control the forces of the universe . . . saying, *Ito na talaga ang buhay ko* [This is indeed my lot].”<sup>55</sup> With this attitude, there is a tendency for some Filipino Catholics to presume that the suffering they experience in life is justified even if it puts them in dehumanizing situations.<sup>56</sup> Meaningless suffering, in effect, becomes inevitable and beyond the control of human will because a higher power is at play. In this context, *bahala na* implies that this higher power comes from the Divine Will. It is God who controls everything and it follows that every human situation, even a meaningless suffering, is willed by Him.<sup>57</sup> God, in this sense, appears to have become unfeeling and disinterested making his relationship with human impersonal. Filipino Catholics then live their life with absolute trust in the unmoving finality of the Divine Will abandoning themselves to fate and waiting passively on their fortunes or misfortunes.<sup>58</sup> According to Rhochie Matienzo, this is best observed during the feast of the Black Nazarene wherein one aims to be saved while ironically exposing oneself to risk because, in the end, the mute image of Christ decides on one’s fate anyway.<sup>59</sup>

Nevertheless, this is contrary to the Christian notion of Divine Will which interacts dynamically with human will within the boundaries of a covenant.<sup>60</sup> “As a moral relationship, God and believers bond in a covenant that allows the exercise of respective ‘will’.”<sup>61</sup> Without these dynamics, the Divine Will is presupposed to be static, making salvation predetermined and human will irrelevant.<sup>62</sup> In effect, human history is rendered meaningless to the history of salvation making it inconsistent with that of the Church’s teaching which requires the autonomy and

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<sup>54</sup> Cf., De Mesa, *And God Said Bahala Na*, 90.

<sup>55</sup> Casiño, “Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na,” 89.

<sup>56</sup> As mentioned above, according to Schillebeeckx, such kind of suffering is meaningless. Cf., Schillebeeckx, *Christ*, 724-725.

<sup>57</sup> Cf., De Mesa, *And God Said Bahala Na*, 90.

<sup>58</sup> Cf., Casiño, “Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na,” 86-89.

<sup>59</sup> See Rhochie Matienzo, “Revisiting the Philosophy of Bahala Na Folk Spirituality,” *Filocracia* 2:2 (2015): 94.

<sup>60</sup> See Casiño, “Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na,” 88.

<sup>61</sup> Casiño, 88.

<sup>62</sup> Cf., Catherine Punsalan-Manlimos, “Bahala Na and the Filipino/a Faith in God’s Providence,” *Asian Horizons* 10, no. 2 (2016): 344.

participation of human will.<sup>63</sup> Casiño states, “In the Judeo-Christian tradition, God relates himself to creation actively, purposively, and personally. In this manner, faith serves as the Christian’s response to the creative acts of the personal God in and through history. Christians understand faith as a ‘personal trust in God on the basis of knowledge’ of his will.”<sup>64</sup>

Consequently, this raises more questions about the will of God, i.e., what is His plan for humanity? Amidst the experience of suffering, is there a better place that awaits them? This query points to another biblical overtone of *bahala na* which is the notion of Divine Providence.

*Divine Providence and the Question of Human Responsibility vis-à-vis Overdependence and Mediocrity*

When it comes to the notion of Divine Providence, it is this particular passage from the Gospel of Luke that is usually quoted:

Notice the ravens: they do not sow or reap; they have neither storehouse nor barn, yet God feeds them. How much important are you than birds! Can any of you by worrying add a moment to your life-span? If even the smallest things are beyond your control, why are you anxious about the rest? Notice how the flowers grow. They do not toil or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of them. If God clothes the grass in the field that grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith.<sup>65</sup>

Casiño states that “God’s providential will forms the basis of order in the world, which is sensitive to human freedom and human responsibility. Human history has meaning, purpose, and direction when God’s will and human freedom come into active interplay and thereby maintain actual relations.”<sup>66</sup> It is to be noted then that the connection between human responsibility and one’s trust and dependence in God’s providential will go hand in hand. However, as stated in the *Catechism for Filipino Catholics* (CFC), “today our belief in God as the Creator of heaven and earth faces new challenges . . . (i.e.) if God creates and sustains everything, then *bahala na*, all is decided already. Or again,

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<sup>63</sup> Cf., Casiño, “Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na,” 89-90.

<sup>64</sup> Casiño, 87.

<sup>65</sup> Lk. 12:24-28.

<sup>66</sup> Casiño, “Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na,” 89.

even if God created the world at the beginning of time, what has that got to do with our opportunities and problems today.”<sup>67</sup> Divine Providence in the *bahala na* framework appears to speak of meaningless suffering as something that God has directly caused without any amount of human responsibility. That is why with the question of the existence of evil in this world, human will is presupposed to have nothing to do with it as everything is within the providence of the Divine.<sup>68</sup> This implies that everything depends on what God wills—a nuance of *bahala na* pointing to overdependence. Drawing the line between trust in God and overdependence, CFC speaks of *bahala na* as the latter. This is an attitude of trust in God that lacks the energy, discipline, and purpose needed for personal, familial, and national development. Hence, such an attitude is not an authentic trust in God, but a mistaken belief based on overdependence on a higher power which renders human effort unnecessary and useless.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, without human responsibility in the picture, one’s determination to achieve the good things in life, ultimately those that will lead to salvation, is useless. This, therefore, promotes an attitude of mediocrity among Filipino Catholics. They believe that even if they act passively or actively in life, ‘*talagang ganyan ang kapalaran*’ (There is nothing we can do about our fate),<sup>70</sup> they would just get the same result because it is God that defines their fate.<sup>71</sup> As a result, this nuance of *bahala na* develops a behavior of passiveness that cancels out one’s sense of responsibility and personal independence.<sup>72</sup>

With this complication, another problem arises, i.e., if the realization of human destiny discounts the necessity of human will and action to accomplish what God has planned, then this also discounts the value and relevance of Christian discipleship.

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<sup>67</sup> Catholic Bishop’s Conference of the Philippines, *Catechism for Filipino Catholics* (Manila City: Claretian Publications, 2005), no. 312.

<sup>68</sup> Cf., De Mesa, *And God Said Bahala Na*, 92.

<sup>69</sup> See *Catechism for Filipino Catholics*, no. 1158.

<sup>70</sup> See Tomas D. Andres, *Understanding the Filipino Values: A Management Approach* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1981), 132.

<sup>71</sup> Cf., Berniemack Arellano, “The Filipino Spirit is ‘Resilient’ or Is It an Excuse for Mediocrity,” *The Habagat Central* (Blog), August 14, 2018, <https://www.thehabagatcentral.com/2018/08/the-filipino-spirit-is-resilient-or-is.html>.

<sup>72</sup> See Andres, *Understanding the Filipino Values*, 132.

*Discipleship: Divine Concern and Human Commitment vis-à-vis Indifference*

*Veritatis Splendor* describes Christian discipleship as *sequela Christi* or the following of Jesus in the way he freely obeyed the will of the Father. In his obedience to this will, he exemplified how it is to be truly human becoming the primordial foundation of Christian morality, thus, informing one's judgment and action.<sup>73</sup> However, as mentioned above, *bahala na* projects a manipulative and superstitious form of belief that commits some Filipino Catholics to the control of the 'will' of supernatural forces—the belief that nonconformity to this will could result in misfortunes and bad events.<sup>74</sup> Hence, *bahala na* motivates one to act out of desperation and superstitions, rather than from an informed and firm belief that one's action is the right one.<sup>75</sup> As a result, this prevents an authentic Christian discipleship<sup>76</sup> because, first, it distorts the notion of the loving concern of the Divine Will.<sup>77</sup> De Mesa argues:

This, if left unchallenged, would make the image of God one of unconcern for the welfare of man; it would also characterize Him as a God who makes sure that the duties He has imposed on His creatures are followed, otherwise punishment shall be meted out. Another reason for the importance of elucidating this matter is the fact that God's will is salvific. It is not against man, it is for man . . . It is a will that wants to bring out the best of someone who wants to be a better person . . . It is a will that is ready to allow someone to make his own mistakes, and to forgive and to welcome him anew upon realizing his mistakes.<sup>78</sup>

This, therefore, shows that the future and the contingent events of history can be seen as products of the free actions of God and human, meaning, if the Divine Will, which points to God's loving concern for humanity, is acted upon by human will, then human history translates into salvific history. This is contrary to the history *bahala na* proposes, an enslaving cycle of karma or *suwerte* (luck or fortune), which implies

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<sup>73</sup> See *Veritatis Splendor*, 19.

<sup>74</sup> See Casiño, "Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na," 88.

<sup>75</sup> See Casiño, 87.

<sup>76</sup> Cf., Casiño, 83.

<sup>77</sup> Cf., De Mesa, *And God Said Bahala Na*, 133.

<sup>78</sup> De Mesa, 133.

that the Divine Concern is a mere product of human actions bribing God.<sup>79</sup>

Second, it follows that to speak of Divine Concern based on superstitions means that believers cannot act upon the Divine Will because they practically believe in a totally different God, i.e., one who wills someone's misfortunes if not pleased.<sup>80</sup> But against that, De Mesa explains that "God's will is salvific. It is not against man, it is for man. It is a will that says to a laborer who struggles for his rights as a human being, 'I am with you' (Mt. 1:23); it is a will that wants to bring out the best of someone who wants to be a better person (cf. Lk. 19:1-10); it is a will that is ready to allow someone to make his own mistakes, and to forgive and to welcome him anew upon realizing his mistakes (cf. Lk. 15:11-24)."<sup>81</sup>

Without the correct understanding of the Divine Will, one cannot essentially follow the footsteps of Jesus<sup>82</sup> because discipleship requires a commitment to the fulfillment of this Will.<sup>83</sup> In this context, whenever *bahala na* is evoked, Filipino Catholics act out of ignorance and are only motivated by their beliefs in karma and *suwerte*.<sup>84</sup> Their commitment is limited to what could bring fortune to their lives far from the very essence of following Jesus which involves meaningful suffering.<sup>85</sup> In effect, they grow apart from their true purpose and responsibility. *Bahala na*, therefore, inspires an attitude of indifference pulling Filipino Catholics away from actively participating in the salvific history, and develops a faith that is detached from the reality of life which, at some point, tolerates injustices that cause social ills and other meaningless suffering.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Cf., Casiño, "Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na," 89. "[God's will then is] unrestricted and cannot be curtailed by events in the world. God, in relation to human freedom, cannot be bribed but rather acts to fulfill the best for humanity." Ibid., 89.

<sup>80</sup> Cf., De Mesa, *And God Said Bahala Na*, 133.

<sup>81</sup> De Mesa, 133.

<sup>82</sup> Cf., Casiño, "Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na," 87.

<sup>83</sup> Cf., *Veritatis Splendor*, 19.

<sup>84</sup> Cf., Casiño, "Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na," 89.

<sup>85</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *Church*, 7.

<sup>86</sup> Cf., Casiño, "Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na," 84-85.



In the end, although it is within culture and tradition that Divine Revelation could find its experiential and interpretative elements,<sup>87</sup> *bahala na*'s biblical overtones alongside the preunderstandings that surround it have shown how they could distort the Gospel message. In this case, to make the reinterpretations consistent with the message, the expression's preunderstandings have to be filtered further through Schillebeeckx's rendition of negative dialectics also known as negative contrast experience.

### THE SALVIFIC EXPERIENCE: *BAHALA NA* AND THE EXPERIENCE OF NEGATIVE CONTRAST

History creates multiple situations and, therefore, develops multiple traditions. However, "the only legitimate development of tradition should be that which makes it possible for Christians today to also have access to that faith experience"<sup>88</sup> The observations discussed above have identified the traditions within Filipino culture that distort Christian concepts which prevent Filipino Catholics from having the fundamental basic experience of the Divine Revelation. Consequently, without this experience, this aspect of Filipino culture also prevents them from realizing the salvific experience brought about by the same revelation.

With Schillebeeckx's appropriation of negative dialectics into theological hermeneutics, he affirms that to access the fundamental basic experience of revelation, a universal human experience has to be identified and used as a hermeneutical situation for the reinterpretation of the text. Accordingly, this experience is found in the universality of meaningless suffering and how human protests against the experience, i.e., aiming at a situation wherein their *humanum* is no longer threatened.<sup>89</sup> So, despite the plurality of the preunderstandings surrounding *bahala na*, these hermeneutical situations could find unanimity in their attempt to face or challenge suffering as the Filipino expression is conditioned

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<sup>87</sup> Cf., Rego, *Suffering and Salvation*, 112-113.

<sup>88</sup> Cf., Boeve, "Divinising Experience," 210.

<sup>89</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *Understanding of Faith*, 64-65.

by and evoked during such negative experience.<sup>90</sup> They might all differ in emphasis; however, they all aim at alleviating Filipino Catholics from suffering which Schillebeeckx identifies as the experience of contrast.<sup>91</sup>

Nevertheless, Schillebeeckx finds limitations to what negative dialectics can do in eliminating suffering. He suggests that “protest is possible only where there is hope. A negative experience would not be contrast-experience, nor could it excite protest, if it did not somehow contain an element of positive hope in the real possibility of a better future.”<sup>92</sup> In this regard, the experience of negative contrast, therefore, warrants an assurance from the future, and in the context of the Gospel message, it is the hope-filled promise of salvation that has to be realized to ascertain the orthodox reinterpretations of the message.<sup>93</sup> Schillebeeckx writes,

When we allow this Christian factor to play in human experience, particularly in what I have called contrast-experiences whence the new moral imperatives spring forth, it becomes clear that the protest prompted by these negative experiences (“this cannot go on”) is also the firm hope that things can be done differently, *must* improve and *will* get better through commitment. The prophetic voice that rises from the contrast-experience is therefore protest, hope-inspiring promise and historical initiative. To put it accurately: what makes the protest and the historical decision possible is the actual presence of this hope, for without it, the negative experience would not prompt the contrast-experience and the protest. Thus the negative experience shows the primacy of this hope for a better future.<sup>94</sup>

In other words, this enterprise is a hermeneutics of praxis that directs *bahala na*, alongside the tradition and culture surrounding it, towards Christian praxis.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Cf., Lagmay, “Bahala Na,” 32-33.

<sup>91</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *Understanding of Faith*, 65.

<sup>92</sup> Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, 136.

<sup>93</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, 136.

<sup>94</sup> Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, 158.

<sup>95</sup> Cf., Lieven Boeve, Frederiek Depoortere and Stephen van Erp, eds., *Edward Schillebeeckx and the Contemporary Theology* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2010), 15.

## Towards Christian Praxis

Through the negative contrast experience, *bahala na* can become an avenue in re-actualizing the fundamental basic experience of the Divine Revelation which also assures the expression's consistency with the Gospel message. In terms of the inconsistencies, the fusion of horizons presented above gives a better understanding of how *bahala na* could distort Christian concepts and potentially prevent the realization of the promise of salvation. Applying points patterned from Schillebeeckx's theological hermeneutics of suffering, a path toward Christian praxis can be articulated.

First, to determine the orthodoxy of *bahala na*'s reinterpretations of the Gospel message, they should be directed to the future which is the realization of the promise. In other words, this promise is not simply to be reinterpreted according to the present culture and tradition, but such reinterpretations must realize something new in the lives and situations of Filipino Catholics.<sup>96</sup>

Second, this, therefore, reaffirms that theology is not purely theoretical, but a hermeneutics of praxis.<sup>97</sup> So far as *bahala na*'s framework continues to faithfully commit Filipino Catholics to the fulfillment of that future, this ensures the identity of the Christian faith alongside the preunderstandings that build this cultural framework.<sup>98</sup>

Thirdly, the assurance this future holds, which is yet to be actualized in the lives of the present believers, has already been realized in the life of Jesus.<sup>99</sup> In terms of theory-praxis dialectics, the orthodoxy is verified by the way *bahala na*'s framework is oriented towards Christian praxis because the Gospel message that the expression reinterprets is essentially informed by Jesus' salvific acts realized historically.<sup>100</sup> In short, for *bahala na* to translate with veracity the salvific experience of the revelation, its theoretical framework must, therefore, reflect and manifest emancipative traits.

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<sup>96</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, 36.

<sup>97</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, 37.

<sup>98</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, 42.

<sup>99</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *Understanding of Faith*, 65.

<sup>100</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *Understanding of Faith*, 66-67.

That is why, lastly, *bahala na*, as geared towards Christian praxis, must be oriented to two things: (a) to be made conscious of Filipino Catholics' meaningless suffering, and protest against it—a 'NO' to negative experience; and (b) to seek ways to emancipate them from such meaninglessness and recover their *humanum* which presupposes the historical realization of the promise—this is the contrast experience which is a 'YES' to a better future motivated by the hope informed by the Gospel.<sup>101</sup>

### The Filipino Catholic Emancipative Traits

As stated in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, "though independent of cultures, the Gospel and evangelization are not necessarily incompatible with them; rather they are capable of permeating them all without becoming subject to any one of them."<sup>102</sup> Schillebeeck's theological hermeneutics does not only identify through *bahala na* the distortions that Filipino culture and tradition bring to the Christian faith, but in the same manner, it reveals through the expression the way God's promise of salvation permeates the same culture and tradition. This is manifested through the positive traits *bahala na* projects such as courage, trust, commitment, and determination.

#### *The Hope: Bahala na as Courage and Trust*

On one hand, *bahala na* is commonly known for its fatalistic nuance because of what it presents as the future reducing it into a predestined situation.<sup>103</sup> Thus, it offers a kind of hope that is futile because it would mean that Filipino Catholics have no choice but to passively resign and wait for what the future holds for them. On the other hand, with the right orientation, *bahala na* turns out to be an expression of courage that does not only project Filipino Catholics' hope for a better future but an active kind of hope which is a responsive and responsible hope, meaning, this hope inspires the faithful to act upon the situation.<sup>104</sup> This is a Christian kind of hope. A prophetic hope grounded and realized in the saving acts of Jesus<sup>105</sup> which, in effect, serves as a calling for the

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<sup>101</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *Church*, 5-6.

<sup>102</sup> *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 20.

<sup>103</sup> See Mijares, "Bahala Na: A Filipino Response to Reality," 113.

<sup>104</sup> Cf., De Mesa, *And God Said Bahala Na*, 121.

<sup>105</sup> Cf., *Catechism for Filipino Catholics*, no. 436-437.

faithful to take an active role and respond to the present situation—such as the act of protest against injustice and dehumanization—in order to actualize the message of salvation.<sup>106</sup> Schillebeeckx speaks of this kind of hope through the contrast-experience which serves as a prophetic voice. This presents a hope that is informed by the promise and becomes real historically through human participation and commitment.<sup>107</sup> Hence, this is when human will and Divine Will work hand in hand. *Bahala na* as courage becomes an expression for Filipino Catholics to take on the responsibility of fulfilling what God has promised.<sup>108</sup>

With this orientation, *bahala na* as an expression of courage is also an expression of personal trust on the basis of Filipino Catholics' knowledge of the Divine Will.<sup>109</sup> The future may be uncertain, but with hope imbued with the promise of salvation, they trust that Divine Providence will take care of the future as much as they trust in their God-given capacity to surmount meaningless suffering.<sup>110</sup> As discussed above, God's providence as the basis of order in the world requires human responsibility.<sup>111</sup> So, while the fulfillment of salvation is transhistorical, Schillebeeckx affirms its historical dimension which points to the liberation of humanity from all kinds of meaningless suffering (e.g., socio-political and economic oppressions).<sup>112</sup> With this, Filipino Catholics should work hand in hand with Divine Providence to fulfill the destiny for which they were created,<sup>113</sup> i.e., for the emancipation of the *humanum* and the fulfillment of God's kingdom here and now.<sup>114</sup> God discloses His providential will to humanity "as the guide, framework, and potential for personal growth and creative possibilities in one's life. The grammar of this disclosure is the will of God, something that could be 'communicated to and acted upon by human beings.'"<sup>115</sup> In other words, salvation as both historical and transhistorical is expressed through *bahala na* as an acceptance of Filipino Catholics' capacity and

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<sup>106</sup> Cf., *Catechism for Filipino Catholics*, no. 440.

<sup>107</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, 158.

<sup>108</sup> Cf., Casiño, "Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na," 88.

<sup>109</sup> Cf., Casiño, 87.

<sup>110</sup> Cf., Mercado, *Filipino Theology*, 126.

<sup>111</sup> See Casiño, "Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na," 89.

<sup>112</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *Church*, 7.

<sup>113</sup> Cf., Gripaldo, "Bahala Na: A Philosophical Analysis," 205.

<sup>114</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *Understanding of Faith*, 65.

<sup>115</sup> Casiño, "Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na," 86.

responsibility coupled with confidence in the Divine Providence despite their human limitations.<sup>116</sup>

*The Praxis: Bahala na as Commitment and Determination*

With the understanding of the Divine Will, *bahala na* inspires human actions indicating a commitment to overcome meaningless suffering.<sup>117</sup> Without commitment, “*bahala na* cannot express the hopeful risk-taking that Jesus showed when he dared to face the consequences of his ministry up to his death on the cross. Jesus’ death on the cross was not simply a matter of fate. It was a free decision, a risk and a hope that by his death salvation would be offered to man.”<sup>118</sup> Hence, through commitment *bahala na* as a value also projects authentic Christian discipleship—an active response to the offer of salvation.<sup>119</sup> This can be expressed in the Filipino aphorism, “*Nasa Diyos ang awa; nasa tao ang gawa*’ (Mercy is God’s prerogative; work is human being’s responsibility).”<sup>120</sup> So, if the expression ‘*Bahala na ang Maykapal*’ is to be consistent with the notion of Christian discipleship, then it should express a deep trust in Divine Concern that actually calls for commitment to Filipino Catholics’ responsibilities as members of the Church and society as a whole.<sup>121</sup> Catherine Punsalan-Manlimos emphasizes on this commitment by saying that “*Bahala na* is an expression of faith, which names what Filipinos/as believe, in whom they trust, and to what they are committed. What appears initially as a throw away phrase is a glimpse of the *sensus fidelium*, the intuition of the faith of the Filipino/a that is shared with the whole church, that is, a belief in, trust in, and commitment to God, present and active in history.”<sup>122</sup>

Now, seeing *bahala na* as an expression of commitment in following Jesus, it, therefore, entails a calling for every Filipino Catholic to become stewards and practice compassion as best expressed in the Filipino word *malasakit*.<sup>123</sup> This makes the expression an evocation of a

<sup>116</sup> Cf., Punsalan-Manlimos, “Bahala Na and God’s Providence,” 344.

<sup>117</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, 158.

<sup>118</sup> De Mesa, *And God Said Bahala Na*, 122.

<sup>119</sup> Cf., Rebustillo, “Bahala Na: An Ordinary Theology,” *International Journal of Practical Theology* 22, no. 2 (1997): 240-241.

<sup>120</sup> Rebustillo, 241.

<sup>121</sup> Cf., *Catechism for Filipino Catholics*, no. 1159.

<sup>122</sup> Punsalan-Manlimos, “Bahala Na and God’s Providence,” 340.

<sup>123</sup> Cf., De Mesa, *And God Said Bahala Na*, 122.

binding covenant for them to take care of other people.<sup>124</sup> With *malasakit*, the expression becomes a Christian risk-taking drawing hope from Jesus himself who personally dared to risk his person out of concern for humanity. Hence, having an active concern for others, *bahala na* ceases to become an expression motivated only by superstitious and hopeless risk-taking.<sup>125</sup>

Consequently, *bahala na* as *malasakit* does not only motivate Filipino Catholics to act towards the elimination of meaningless suffering. It also allows them to see the deeper meaning of Christian discipleship through the experience of meaningful suffering, that just like Jesus, they would develop a determination to endure pain and suffering for the fulfillment of human destiny.<sup>126</sup> In the Filipino context, this is best expressed in the last line of the Philippine national anthem, ‘*Aming ligaya na pag may mang-aapi, ang mamatay nang dahil sa’yo*’ –loosely translated as “To vanquish the oppressors, we will joyfully offer our lives and die for you.”<sup>127</sup> This determination should enable Filipino Catholics to be committed to the emancipation of Filipinos from unjust social structures however difficult the path may be.<sup>128</sup> In view of this end oriented by the promise of salvation, *bahala na* projects that Filipino Catholics’ built-in mechanism of flexibility and resiliency<sup>129</sup> should not only depend on impulse or fortune. Rather, *bahala na* as determination is about making plans of action to achieve the intended end. This is then a move away from mediocrity, complacency, and unpreparedness.<sup>130</sup> In an interview, Filipino geologist and disaster-resilient expert Mahar Lagmay points out that resilience is not just about how Filipinos get through adversities, but it is a matter of how well have they planned to face such adversities. This includes working together by taking up their respective responsibilities.<sup>131</sup> Hence, with

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<sup>124</sup> See Casiño, “Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na,” 84.

<sup>125</sup> See De Mesa, *And God Said Bahala Na*, 124.

<sup>126</sup> Cf., De Mesa, 122.

<sup>127</sup> Ma. Ceres P. Doyo, “Ang Mamatay ng Dahil sa’yo,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer* (Blog), Feb. 25, 2016, <https://opinion.inquirer.net/93176/ang-mamatay-nang-dahil-sa-yo>.

<sup>128</sup> Cf., Lagmay, “Bahala Na,” 33.

<sup>129</sup> See Lagmay, 34.

<sup>130</sup> Cf., Casiño, “Filipino Folk Spirituality: Bahala Na,” 85.

<sup>131</sup> Cf., GMA Integrated News, “Need To Know: Bakit Hindi na Sapat Umasa sa ‘Filipino Resilience?’” Published November 21, 2020, video, 2:35, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rRMaZDqdHr0>.



determination, emancipating themselves from these situations requires Filipino Catholics to take up their role in the Church and society. In this sense, *bahala na* becomes an expression of accepting the demand of Christian discipleship which is carrying one's cross while following the example of Jesus.<sup>132</sup> It harnesses a sense of care and cooperation through the recognition of personal responsibility and independence<sup>133</sup> to achieve a future with more humanity and less dehumanizing tradition and culture.<sup>134</sup> So, Filipino Catholics, as part of the community who hopes, are capable of changing their situation into a better one.<sup>135</sup> As a result, '*talagang ganyan ang kapalaran*' can no longer be an excuse because there is actually something that they can do to take part in the history of salvation. In other words, based on Schillebeeckx's theological hermeneutics, *bahala na* serves as the link between the mystical and political dimensions of the Christian faith. The promise of salvation is, therefore, mediated to human experience through the Filipino Catholics' experience of negative contrast<sup>136</sup>—a realization of the *humanum* as the kingdom of God which is something that is already here but is not yet.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> See Mk. 8:34-35.

<sup>133</sup> Cf., Andres, *Understanding the Filipino Values*, 132.

<sup>134</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *Schillebeeckx Reader*, 56.

<sup>135</sup> Cf., Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man*, 182.

<sup>136</sup> Cf., Rego, *Suffering and Salvation*, 171.

<sup>137</sup> See Schillebeeckx, *Understanding of Faith*, 65.

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