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Emmaus

A JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND HUMANISTIC STUDIES

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Sacred Heart Seminary
Gozo - Malta

2009 - 2010
Year for Priests

Emmaus

A JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND HUMANISTIC STUDIES,
published by the Sacred Heart Seminary - Gozo - Malta.
Founded 1999

No 10 (2009-2010)

ISSN 1563-0137

Editorial Board:

Joseph Bezzina, Saviour Grima, Anthony Mizzi, Noel Saliba, Joseph Sultana, Trevor Sultana, Daniel Xerri.

All correspondence to be addressed to:

The Editor
Emmaus
Sacred Heart Seminary
Victoria VCT 2042
Gozo - Malta

Printed by Gozo Press - Malta

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JOSEPH SULTANA

KRISTU S-SAĊERDOT IL-KBIR: LHUD 4,14 – 5,10

Tradizzjonalment din l-ittra hija attribwita lil Pawlu. Imma meta niflu mill-qrib l-istesura taghha nintebhu li għandna quddiemna kitba li tiegħu forma aktar ta' omelija milli ta' ittra. Dan għaliex m'għandna l-ebda indirizz epistolari fil-bidu ta' din l-opra letterarja. Huwa biss lejn l-aħħar ta' din l-opra letterarja li nsibu nota konklużiva ta' natura epistolari li tixhed li din l-opra letterarja kellha tkun iċċirkulata qalb il-knejjes.

Din l-omelija tipproponi meditazzjoni fuq il-medjazzjoni unika u definittiva ta' Ġesù Kristu bħala l-Iben il-Waħdieni ta' Alla. Għalhekk il-misteru tal-Ghid huwa mistqarr fl-effikaċja tiegħu fil-hajja ta' dawk li jemmnu. L-awtur jagħmel dan kollu b' mod għal kollox ġdid għax jesprimi dan kollu b' kategoriji marbuta mas-saċerdozju, mas-santwarju u mal-offerta kif kienu jithaddmu fit-tempju ta' Ġerusalem. Għalhekk din l-omelija tipprezentalna meditazzjoni b'lingwaġġ għal kollox ġdid meta mqabbel ma' dak prevalenti fil-kerygma tal-bidu.

Id-destinatarji ta' din l-omelija huma Lhud-Insara li jinsabu f' mument ta' krizi, liema krizi hija frott tal-persekuzzjonijiet li kienu għaddejjin minnhom. Kienu persekuzzjonijiet frott ta' oppożizzjoni minn huthom Lhud kif ukoll persekuzzjoni oħra morali mnissla mit-tifkira passata tagħhom meta kienu għadhom jistqarru t-twemmin Lhudi. Dan ifisser li dawn il-Lhud-Insara kienu jharsu lura b' nostalgija u jiftakru fir-ritwali Lhud u l-għana tal-ġesti u s-simbolizmu tagħhom. Għalhekk din l-omelija tidher bħala tentattiv biex jiġi rkuprat dan kollu u jiddawwal, biex idawwal il-misteru ta' Ġesù Kristu. Hekk it-teoloġija u l-ispiritwalità mistqarra f' din l-omelija hija kollha kemm f' rabta mas-saċerdozju u mas-sagrificju.

M'ahniex ċerti mid-data ta' din l-omelija. Jekk inkitbet wara s-sena 70 WK, għandna fiha hjiel li dawn il-Lhud-Insara huma mhegġa biex ma jaqtgħux qalbhom quddiem din il-qerda tal-belt għażiża tagħhom, Ġerusalem il-qaddisa għax fi Kristu għandna saċerdozju ġdid b' offerta magħmula darba għal dejjem

għal kulhadd li gġib fix-xejn il-missjoni u l-benefiċċju li kellu t-tempju ta' Ġerusalem sa issa.

L-awtur jipprezentalna l-messjanizmu saċerdotali ta' Ġesù Kristu. Dan huwa aspekk għal kollox gdid fil-Kristologija kif ipprezentata mill-Vanġeli. Ġesù ma kienx minn familja saċerdotali u ma nsibu mkien fil-vanġeli li wettaq hidma jew ġesti saċerdotali. Għalhekk dan l-awtur Kristjan tal-ewwel seklju jibni din il-meditazzjoni fuq il-fidwa f' dimensjoni saċerdotali, waqt li jurina l-kontinwità u d-diskontinwità li hemm bejn is-saċerdozju tat-TQ u s-saċerdozju tat-TĠ.

Fis-silta Lhud 4,14 - 5,10 għandna l-introduzzjoni għal din it-tema li ser tkun żviluppata matul il-kumpliment ta' din l-opra letterarja. Nistgħu naqsmuha fi tlett taqsimiet:

Lhud 4,14-16: Thabbira tat-tezi li l-awtur sejjer jiżviluppa matul l-ittra flimkien ma' eżortazzjoni ta' natura parenetika.

Lhud 5,1-4: Profil tas-saċerdozju skont l-ordni ta' Aron (dan huwa konfermat mill-ahħar vokabolu tal-istess paragrafu).

Lhud 5,5-10: Profil tal-konsagrazzjoni ta' Kristu bħala saċerdot skont l-ordni ta' Melkisedek (dan huwa konfermat ukoll mill-ahħar vokabolu tal-istess paragrafu).

Is-saċerdozju fit-TQ għandu l-għeruq tiegħu fir-relazzjoni speċjali li l-poplu ta' Izrael kellu ma' Yahweh. Din ir-relazzjoni kienet titlob medjazzjoni, liema medjazzjoni kienet tithaddem u titfisser mis-saċerdozju. Għalhekk is-saċerdot kellu jkun mifhum bħala pont biex ipoġġi u jressaq flimkien lil Alla mal-poplu. Dan jidher ċar f' dak li nsibu f' Lhud 2,17: "Għalhekk kellu jkun jixbaħ lil hutu f' kollox biex ikun il-Qassis il-Kbir, hanin u fidil, f' dak li għandu x'jaqsam ma' Alla u biex ipatti għal dñubiet il-poplu."

Saċerdot hanin u fidil

Dawn iż-żewġ kwalitajiet mistqarri permezz ta' dawn iż-żewġ aġġettivi jikkonfermaw dak li qeġhdin nġhidu fir-rigward tas-saċerdozju għax jikkwalifikaw ir-relazzjoni ma' Alla u mal-bniedem, imma fl-istess waqt jesprimu diskontinwità ma' dak li kien meqjus rekwiżit mis-saċerdozju fit-TQ.

Ġesù huwa deskritt bħala saċerdot fidil fir-relazzjoni tiegħu ma' Alla. Ġesù huwa iben denn ta' missieru għaliex hadd u xejn ma firdu minn Alla lanqas

l-akbar prova li għadda minnha – il-mewt fis-salib. Fl-istess waqt huwa deskritt bħala hanin fir-relazzjoni tiegħu mal-bniedem. Din hija s-solidarjetà sħiħa li Ġesù wera lejn il-bniedem. Is-solidarjetà ta' Ġesù mal-midneb ma kelliex tkun waħda ta' komplicità imma għarfien fil-qrib tad-dgħufija tal-bniedem. Id-dnub qatt ma jiġġenera komunjonu u komprensjonu imma akkuża reċiproka. Ġesù qatt ma kien miftum mill-esperjenza personali tad-dgħufija tal-bniedem tant li qagħad għall-prova tat-tentazzjoni, tal-impotenza u tal-mewt. Dan huwa mistqarr tant tajjeb f' Lhud 2,18: “Għax billi hu stess bata u kien imġarrab, jaf jgħin lil dawk li huma fit-tigrib.” Hekk l-awtur iħassar l-oġġezzjoni ta' min jirraġuna li Ġesù għax huwa 'l fuq mill-angli (dan stqarru l-awtur fl-ewwel kapitlu) huwa differenti mill-bniedem u għalhekk mhux fi grad li jagħder id-dgħufija tagħna. Fi ftit kliem dawn iż-żewġ aġġettivi jgħaqqdu flimkien il-maestà ta' Alla u t-thaddim tal-ħniena lejn il-mard tal-bniedem, żewġ kwalitajiet li qatt ma nfirdu fil-ħajja ta' Ġesù Kristu u li mmeritawlu li jkun saċerdot kbir li jiżboq lil dawk ta' qablu.

Għalhekk il-medjazzjoni saċerdotali ta' Ġesù tinsab hawn: li poġġa flimkien dak li hu ta' Alla ma' dak li hu tal-bniedem. Għax kien mingħajr dnub baqa' b'konsegwenza dejjem marbut ma' Alla u hekk wassal lid-dinja l-mogħdrija ta' Alla fit-thaddim tas-solidarjetà lejn il-midinbin, li mingħajr biża' kien isejhillohom hutu.

Saċerdozju għal kollox ġdid

Din in-novità tixhed ruhha fid-diversi elementi ta' diskontinwità li johorġu minn Lhud 5,1-10. Is-saċerdozju tat-TQ kien jitlob tant żelu lejn Alla li kien ifisser li wiehed jinfatam mill-bniedem midneb. It-thabbrik tar-religjon Lhudija kien jikkonsisti f'li wiehed iwarrab il-midneb mill-komunità. Anke l-istess sistema saċerdotali kienet mibnija fuq is-separazzjoni. Dan jidher ċar meta giet imqassma l-art imwegħda fost it-tnax-il tribù ta' Izrael. Kull wiehed mit-tribujiet ha biċċa art imma t-tribù ta' Levi gie mħolli barra għaliex il-wirt ta' dan it-tribù kellu jkun Alla nnifsu u l-qadi tiegħu fit-tempju ta' Ġerusalem. Minn dan it-tribù ta' Levi giet magħzula r-razza ta' Aron biex minn din ir-razza giet magħzula l-familja ta' Sadok, biex eventwalment minn fost is-sadokiti jinħatru s-saċerdoti u fosthom anke s-saċerdot il-kbir. Nistgħu nġid li kien hemm diversi passaturi li wiehed kellu jgħaddi minnhom biex jasal biex jaqdi l-ministeru saċerdotali fit-TQ. Dan kollu kien jistqarr li wiehed qiegħed jintagħzel minn fost l-oħrajn biex ikun kollu kemm hu ta' Alla u bħala konsegwenza ma jkollux x'jaqsam mal-bniedem. Dan nistgħu niċċarawh jekk

niftakru fil-parabbola tas-samaritan it-tajjeb fejn ghandna saċerdot u levita li ma joqorbux lejn il-bniedem miġrub u miġrugħ ghaliex il-qadi tagħhom fit-tempju ma kienx jippermettilhom li joqorbu lejn il-miżerja tal-bniedem għax jitilfu l-idoneità tagħhom għas-servizz t'Alla.

Mhux hekk kellu jkun Ġesù. Is-saċerdozju tiegħu kien kollu mibni fuq solidarjetà shiħa mal-umanità midimba. Ma eskluda xejn minn dak kollu li jiffirma d-dramma tal-ħajja tal-bniedem. Lhud 4,15 tistqarr b'mod ċar: "Għandna wiehed li kien imġarrab bħalna f'kollox, minbarra d-dnub", u frott ta' dan "m'għadniex qassis il-kbir li ma jistax jagħder id-dghufija tagħna".

Dan kollu jservi ta' pedament biex l-awtur Kristjan jagħmel l-eżortazzjoni tiegħu lill-komunità ta' Lhud-Insara: "Ħa nżommu shiħa l-fidi tagħna u nistqarruha... Ħa nersqu, mela, b'qalbna qawwija lejn it-tron tal-grazzja, biex naqilgħu ħniena u nsibu f'waqtha l-grazzja li neħtieġu". Dan huwa l-mument opportun biex dawn il-Kristjani jagħmlu l-qalb għax qatt daqs dan il-mument il-medjazzjoni ma kienet tant effikaċi li tpoġġi lil bniedem wiċċ imb'wiċċ m'Alla fil-persuna ta' Ġesù Kristu.

L-Ordni ta' Aron u l-Ordni ta' Melkisedek

Element ieħor ta' diskontinwità bejn is-saċerdozju tat-TQ u dak ta' Ġesù Kristu huwa mistqarr mill-kelmiet skont l-ordni ta' Aron u skont l-ordni ta' Melkisedek. L-ewwelnett ordni mhix fis-sens ta' kmand imma bit-tifsira ta' format jew sura. Għalhekk għandna żewġ suriet ta' saċerdozju dak skont il-format ta' Aron u dak skont il-format ta' Melkisedek. F'Lhud 7,23 għandna mistqarr b'mod ċar li s-saċerdozju ta' Ġesù Kristu huwa skont Melkisedek u dan huwa "saċerdozju li ma jmut qatt". Melkisedek huwa persunaġġ li niltaqgħu miegħu f'Ġen 14,18 li jwettaq offerta ta' hobb u inbid f'isem Abraham bħala ringrazzjament lil Alla li kien sehħlu jehles lil huh Lot u l-ġid u l-familja kollha tiegħu. F'dan il-mument tan-nisġa tal-istorja tas-salvazzjoni ma kienx għadu sar il-patt tas-Sinaj u għalhekk dan is-saċerdot Melkisedek huwa aktar bikri u differenti minn dak ta' Aron. It-tradizzjoni Lhudija żammet li dan is-saċerdot Melkisedek li la nafu minn fejn ġie u lanqas it-tmiem tiegħu, kien saċerdot etern u mhux marbut mal-geneoloġija. Dan jagħmlu differenti minn dak ta' Aron li kien leġittimu dment li jkun hemm ir-rabta tad-dem. Dan ipoġġi f'kuntrastr is-saċerdozju ta' Aron li joriġina fil-bniedem u dak ta' Melkisedek li joriġina f'Alla.

L-awtur tal-ittra lil-Lhud jikkwota Salm 2 u Salm 110. Dawn iż-żewġ salmi jorbothom flimkien għax iħossu ffavorit jagħmel dan mill-interpretazzjoni regali li l-ermenewtika Lhudija kienet tattribwixxi lil dawn iż-żewġ salmi. Jikkwota salm 2,7: “Ibni, int jien illum nissiltek.” U wara jikkwota salm 110,4: “Int qassis għal dejjem skont l-ordni ta’ Melkisedek.” Jekk dawn iż-żewġ salmi jitkellmu t-tnejn mis-sultan, l-awtur jikkonkludi li ż-żewġ versi jistgħu jiġu applikati għal Ġesù Kristu. Għaldaqstant l-awtur jasal għall-konkluzjoni li Ġesù huwa saċerdot skont l-ordni ta’ Melkisedek. Dan ifisser li s-saċerdozju ta’ Ġesù Kristu m’għandux għeruq fil-bniedem għax Ġesù kien mit-tribù ta’ Ġuda u mhux mit-tribù ta’ Levi. Għalhekk is-saċerdozju ta’ Ġesù Kristu huwa saċerdozju perpetwu u etern, assigurat mill-halfa t’Alla li qatt ma giet mregġa’ lura. Hekk tiġi msahha mill-ġdid ir-raġuni għalfejn dawki li jemmnu fi Kristu għandhom jibqgħu b’qalbhom qawwija għax fi Kristu għandhom garanzija li jaslu għand Alla, frott tal-medjazzjoni eterna mwettqa fi Kristu saċerdot għal dejjem skont Melkisedek.

Il-konsagrazzjoni u l-offerta ta’ Ġesù Kristu

Element ieħor importanti li jiddistingwi s-saċerdoti tat-TQ minn Kristu bhala s-saċerdot il-kbir u “li hu tassew kbir” huwa l-mod tal-konsagrazzjoni tiegħu. Skont il-Levitiku, din il-konsagrazzjoni kienet issir permezz ta’ serje ta’ ġesti ritwali li jilhq u l-qofol tagħhom fl-offerta ta’ iġsma fuq l-artal. Ġesù ma jagħmel xejn minn dan kollu imma l-offerta tiegħu hija l-ħajja tiegħu nnifsu fil-mewt tiegħu. Hekk Ġesù jkun saċerdot u vittma fl-istess waqt. Is-saċerdozju ta’ Ġesù Kristu kien saċerdozju tal-qalb jiġifieri li jikkonvolġi l-ġewwieni l-aktar profond tal-bniedem, f’kuntrast mas-saċerdozju tat-TQ li qatt ma kien iħaddem il-qalb. Dan jidher ċar mit-testi tal-Levitiku li meta jitkellmu mis-saċerdoti qatt ma jitkellmu mit-thaddim tal-qalb fl-eżerċizzju ta’ dan is-servizz fit-tempju.

F’dan ir-rigward Ġesù laħaq il-perfezzjoni għax il-mument tal-offerta tiegħu fis-salib kien l-aktar mument li fih iħaddem il-qalb u l-inqas mument li fih wettaq ġesti ritwali. Il-konsagrazzjoni tiegħu bhala saċerdot il-kbir saret mhux frott ta’ riti esterni imma frott taċ-ċirkonċizzjoni ta’ qalbu meta ġie mogħti kollu kemm hu b’fidwa għall-kotra. L-ittra lil-Lhud tevoka b’mod ċar mumenti mill-passjoni ta’ Ġesù bhala l-quċċata tal-mixja tiegħu fl-umiltà u fis-solidarjeta lejn il-bniedem. Għandna referenza ċara għat-talba ta’ Ġesù fil-Ġetsemani kif ukoll l-ghajta tal-imsallab fil-mument tal-agunija u l-mewt tiegħu fis-salib. Ma nafux il-kontenut tat-talba imma l-awtur tal-ittra lil-Lhud jistqarr li din kienet

talba b'fiduċja totali u magħmula bi pjetà profonda. Għaldaqstant nikkonkludu li Ġesù lil Alla Missieru ma talbux biex jehilsu mill-prova imma li Alla jbidel it-tbatija f' mixja ta' salvazzjoni għall-bnedmin kollha.

Hekk huwa tharreg fl-ubbidjenza filjali u sar mudell tagħha. Dan ifisser li l-kollaborazzjoni tiegħu mal-pjan t'Alla kienet wahda qatt mxellfa u dan għamel li l-konsagrazzjoni saċerdotali tiegħu tkun perfetta (“u billi lahaq il-perfezzjoni”) jiġifieri li twettaq tabilhaqq il-medjazzjoni bejn Alla u l-bniedem.

Ġesù Kristu sar il-punt tal-laqgħa perfetta bejn Alla u l-bniedem: “Sar awtur tas-salvazzjoni ta' dejjem għal kull min jisma' minnu”. Il-mewt kienet tilfet il-qawwa tagħha fuqu u issa fl-ubbidjenza tal-fidi aħna stajna nipparteċipaw u jkollna sehem minn din is-salvazzjoni li l-ghejjun tagħha jinsabu fiH. Din il-medjazzjoni saċerdotali ta' Kristu saret għajn ta' rikonċiljazzjoni għall-bnedmin kollha. Hekk tiġi mistqarra l-effikaċja tas-sagrificċju tiegħu magħmul darba għal dejjem u għal kulhadd!

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CRISTOPHER CARUANA O.P.

IS CHRIST A PRIEST? INCARNATION AND PRIESTHOOD IN AQUINAS' CHRISTOLOGY

The Biblical Evidence

Aquinas tells us that Christ is the source of all priesthood.¹ Yet the Gospels make it quite clear that the early Church considered Jesus a prophet rather than a priest. Portraying John the Baptist as a genuine prophet they then point out that Jesus was far greater. They also portray his ministry as one of preaching the coming of the Kingdom of God witnessed by miracles just as had been the ministry of Elijah, type of all the Old Testament prophets.

The early Church was also concerned to show that Jesus was a king, a Messiah (Greek: *Christos*, the Anointed One), as is evident in the infancy narratives that trace his descent from David. He was to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies by being invested with the same authority conferred on David as king and on their successors by a ceremony of anointment. Privately accepting Peter's profession of him as the Christ (Mk 8:27-30; Mt 16:13-20; Lk 9:18-21) Jesus avoided a political understanding of his mission. This explains why he never made this claim for himself publicly nor did he permit the Twelve to do so. According to the Synoptics, even when asked by Pilate at his trial whether he was "the King of the Jews" (Lk 23:3), he replied, "You have said it", and remained silent. Yet according to the Johannine tradition (Jn 18:8-40) Jesus further explained this by saying, "My kingdom is not of this world".

Was Jesus Christ also a priest? Certainly, he was not a "priest", let alone a "High Priest", as Jews understood the term. His legal father, Joseph, was a member of the tribe of Judah, not of Levi from which the hereditary Jewish priesthood had to come (Mt 1:1-18; Lk 2:4-5; 3:1-38). Although his disciples and sometimes others addressed him as Rabbi, Master or Teacher, he had no official approval as such by the scribes. Was the lay status of Jesus a problem for early Christians? And if so why? Hebrews 7:14 certainly raises it:

¹ *Summa Theologiae*, III, q. 22, a. 4c, "Christus autem est fons totius sacerdotii"

“For it is evident that our Lord was descended from Judah, and in connection with that tribe Moses said nothing about priests.”

There is evidence in the Dead Sea Scrolls that at least some Jews of Jesus’ time expected both a “Messiah of David” and a “Messiah of Aaron” and perhaps thought of these titles as joined in one person. What really raised the question was the destruction of the Temple in 70 AC, an event that the Gospels claim was predicted by Jesus himself, so it may have been dreaded by the Jewish Christians even before it occurred. That destruction meant the end of the Old Testament sacrificial worship. How then, could the Christians, most of whom were still Jews, carry on adequate worship? Of course, the Jews had worshipped in the Exile before the rebuilding of the Temple. They continued to do so in the Diaspora before its fall, and that worship was continued among Jews without the Temple. But for Orthodox Jews this synagogue worship was always relative to that of the Temple in actuality or promised restoration when the Messiah comes.

For the Jewish Christians, since they believed Jesus was the Messiah, this imperfect worship without priestly rites could not be an adequate answer. The urgency of this question may not be evident to us today because we are used to a separation of church and state. In the ancient world, however, the idea that a nation could exist without its gods and, therefore, without a priesthood to carry on their worship, was unthinkable. It is to this precise question that the Epistle to the Hebrews gives the only explicit and revealed answer that we will ever have, and its answer is unambiguous.

The Letter to the Hebrews quickly gained importance in the Church’s Biblical Canon because it forcefully argues on the basis of many Old Testament references that (1) Jesus Christ is the Son of God superior to all creation; (2) yet he is also truly human; (3) therefore, as the Christ, he is our mediator. He is the only true priest, and indeed the High Priest, who is able with us and for us to offer himself to God as a worthy sacrifice and thus bring us the gift of salvation from God, the Father.

Apart from establishing Jesus’ right to the official dignity of a High Priest since many of the high priests of recent memory had been less than worthy, the Letter to the Hebrews praises him as supremely fitted for that office. He is a High Priest who is faithful, sympathetic to his people, merciful, holy, blameless, in solidarity with human suffering, and his priesthood will endure

for ever. This permanence of Jesus' priesthood results from his resurrection and ascension to immortal life (7:23-24; 4:14). Thus he anticipates our own eternity with God and is its forerunner (12:2), leader and pioneer (2:10).

Isn't, however, the teaching of Hebrews isolated from the rest of the New Testament doctrines, thus making its teaching atypical? This doubt can be answered by referring to important passages elsewhere in the New Testament which, although less explicit and extensive than the thesis of Hebrews, support it. Thus, although the authentic epistles of Saint Paul and the Synoptics never speak explicitly of Jesus as priest, they carefully narrate his solemn words and actions at the Last Supper. There he commands the Twelve to imitate him by continuing in perpetuity the performance of a sacred rite, the Eucharist. Moreover, this rite is sacrificial and hence specifically priestly since he says, "This is my body that is for you". "This cup is the covenant in my blood. Do this, as often you as you drink it, in remembrance of me." In 1 Cor 10:21 Paul also says: "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons." In the preceding verse he uses the terms *thusia* (sacrifice) and *thusaterion* (altar of sacrifice) to emphasise that an analogy between the pagan ritual and the Eucharistic meal is being made. Certainly these many references demonstrate that the early Church understood the Last Supper as a cultic, priestly act on Jesus' part to be continued as a central practice in the Christian community.

Moreover, in Paul's epistles, the *leiturgos* and its cognates are usually used in a cultic sense and Paul seems to be thinking of his own ministry as a share in the sacrificial offering of Christ. Thus in Philippians 2:17 he writes, "But even if I am being poured out as a libation (*leitourgia*) over the sacrifice (*thousia*) and the offering (*leitourgia*) of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you". Again he writes, "I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Rm 12:1). He also uses this language for an exchange of gifts with the Philippians by which they have supported him financially because he had given them the gospel. He calls their gift "a fragrant aroma", "an acceptable sacrifice (*thousia*) pleasing to God". Paul again uses the term *leiturgia* for his collection of money as a ministry to the Jerusalem church in Rom 12:27 and 2 Cor 8:12. Similarly, Luke, in Acts 12:2-3 uses a cognate to describe Christian worship in the Church of Antioch: "While they were worshipping (*leitourgounton*) the Lord and fasting the Holy

Spirit said, ‘Set me apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work which I have called them’. Then completing their fasting and prayer, they laid hands on them and sent them off”.

Perhaps even more significant is the use of the term temple (*hieron*) to refer to Christ himself. A principal accusation against Jesus at his trial was that he had declared he would destroy the Temple. Mark and Matthew call it a false accusation, but John says that the disciples after the resurrection remember that he had in fact said this when he cleansed the Temple, “But he was speaking about the temple of his body”. Furthermore, St. Paul and the Deutero-Pauline epistles speak of the Church as the body of Christ (1 Cor and Col 1 for instance). Hence God dwells in Christians as in a temple. Thus it should be clear that Hebrews is not an isolated work in the New Testament but takes up and elaborates themes current in the apostolic Church that concur with its central argument that the death of Jesus is the one true sacrifice that can take away sin. Therefore, Hebrews elaborates a common New Testament theme when it declares that Jesus is the one and the only true High Priest of whom the Levitical priests of the Old Testament were prophetic types.

Why does Aquinas consider Jesus to fulfil the role of “priest”?

Let us now turn to examine Aquinas’ theological treatment of Christ’s priesthood in his Commentary on the Letter to the Hebrews before reflecting on his more systematic presentation in the Third Part of the Summa Theologiae. As one would expect, Aquinas brings to his analysis a number of doctrinal presuppositions about Jesus and lacks our knowledge of the Second-Temple context in which the Gospels were written. Nevertheless his theology of Christ’s priesthood – together with his docility to Sacred Scripture – still has much to offer to contemporary theology about Jesus’ “priestly” role.

The themes Aquinas considers to be most pertinent to his discussion of Christ’s priesthood in the Hebrews Commentary are directly related to his concerns about the mystery of Christ’s Incarnation and the saving effects of his passion and death, of which the Church is the greatest and most enduring fruit. Thus when commenting on Hebrews 5:7 he succinctly observes that,

“...when he says, Who in the days of his flesh, etc., he shows that what pertained to the priestly office (*officium pontificiale*) befit Christ. And first, he shows his condition; second, His act, when he says, prayers; third, His

efficacy, when he says, with a strong cry and tears. His condition was that he was one of men since, as has been said, a priest is taken from among men. And so he says, Who in the days of His flesh. Here his flesh is given for the whole human nature, since according to Jn 1:14: And the Word was made flesh.”²

Now Aquinas is fully aware that it is problematic to attribute priesthood to Christ. Isn't Jesus Christ, after all, the “Son... appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the world... He is the reflection of God's glory and the exact imprint of God's very being, and he sustains all things by his powerful word” (Heb 1:2-3)? Now priests are essentially ministers, a service rendered to God and to people. This is quickly pointed out by Thomas in his Commentary Prologue:

“Priests are said to be gods because they are ministers of God: “You, priests of the Lord, you will be called ministers of God (Is 61:6). But the Christ is even more so a God, because he is not a minister, but “The Lord of all things” (Est 13:11), “Lord of lords” (Ap 19:16), Lord “over all his household” (Heb 3:6).

The priesthood, no doubt, carries with it great dignity, since it confers a state of excellence on its bearer. Moreover, it is one of the highest dignities in virtue of belonging to the religious domain which itself provides a vertical direction in as much as it deals with relations between God and humans. Yet, the attribution of priesthood to the Son of God, Lord of the Universe, raises a theological problem which does not exist in the case of other titles such as king, judge or teacher: the very notion of priest implies service and, hence, inferiority.³

The priest's situation is, thus, one of subjugation to God and is directly related to cult. On the contrary, he who governs is also judge and sits on a throne in majesty. Commenting on Heb 10:11 – “And every priest stands day after day at his service, offering again and again the same sacrifices that can never take away sins” – Aquinas affirms that Christ sits on a throne not as a minister, in the manner of a priest who is disposed according to the norms of the Law but, rather, as Lord.⁴ Thus, notes Aquinas, the high priest could enter the holy of holies, before the Tabernacle which contained the Law and which signalled the presence of God in the midst of his people.⁵

² In Hebr. 5, 7, n. 253-254

³ Cfr. Ps 44, Heb 1: 8; In Hebr. 1:8, n. 60

⁴ Cfr. Ps. 109,1, Mk 16: 19; In Hebr. 10:11

⁵ In Hebr. 9:5

The apparent contradiction derived from the attribution of a subaltern office such as the priesthood to the Son, the eternal Word and Lord of the Universe, may be surmounted if located within the mystery of the Incarnation and, particularly the Passion of Christ. For according to the Christian faith, in the mystery of the Incarnation the Son suffered for the salvation of humans, became a true servant, he was among the angels and at the right hand of God, became the least among men.⁶ To affirm that Christ is priest, therefore, is semantically faithful to the theology of his humbled condition within the mystery of his Passion. Mention of the Passion seems to support the intention of the author of Hebrews to show his readers the superiority of the New Alliance inaugurated by Christ in relation to the First.

This is why, Aquinas remarks, the author underlines the *minoratio*, literally the belittlement suffered by Christ's humiliation during his Passion, rather than seek to establish that he is greater than angels.⁷ In fact, according to this doctrine, it would appear that,

“Here it must be known that by the order of nature, corruptible and passible things are lesser than incorruptible and impassible things. The angels, however, are impassible and immortal according to nature. Wherefore, when Christ deigned to undergo his Passion and death, he was made lesser than them, not that he lost his fullness, or was diminished in something, but he took to himself our littleness (*parvitatē nostram sibi assumpsit*). And this is signified in Lk 22:43, where it is said that the angel of the Lord appeared to him, strengthening him, not that he needed him, but that he might show that he was made lesser than them through his Passion.”⁸

No loss of being or nature, hence, occurs in the Christological mysteries of the Incarnation and Passion. What has occurred, rather, is the mysterious assumption of human nature within the life of God, in all its extreme misery as suffered in such a Passion as that of Jesus Christ.

According to Aquinas, in considering Christ as priest, the author of Hebrews highlights how the humiliation or belittlement voluntarily undertaken by

⁶ In Hebr. 2:9: “Haec minoratio non est intelligenda in Christo nisi propter passionem mortis. Nec est mirum quia quantum ad hoc non solum angelis, sed etiam hominibus est minor”.

⁷ In Hebr. 2:9, n. 121: “Istud autem videtur repugnare suo principali intent quo scilicet intendit Christum praeferre angelis. Et ideo hoc in parte ista diffusa exponit.”

⁸ In Hebr. 2:7, n. 109

Christ in his Passion actually adds to his human excellence. Fully deserving bodily exaltation in glory, this mystery recognises Christ's role as perfect mediator of the new and definitive pact with God.⁹ According to the Letter to the Hebrews, in the first passage which makes reference to the priesthood of Christ (2:17-18),

“...he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.”

In Thomas's view while commenting on this text, by his Passion Christ became “merciful and faithful high priest” not because any disposition in him underwent some change or other – God “knows well what we are made of” (Ps 102:14). Rather, this served, in the first place, as proof of his mercy and his trustworthiness, the Passion being an extreme experience of our misery, “Christus potissime in passione expertus est miseriam nostram” and thus indefeasible witness to his unwavering compassion for us. Secondly, it was through his glorious and obedient humanity that Christ exercised his mercy, a humanity nonetheless marked with the stigmata of the crucifixion. For this God established him as judge over all the human race and, Aquinas reflects, “... in a judge what is most desired is mercy.”¹⁰ But here it is worth reading Aquinas's text itself:

“But was he not merciful from all eternity?... It must be said that mercy (*miseratio*) is said as if it were “a heart miserable over another's mercy” (*miserum cor super aliena miseria*), and this is in two ways. In one way through apprehension alone, and thus God apprehended our misery without suffering... In another way, through experience, and thus Christ most powerfully experienced our misery in His Passion. And thus it said that he who was merciful through the apprehension of our misery, was made merciful through experience”.

Note that on this reading God's judgment entrusted to Christ cannot be other than an act of mercy since Christ is simultaneously judge and advocate.

⁹ Cfr. In Hebr. 2:9: “Videmus Jesum propter passionem mortis Gloria et honore coronatum; Propter passionem mortis quae fuit causa illius exaltationis: Propter quod et Deus exsultavit illum”; In Hebr. 9:15: “Novi Testamenti mediator est ut morte intercedente in redemptionem...repromissionem accipiant qui vocati sunt aeternae haereditatis”.

¹⁰ In Hebr. 2:17-18, n. 152

He is judge in that God desires to be totally persuaded by him, “faithful advocate”. He “became merciful” in that human beings know that they can place their complete trust in his intercession before God. According to Aquinas’ explanation, Christ is thus our almighty celestial intercessor with the Father, whereby he presents a faithful and redeeming case for us before him, “*assistit vultui eius pro nobis*”. It is in this sense that Christ is shown to be high priest in the Letter to the Hebrews. In the act of offering up his life on earth Christ is priest, since, as Hebrews reminds us, “For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices” (8:3). If Christ is a priest, it is necessary that he have something to offer: “he offered up himself”.¹¹

This offering of himself Christ accomplished through his Passion but Aquinas points out that his entire life was addressed to this ultimate act of pure gift of self. The *raison d’être* of his life was the Passion. This analysis is also applied by Aquinas to the text in Hebrews 10:5-9,

“When Christ came into the world, he said, ‘Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, “See, God, I have come to do your will, O God” ‘You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt-offerings and sin-offerings”

Thomas takes “Body” as an explicit reference to the mystery of Christ’s Incarnation, whereas the sacrifice being offered up according to God’s will is the act of pure obedience and oblation offered up in his Passion and Death. He also observes that in the first part of the quote implies God’s disavowal of the Old Testament and the latter part is intended to show the approval of the New.

“Then when he says, ‘Then said I,...’, he proceeds with the approval of the New Testament. According to the Gloss it reads thus: Then, namely, when Thou had fitted a body for me in conception, said I: Behold I come, that is, I propose to come to the Passion... Or better, this refers to his coming into the world thus: Then, namely, when the holocausts did not please thee, said I: Behold I come through the Incarnation... and to offer myself for the Passion.”

This is meant to show the resolution displayed by Christ, shown from the moment of conception, to embrace his Passion. According to Thomas, this Psalm clearly states that final cause of the Incarnation is the Passion.

¹¹ In Hebr. 8:3

The Word was made flesh in order to offer up its humanity in the Passion. If Christ was not a priest if not within the context of his Passion, according to Aquinas – and for this same reason a member of the human race – his priesthood does not have any life-giving power if not that derived from his nature as the Son of God. Only this priest who is the Incarnate Word gives justifying grace. This is of course why Christ alone is the true priest, the others being so only in a secondary, derivative manner, they being at the service of the one true priest. As priest, affirms Aquinas, Christ is unique within his species since he “holds his priesthood permanently, because he continues forever” (Heb 7:24). Commenting on this text he says,

“Just as in natural things which are signs of spiritual things, we see that incorruptible things are not multiplied under the same species; wherefore, there is only one sun; so in spiritual things, in the Old Testament, which was imperfect, priests were multiplied. And this was a sign that that priesthood was corruptible, since incorruptible things are not multiplied in the same species, as was said; but this priest, namely, Christ, is immortal. For he remains for all eternity, as the eternal Word of the Father, from whose eternity also redounds into his body, since Christ, rising again from the dead, dies no more, as is said in Romans 6:9. And therefore, he holds an everlasting priesthood. Thus, only Christ is a true priest; others, however are his ministers. Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ.”¹²

The figure of Melchisedek in Genesis carrying with it the name of father and mother, birth and death, announced the priesthood of Christ, his virginal conception, his eternal generation of the Word and the assumption of his humanity in eternity after the Resurrection. Through this figure were preannounced the uniqueness and transcendence of the priesthood of Christ, annulling the priesthood of the Old Law and instituting that of the New Law. As Son of God made flesh in the virginal womb of Mary, Christ could offer himself up as a holy victim, that is, in consecration to God, from conception; such a victim being innocent of any sin, with perfect integrity and blameless, him who is the spotless lamb, he was separated from all sinners not in isolation but in being essentially holier and thus radically different.¹³

¹² In Hebr. 7:24, n. 368

¹³ In Hebr. 7:26, n. 375

Further theological considerations on the priesthood of Christ

Aquinas' Commentary on the Letter to the Hebrews establishes the reasons behind the perfection and fullness of Christ's priestly office faithfully following the arguments of the Biblical text. As is to be expected the *Summa Theologiae* takes up the nature of such office in a more systematic way, with the same major concerns, however, guiding the themes of his investigation. This is done in Question 22 of the *Tertia Pars*. In fact nothing is found about the subject in the *Prima Pars* and, apart from some cursory allusions in the *Prima Secundae* nothing at all the *Secunda Pars*. In the *Tertia Pars* the terms *sacerdos* and *sacerdotium* are to be found mentioned fifty-six times in connection with Christ, though these are all in the context of Aquinas' discussions on sacramental theology or on the ministerial priesthood as instrument of Christ's action. It is only in Question 22 that the topic of *sacerdotium Christi* is explicitly taken up.

Once again the true significance of the mystery of the Incarnation is at the core of the discussion on Christ's priesthood. As Herbert McCabe OP once wrote,

“Jesus was eternal Son of God and as God he could not die, could not leave us (if he did we would vanish into nothing for he is our creator who keeps us in being for every moment as a singer keeps her song in being). As God, Jesus could not die. But neither could he be born, neither could he be with us to share our sufferings and joys.”¹⁴

The main objections against Christ's priesthood tackled by Aquinas in Question 22 all stem from a position which seeks to undermine in some way or other the reality of his incarnation. The first reason why the objector claims the Messiah should not be priest is that – as the Letter to the Hebrews itself asserts in 1:7 – Christ is far greater than the angels. And in Zechariah 3:1 it is clear that the angel is greater than Joshua the high priest of the temple. The angel offers no sin-offering or cultic worship. The implication is that the Messiah, too, would stand above the kinds of cultic offerings the high priest of Israel was consecrated to offer, if the Messiah is far greater than the angels. To say that the Messiah was priest would be to relegate him to the cultic sphere to which the high priests who offered bloody sacrifices belonged.¹⁵

¹⁴ *God Still Matters*, Continuum (2002), pg. 227

¹⁵ *ST*, III, q. 22, a. 1, obj. 1

The second objection points out that that the priesthood and the sacrificial cult belonged to the Old Law which only prefigured the New Covenant heralded by the Messiah.¹⁶ Therefore, Christ cannot be priest because the realities in the Old Testament that prefigured him are surpassed in the New. Moreover, Aquinas himself points out with the objector, it is significant that Christ did not descend from the tribe of Levi, to which the hereditary Old Testament priesthood belonged. Since Christ is something entirely new, his deeds could not rightly be described as “priestly”, since this would be to draw him once more into an obsolete institution and to confuse the figure with the reality.

Our objector then refers us to the longstanding distinction between lawgivers and priests under the Old Covenant.¹⁷ Thus Moses was lawgiver whereas his brother Aaron was priest, as we find in Exodus 28. Such an institution was surely set up by God to reveal something about the Messiah whose mission it was to fulfil and transform the Law of Israel. In fact the prophecy given by the Jeremiah (31:33-34), that God will act as lawgiver, but this time will inscribe his law in the very heart of each member of Israel, renders the cultic sphere redundant. The actions of the lawgiver will suffice to accomplish the forgiveness of sins and the restoration of a holy people with whom God dwells intimately. If the new lawgiver is greater than Moses himself, who needs a new and greater Aaron? Aquinas concludes that since “Christ is the giver of the New Law, it is unfitting that he should be a priest”.

Aquinas has ample resources to meet these objections from the Commentary to the Letter to the Hebrews briefly signalled earlier on. In the present context, he finds it expedient to first offer a definition of priestly ministry since the attribution of the title “High Priest” to Christ in Hebrews 4:14 offers us none: “The office proper to a priest is to be a mediator between God and the people: to wit, inasmuch as he bestows divine things on the people, wherefore *sacerdos* [priest] means a giver of sacred things [*sacra dans*].”¹⁸ Such mediation is accomplished in two ways. The first consists in the communication of divine instruction or teaching. The second manner involves the mediation of human offerings to God, both thanksgiving/praise/petition offerings and sin offerings.

Now the very act of offering gifts and sacrifices is an exercise in divine providence because all comes from God in the sense that he creates and sustains

¹⁶ Ibid., q. 22, a. 1, obj. 3

¹⁷ ST, III, q. 22, a. 1, obj. 3

¹⁸ Ibid., q. 22, a. 1

everything in being. Such offerings do not bring about a change in God but rather in those who offer vis-à-vis God. God gifts us by enabling us to offer our gifts to him. In turn, our sacrifices to God aim to restore us to justice and holiness, so that we can dwell with God. This is what the Letter to the Hebrews means by fullness of the priestly office – namely, mediating God’s gifting and the people’s participation in this gifting – and Christ, says Aquinas, fulfils this office most perfectly. The Levitical priests taught the Torah and offered sacrifices on behalf of the people, whereas Christ mediates the divine gifts to us both by his teaching and by his offering of the perfect sacrifice on the Cross.

Through his priesthood, human beings become “partakers of the divine nature” and are reconciled to God. This is why Christ, as Aquinas has already affirmed in his Commentary, is the perfect priest. Indeed, he is the only priest who can accomplish the mediation of divine gifting – healing and deification – that God wills to bestow. Because of who Christ is – thus the centrality of the Incarnation – he is able to mediate these divine gifts through his human actions. The Letter to the Hebrews highlights the efficacy of this mediation, which far exceeds what a merely human, and thus sinful and weak, priest could achieve.

Let us now get back to the three objections raised against the reality of Christ’s priesthood. The first objection is based on the classical hierarchical structure provided by the Pseudo-Dionysius and which dominated medieval ecclesiology. The question in this context is, how could Jesus, as a human priest, possess more hierarchical power than the angels, as Hebrews claims? Aquinas argues that by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which transformed his human nature, Christ received a hierarchical power to teach, heal and uplift that surpassed angelic nature. In fact, “Christ was greater than the angels, not only in his Godhead, but also in his humanity, as having the fullness of grace and glory.”¹⁹ The Holy Spirit, whom in the first part of the Summa Aquinas names as “Love” and “Gift”, bestows hierarchical power upon Christ. This power is the power to mediate divine gifting, divine love. The Holy Spirit makes Christ’s human nature greater than any graced angelic nature through the excellence of the degree of transformation of his human nature.

Moreover, in Aquinas’ view, Christ “had the hierarchical or priestly power in a higher degree than the angels, so that even the angels were ministers of his priesthood.”²⁰ This suggests that the extent to which the Holy Spirit is

¹⁹ *ST* III, q. 22, a. 1, ad 1

²⁰ *Ibid.*

the source of Christ's power makes our understanding of priestly power far different from any other. Now the Letter to the Hebrews states that Jesus "for a little while was made lower than the angels," whereby Aquinas observes in the same discussion that Jesus' passibility makes him like "those wayfarers who are ordained to the priesthood."

The remaining two objections are answered by showing how the mystery of Christ humbling himself in assuming human nature though he was divine, can withstand "power as domination" – since hierarchical power has earlier on been defined as the mediation of kenotic divine gifting. The answer is to be found in Christ's cross. True hierarchical power will accomplish its work of mediation because it is stronger than the most devastating abuses that worldly power, the distortion of love and gift, can devise. If this were not so, the forgiveness of sins would lose its warrant. Thus Aquinas can differentiate Christ's priesthood from that of others because Christ "has the perfection of graces" – thereby holding that he stands above the Old Testament priesthood and unifies in himself the offices of priest, prophet, lawgiver and king.²¹ Worldly power will thus not render Christ's mediation through the offering of himself, powerless. On the contrary, as Saint Paul puts it, "where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 5:20-21).

Christus fons totius sacerdotii

How is Christ the source of all priesthood? What are the beneficial consequences for humanity obtained through this unique mediator? The Letter to the Hebrews tells us that,

"When Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come,²² then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing eternal redemption. (Heb 9:11-12)

The eschatological dimension of Christ's priesthood is one of the more salient themes enthusiastically picked up by Aquinas in his reading of Hebrews

²¹ *ST* III, q. 22, a. 1, ad 2 & 3

²² In a footnote the RSV here notes that other manuscripts read good things to come; Aquinas had this latter version of the verse.

and which is carried on in the discussion of the Summa. Christ's priestly action inserts time (created and fallen, and in Christ redeemed and elevated) into divine eternity, into the Trinitarian life of God. Christ's priestly action thus marks the everlasting presence of God among his people and, in post-exilic terms, YHWH's permanent return to Zion. Thus in the fifth article of Question 22, Aquinas takes up the question, "Whether the priesthood of Christ endures forever", the issue behind this question being that after Christ's death and resurrection little seems to have changed, thus posing a problem for an "eschatological" understanding of Jesus' words and deeds.

Aquinas puts the question more sharply when he argues that the eschatology of the Hebrews text cited ought to read in the context of the "eschatological day" announced by Zechariah (14:1). So if Christ's priestly action constitutes a "continuous day", does this also imply a mediation of the divine gifting that endures forever? Thomas is fully aware of certain potential objections to this position. For instance if "those alone need the effect of the priesthood who have the weakness of sin"²³ then Christ's priesthood has no relevance in eternity since the blessed have been redeemed from concupiscence and the damned no longer benefit from priestly expiation.

The other two objections are similarly based on a purely historical consideration of Christ's priestly action. Jesus is priest as a man, not as God, the objector says. Since he dies no longer and instead enjoys eternal life there is no room or need for other priestly actions. Moreover as God he can act directly in the bestowal of divine gifts in an unmediated fashion. A further point is that for three days, Jesus' body and soul were separated in death and one cannot call any of them "man" separately. During this period Christ could not have acted as priest and thus his priestly act does not instantiate a "continuous day", but instead marks a historical rupture, whatever its other effects.

Aquinas replies by saying that "The Saints who will be in heaven will not need any further expiation by the priesthood of Christ" and "Christ's passion and death are not to be repeated."²⁴ There are also other texts which show that according to Aquinas the fullness of the *eschaton* is not marred by death, nor does it require Christ's ongoing suffering.²⁵

²³ *ST III*, a. 5, obj. 1

²⁴ *ST III* *ibid.* ad 1 and 2

²⁵ See for instance, *ST III*, q. 49, a. 5

Thomas goes on to discuss the eternal duration of Christ's priesthood by focusing on its effects for humanity:

“In the priestly office, we may consider two things: first, the offering of the sacrifice; secondly, the consummation of the sacrifice, consisting in this, that those for whom the sacrifice is offered, obtain the end of the sacrifice.”²⁶

Keeping to his account of causality, Aquinas thinks that the goal of the action inheres in the action itself; likewise, when the goal is achieved, the action that brought about the goal is not lost, but instead shares in its completion or consummation. The consummation of Christ's priestly life is eternal life. Eternal life, therefore, belongs to Christ's priestly action as its goal, and in this sense Christ's priesthood endures forever. In this context of the reply to the first objection of article five, Aquinas cites the following passage from Revelation 21:23,

“And the city [the heavenly Jerusalem] has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb.”

However it is only when Aquinas considers the sacrificial aspect of Christ's priesthood,²⁷ with considerations lying at the heart of his soteriology, that the unique reality of such priesthood and its eternal endurance are most exquisitely expounded. A number of theologically exciting questions are made in this context. For instance, if Christ was sacrificial victim, how do we reconcile this fact to his free agency? Did Christ intentionally see himself as a sacrificial victim? On the other hand Christ did not kill himself nor was he slain by priests in the traditional cultic manner and certainly doesn't seem to have had much choice in what eventually materialised as a political, rather than religious, sentence to death on a cross. Moreover, it is not at all clear that Christ could have acted as priest in a sacrifice where he himself also acted as victim and sacrifice. This also carries with it unattractive connotations given God's frequent disapproval of pagan style sacrificial cult which was at times absorbed into Israelite practice (for instance, Ps 106:36-38 – a text Aquinas quotes in this context).

What about the consecratory nature of a sacrificial offering? Priests consecrated their offerings to God, an act which in turn brought back with it the bestowal of God's favour and blessings. However, as we have already

²⁶ *ST* III, q. 22, a. 5

²⁷ *ST* III, q. 22, a. 2, obj. 1-3

noted, Christ already possess a perfect human nature consecrated by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.²⁸ This seems to make the sacrificial nature of Christ's offering to God quite pointless since his holiness and divinity are to be assumed from eternity.

Following St. Paul's reading of Old Testament sacrificial practice (see for example Eph 5:2) and enlightened by St. Augustine's semiotics (see *De Civitate Dei*, 10:5), Aquinas' analysis in Article 2 reaches the following conclusion. Sacrificial practice in the Old Testament seems to have served three purposes on an ascending scale: the remission of sin, the preservation of the state of grace, and perfect union with God. Now we must keep in mind that no theory of sacrifice could adequately meet the case of Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

“It is a sacrifice so entirely *sui generis* that it has to be identified by itself... The whole ancient sacrificial rite was figurative of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. This means that we are to explain the ancient sacrifices through the sacrifice of the Cross and not vice-versa.”²⁹

That through the shedding of his blood Christ accomplishes, in a unique and transcendent way, a sacrificial and sanctifying mission is established by Aquinas with the aid of pertinent New Testament reference. Notable among these are Rom 4:25, Heb 5:9; 9:26; 10:14; 10:19. With regard to the Eucharistic sacrifice instituted by Christ, Aquinas observes that the sacramental commemoration truly unites the Church to Christ's historical sacrifice.

“The Sacrifice which is offered every day in the Church is not distinct from that which Christ himself offered, but is a commemoration thereof. Wherefore Augustine says (*De Civitate Dei* X, 20): ‘Christ himself both is the priest who offers it and the victim: the sacred token of which he wished to be the daily Sacrifice of the Church.’”³⁰

One might here object that what is being offered by Christ in this sacrifice is his very life. Can that life be appropriately conceived as a sacrificial victim? What kind of priest would offer his life in sacrifice? How coherent is it to speak of sacrificial victim in the case of Christ's passion and crucifixion?

²⁸ *ST* III, q. 22, a. 2, obj. 3: “Christ was from the beginning consecrated and united to God”.

²⁹ Vonier, A. In his classic *A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist* (2003), pp. 105-6

³⁰ *ST* III, q. 22, a. 3, ad 2

Aquinas counters this powerful objection by distinguishing between sacrificial victim and human sacrifice. In his passion Christ is an active agent, the person of the Son of God, possessing a humanity perfectly graced by the Holy Spirit. He is in this sense a sacrificial victim, but never a human sacrifice. In the case of brute animals offered as sacrifices, we have passive rather than active submission and Aquinas is careful to point out the difference. The fundamental offering of his human life is, then, the interior or spiritual act of obedience to the Father, rather than the merely passive submission of his body to Roman violence. Christ, as the Incarnate Son, also actively permits this apparently wholly passive submission of flesh. Christ did not slay himself in sacrifice, which is, according to Aquinas, a mark of distinction vis-à-vis Old Testament sacrificial acts. “Of his own free-will he exposed himself to death” and “freely offered himself to suffering”.³¹ There is therefore a difference to be made between killing oneself and allowing one’s persecutors to do their will.

“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth (Is 53:7)”.³²

Some final remarks on the healing of broken humanity

The paradox of the passion, death and resurrection of Christ is that such events of violence and upheaval are the foundations of a new humanity established through the renewed commitment of God towards human beings through his Son, Jesus Christ. Establishing the sacrificial nature of Christ’s entire life culminating on the cross enables us to discover entirely new frontiers of obedience and faithfulness hitherto unheard of. Yet the sacrificial nature of Christian priesthood has also been a point of theological controversy. For David Power, to cite but one example, to put the cross at the heart of the Christian mystery constitutes a “reversal of values” where a false god and false religion are “sacrificed”.³³ The resurrection, not the crucifixion, thus comes to stand at the centre of Christian theology of the priesthood. The Eucharist invites people to the liberation from evil, sin, and death that God reveals and accomplishes through Christ’s resurrection, and that forms the basis of our eschatological hope. According to Power, the uniqueness of Christ’s death was such that an

³¹ *ST* III, q. 22, a. 2, ad 1 and 2

³² Quoted in *Ibid.* ad 1

³³ *The Eucharistic Mystery: Revitalising the Tradition*, 1992, pg. 322-323

entirely new way of relating to God became possible, doing away with all forms of priestly mediation and cult. Thus, as Power observes,

“The religious awe and power associated with cultic sacrifice was transferred to the memorial Eucharist, to the death remembered, to lives lived in obedience to the gospel, and to the witness of the martyrs.”³⁴

According to Power’s historical diagnosis of Christian theology, a mistaken understanding of Christ’s sacrifice entered the mainstream, such that the understanding of the Eucharist as a memorial meal – “Do this in remembrance of me (Lk 22:19) – had changed. The act of remembering Jesus’ gift of his body and blood now was understood to insert participants into Jesus’ very act of sacrificial self-offering. Instead of a memorial, the Eucharist thus became a representation or re-enactment in the sense of enabling participants to share in Jesus’ very act. Power’s verdict views this distortion of Christian ecclesiology and worship depicting Christian priesthood, which is directly involved in the Eucharist as a cultic sacrifice, as retrogression to the pagan and Jewish model of consecrated intercessors standing between the people and their (wrathful) God.

One can find ample response to Power’s position in Joseph Ratzinger’s essay, “On the Essence of the Priesthood.”³⁵ A theme he typically develops is that one finds in Jesus Christ both the newness of the gospel and the unity of the Old and New Testaments. In this paper Ratzinger reclaims the theology of cultic priesthood by showing first of all that the real change in relationship of human beings to God is the supreme manifestation of his “power” from the Father in the Holy Spirit. Moreover, the apostles receive an ontological share in the power of the Risen Christ that enables them to bestow Jesus’ sanctifying gifts upon the whole community. Thirdly, Jesus constitutes a community built upon a structure of gifting/receptivity, which reverses the human sinful desire for autonomous self-sufficiency.³⁶

We have already seen how Aquinas’ account has the resources to show that by the power of his embodied self-giving love of Christ, the need of fallen human beings to be liberated from their sinful pride and rejection of

³⁴ Ibid., pg. 321

³⁵ In *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*, trans. Adrian Walker, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996 [German 1991], pp. 105-31, pg. 107

³⁶ Also see discussion by Matthew Levering, *A Note on Joseph Ratzinger and Contemporary Theology of the Priesthood*, in *Nova et Vetera*, vol. 5 / 2 (2007), pp. 271-284

God is met since such generosity exceeds any possible mediation performed by unredeemed human nature. Aquinas also thinks that Jesus established hierarchical sacramental mediation in his Church because human beings need more than a celebratory meal that assures them of the omnipresence of God's love. As becomes clear throughout his discussion on the mystery of the Eucharist, this form of mediation exists to form human beings in this cruciform image of radical receptivity and provides a renewed theology of Catholic priesthood.

Thus we can say that in Aquinas' view, the mystery of the Eucharist alive within the Church captures the dynamism of the eternal priesthood of Christ. The richness of this dynamism is discussed in the *Summa Theologiae* when Aquinas speaks of three dimensions integral to this mystery. First of all, the Eucharist is a *commemoratio*³⁷ or *recordatio*³⁸ or even *rapraesentatio* of the sacrifice of Christ and since it is not the funeral of Christ that is celebrated but the sacramental presence of the Risen Christ who renews his love for humanity in his eternal offering to the Father at mass, we may truly say it is a *sacrificium*. Secondly, the present reality of Christ creates community. In fact Aquinas tells us that the *res* of the sacrament of the Eucharist is communion (the Real Presence is the *res et sacramentum*). Thus *communio* or *synaxis* show how ecclesial communion is established by and through the Eucharist which is the mystery of the Body of Christ par excellence. The third aspect is the eschatological power of the Eucharist in that it strengthens our faith and hope in eternal life and perfect communion with God, hence the Eucharist as *viaticum*.³⁹

We cannot, then, adequately understand the mystery of the Eucharist if not in relation to the sacrifice of the Cross which was accomplished by the priest of the New Covenant through the shedding of his own blood, an offering which is renewed through sacramental grace within the very life of the Church. This brings us back to the theme of the eternity of Christ's priesthood as well as its definitive nature. His priestly action is "once for all" (Heb 9:26) and never needs to be repeated, because it permanently establishes holiness.

³⁷ *ST* III, q. 22, a. 3, ad 2

³⁸ Cf. In IV Sent, d. 12

³⁹ *ST* III, q. 73, a. 4. This teaching of Aquinas finds liturgical expression in the Magnificat antiphon for the Feast of Corpus Christi: "O Sacrum Convivium in quo Christus sumitur, recolitur memoria passionis eius, mens impletur gratia, et futurae gloriae nobis pignus datur", Office of the feast of *Corpus Christi*, book IX, p. 280

It is also an eternal priesthood since no high priest ever takes his place. The unity of Covenants referred to in Ratzinger's analysis is shown in that the Levitical priesthood symbolises sacrifice (through the shedding of blood), while Melchizedek's priesthood symbolises communion (through bread and wine). However, Aquinas gives the latter pride of place when he says that,

“...the participation of this sacrifice and the effect thereof, wherein the excellence of Christ's priesthood over the priesthood of the Law principally consists... the former was more distinctly foreshadowed by the priesthood of Melchisedech...”⁴⁰

Note that it is the unitive dimension of Christ's priesthood which explains for Aquinas why it receives its primary definition through the Letter to the Hebrews' application of Psalm 110:4, “Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek” (Heb 5:6, 7:17).

In conclusion, sacramental life in the Church is a configuration of our broken humanity to the redeeming power of the humanity of Christ. This is especially obtained through the unity of the people of God, the mystical body of Christ which is the primary fruit of Jesus' sacrifice represented in the Eucharist, according to the story given to us by Aquinas. Jesus dies not for himself or his own needs, but to unify all others in himself.⁴¹ This is why for Aquinas Christ's priesthood is the

“...*fons totius sacerdotii*, for the priest of the Old Law was a figure of him; while the priest of the New Law works in his person”.⁴²

⁴⁰ ST III, q. 22, a. 6

⁴¹ ST III, q. 22, a. 4

⁴² Ibid.

MAXIMILLIAN GRECH

IS-SAĊERDOT U L-HIDMA TIEGHU FID-DJOĊESI

Fr. Joe kien qed jitkellem mal-arċipriet Fr. Mark kemm kellu xogħol bhala għalliem fis-Seminarju. Fr. Mark wiegħbu li hafna mix-xogħol li qed jagħmel m'għandux x'jaqsam mal-hidma saċerdotali u li kellu jagħti aktar hin lill-hidma pastorali. Fr. Joe afferma li kull xogħol, jekk tagħmlu b'intenzjoni ta' għid lill-bniedem hu hidma pastorali, u nsista mal-arċipriet li l-parruċċani jitolbu hidma li tgħin lill-bniedem u jeżiġu t-trasparenza f'dak li nagħmlu l-aktar fejn jidhlu l-amministrazzjoni tal-beni u l-flus li l-parruċċani joffru jew jagħtu għall-hidma tal-Knisja.

- (1) X'inhi l-attività propja tas-saċerdot?
- (2) Kemm għandha tkun trasparenti l-hidma tagħna bhala saċerdoti fejn jidhlu l-flus tal-parruċċani?

Fil-ħajja professjonali tiegħi, qatt ma rajt daqshekk nuqqas ta' interess f'li s-saċerdot jifli bir-reqqa kif ikun sejjer fil-ministeru pastorali tiegħu. Il-ministri pastorali jidhru li huma indifferenti għall-istandards professjonali u mhumiex lesti li jikkonfrontaw lil xulxin meta jkun hemm imġieba irresponsabbli. Din l-attitudni tidher li hi ġejja mill-fatt li l-vokazzjoni 'religjużi' teżenta lis-saċerdot milli jkun *accountable* għall-istandards professjonali. Kemm se ddum din l-attitudni u din il-prattika ma tiġix konfrontata?¹

1. Ix-xogħol fil-Bibbja u fit-Tradizzjoni

Kull bniedem għandu d-dmir li jaħdem. Id-dmir li taħdem johroġ mill-għan u s-sinjifikat tal-istess xogħol.

Bhala dmir ix-xogħol huwa:

- (i) preservazzjoni tal-individwu nnifsu - għixien;
- (ii) iservi lill-proxxmu;
- (iii) jikkopera ma' Alla fil-holqien.

¹ RICHARD M. GULA, S.S., *Ethics in Pastoral Ministry*, 1996, 1.

L-ghan tax-xogħol:

- (i) il-mod normali ta' kif wiehed jippreserva lilu nnifsu;
- (ii) jissodisfa il-ħtiġijiet materjali tiegħu u ta' dawk li huma fdati f'idejh.

Ix-xogħol m'għandniex nehduh f'sens strett bħala xogħol manwali, imma għandna nifhmuh fis-sens ta' kull attività serja u li għandha għan. Dawn il-punti joħroġu mir-riflessjoni dwar ix-xogħol fid-dawl tar-Rivelazzjoni biblika u t-tagħlim tal-Knisja tul is-sekli.

It-Testment il-Qadim jipprezentalna x-xogħol bħala barka jew don minn Alla. L-“ahkmu l-art kollha” (Ġen 1,28) – m'għandniex nifhmuha bħala kmand imma bħala parteċipazzjoni fl-istess opra kreatriċi ta' Alla u għalhekk komponent essenzjali biex il-bniedem ikun xbieha ta' Alla. Fl-ahħar sekli qabel Kristu tinbet it-tendenza li jiġi mogħti valur oghla lix-xogħol intellettuali tar-rabbi jew ta' dak li jiddedika ruħu għall-istudju. Imma din ma kenitx l-idea ġenerali tat-Testment il-Qadim.

Fil-Testment il-Ġdid ma nsibux trattazzjoni diretta tax-xogħol, imma noħroġu zewġ fatti essenzjali li jinkwadraw ix-xogħol tal-bniedem fil-logika u l-ġustizzja tas-Saltna ta' Alla:

a) il-Mulej wettaq għal ħajtu kollha xogħol manwali qabel ma ddedika ruħu għax-xogħol spiritwali. Dan jafferma mal-ewwel li: m'hemmx differenza bejn id-dinjità tax-xogħol manwali u dak intellettuali; li taħdem hu konnaturali għall-bniedem. [Ix-xogħol hu l-attività propjament umana.]

b) it-tieni fatt joħroġ f'konfront mat-Testment il-Qadim – waqt li t-Testment il-Qadim iqieghed ix-xogħol fil-kuntest tar-relazzjoni bniedem-natura, it-Testment il-Ġdid iqieghdu fil-logika tas-Saltna, jiġifieri bħala parti mill-problema tar-relazzjoni bniedem-bniedem [servizz]. Kull attività umana ssib is-sens tagħha jekk tidhol 'fil-logika tal-Vanġelu' fejn l-Iben ġie mhux biex ikun moqdi imma biex jaqdi u l-paċi titlob servizz reċiproku u solidarjetà.

Fil-Patristika u l-Iskolastika t-tema tax-xogħol hi kwazi mwarrba għal kollox fuq il-livell tat-teorija. Imma x-xogħol uman hu mwettaq b'intensità bħala espressjoni shiha ta' li tkun preżenti quddiem Alla u quddiem il-proxxmu.

2. L-approfondiment tal-problema morali tax-xogħol fil-*Gaudium et Spes*

F'paragrafu 67, intitolat: Ix-xogħol u l-kundizzjonijiet tiegħu u hin liberu, ix-xogħol hu kkunsidrat dejjem bħala attività umana sewwa jekk hu xogħol awtonomu jew dipendenti. U minn hawn li johroġ il-valur u l-etika tiegħu. Ix-xogħol “jiġi dritt mill-persuna li donnha tistampa s-siġill tagħha fuq il-hwejjeġ maħluqa u tissotomettihom għar-rieda tagħha”.²

Is-sens u l-valur tax-xogħol hu li jagħti glorja lil Alla fuq l-art għax jekk waqt li wiehed jaħdem biex jaqla' l-ghixien tiegħu, ifittex ukoll li jaqdi lis-soċjetà, hu jestendi l-opra tal-Ħallieq u jagħti l-kontribut persunali tiegħu għall-proġett ta' Alla fuq l-istorja.

L-attività umana, ix-xogħol, tagħmel parti minn twegiba libera u ta' fidi għas-sejha ta' Alla lil kull bniedem. Il-bniedem meta jaħdem jipperfezzjona lilu nnifsu – il-bniedem jiswa aktar għal dak li hu milli għal dak li jagħmel. Niżviluppaw aktar dan it-tagħlim f'zewġ aspetti:

(a) hemm sens akbar ta' umanità f'kull ko-operazzjoni: li taħdem flimkien hu valur fih innifsu, hu offerta reċiproka tal-kontribut ta' kull wiehed għal skop komuni – għaldaqstant kull organizzazzjoni tax-xogħol għandha tirrispetta u tiffavorixxi l-qawwa soċjalizzanti tax-xogħol;

(b) hu dmir li taħdem għall-finalità li jindika l-Konċilju, indipendentament għandekx bżonn jew le li taqla' il-flus: is-sinjur li ma jagħmel xejn hu moralment ta' min iċanfru.³

3. Il-Vokazzjoni u l-professjoni tas-saċerdot

Ix-xejra li nikkunsidraw il-vokazzjoni saċerdotali bħala professjoni kellha l-mira li ttejjeb il-kwalità fl-eżerċizzju ministerjali tas-saċerdot. Hemm aktar x'wiehed jiggwadanja milli x'jitlef meta wiehed jikklassifika l-ministeru pastorali bħala professjoni, billi tistenna lill-ministri tal-pastorali, b'mod speċjali s-saċerdoti, li jaġixxu b'mod professjonali, u billi żzommhom *accountable* bħala professjonisti. L-aktar oġġezzjoni komuni għal dan id-diskors hi li ma tistax tittratta l-ministeru pastorali bħala professjoni għax hija

² KONĊILJU VATIKAN II, *Konstituzzjoni Patorali dwar il-Knisja fid-Dinja ta' Illum Gaudium et Spes*, 7 ta' Diċembru 1965, 67.

³ Ibid.

vokazzjoni reliġjuża u għax bhala vokazzjoni hija tip uniku tal-*leadership* kristjan u ma jistax ikun komparat għal professjonijiet ohra. Bhal donnu jekk tipprofessjonalizza l-ministeru pastorali tkun qed tirriduċih għal biċċa xogħol u tinjora d-dimensjoni spiritwali u traxxendenti tiegħu.

Imma għax propju l-ministeru pastorali hija vokazzjoni reliġjuża għandna aktar għax nirrispettaw ir-responsabilitajiet li gġgib magħhom il-fatt li tkun professjonali ukoll. Għalkemm il-ministeru saċerdotali mhux *parallel* f'kollox mal-professjonijiet l-ohra f'kull karatteristika, hija b'mod suffiċjenti analoga għalihom. Jekk mill-ministeru saċerdotali naqtgħu r-rekwiziti professjonali faċilment naqgħu fit-tentazzjoni biex ngħidu li l-vokazzjoni ġejja minn Alla, għalhekk ir-regoli u l-aspettattivi li japplikaw għal professjonist ma japplikawx għas-saċerdot. Jehtieg li wiehed jirreżisti t-tentazzjoni li jistaħba wara “l-vokazzjoni reliġjuża” sabiex wiehed jevita li jwettaq id-dmirijiet morali.

Meta wiehed jgħid li l-ministeru pastorali hija vokazzjoni jfisser li hija tweġiba hielsa għas-sejha ta' Alla permezz u fil-komunità sabiex wiehed jintrabat li jhobb u jservi lill-ohrajn. Id-dimenesjoni kommunali tal-vokazzjoni tfisser li s-sejha għal-ministeru hija mismugħa fi hdan il-Knisja, sostnuta mill-Knisja u qiegħda sabiex isservi l-missjoni tal-Knisja. M'hemm x vokazzjoni privata jew individwalistika tal-ministeru. Is-saċerdot mhux imsejjah primarjament għal benefiċċju personali, imma minhabba l-missjoni tal-Knisja. In-natura voluntarja tal-vokazzjoni tfisser li wiehed irid ikun iddixxiplinat sabiex jissubordina l-interess personali tiegħu sabiex jaqdi u jahdem b'risq l-interess tal-proxxmu. Id-dimensjoni traxxendentali tal-vokazzjoni hi li s-saċerdot huwa msejjah għal dik ix-xi haġa iżjed, sabiex jirrapprezenta l-preżenza ta' Alla fl-imhabba u bl-aċċettazzjoni. Dawn il-karatteristiċi u d-dimensjonijiet tal-vokazzjoni jagħmluha aktar urgenti f'li wiehed ikun professjonali.

L-istorja tal-iżvilupp tal-professjoni turi li “li jkollok vokazzjoni” u “li tkun professjonist” kienu darba magħquda flimkien, imma tul iż-żmien intilfet il-konnessjoni ta' bejniethom. Il-kelma ‘professjoni’ tfisser ‘li toqgħod għal xi haġa li twieghed’. L-użu l-aktar antik tat-terminu professjoni kien iġorr fundamentalment tifsira reliġjuża. Il-professjonijiet ġejjin mill-kuntest reliġjuż tal-patrijiet u s-sorijiet meta kienu jagħmlu l-‘professjoni’ tal-fidi f'Alla billi jagħmlu l-voti tal-faqar, kastità ċelebi, u l-ubbidjenza. Tagħmel ‘professjoni’ u jkollok ‘vokazzjoni’ kienu haġa waħda. Gruppi organizzati

ta' reliġjużi professi kienu jilhq u lil dawk li kellhom htigijiet immedjati bhal mhuma l-edukazzjoni, id-drittijiet legali, il-kura medika, u s-salvazzjoni. Il-Knisja taż-Żminijiet Medjevali hija s-sors ta' dak li illum insejhu bhala professjonijiet. Lejn tmiem iż-żminijiet medjevali, permezz tal-proċess ta' sekularizzazzjoni, istituzzjonijiet mhux reliġjużi ġew imwaqqfa sabiex jaqdu funzjonijiet li xi darba kienet twettaq il-Knisja. Anki jekk it-terminu 'professjoni' ma kenitx għadha applikata għal dak li hu biss reliġjuż, baqgħet iġġorr l-konnotazzjoni li tkun immotivata mill-imhabba sabiex tintrabat u sservi d-dinja.

Il-marka li turi li tkun professjonali fis-sens klassiku jfisser li tintrabat li takkwista għarfien espert u kapacitajiet, u li twieġeb għall-htigijiet tal-bniedem b'karattru morali tajjeb. Dan is-sens klassiku li tkun professjonali intilef minn hafna illum għaliex jassoċjaw li tkun professjonali mal-interess tal-individwu li jagħmel il-flus mis-servizz li jagħti lill-bniedem, mal-privileġġi li jiġu mill-istatus għoli li taġhti s-soċjetà, jew li turi kompetenza teknika b'mod insensittiv, distakkat u disinteressat.

Għall-kuntrarju, li tkun professjonali jimplika kompetenza speċjalizzata, *commitment* għall-eċċellenza, integrità, dedikazzjoni disinteressata sabiex isservi l-komunità.

Li tpoġġi flimkien "li jkollok il-vokazzjoni" u "li tkun professjonali", tkun qiegħed tafferma li kull ma nagħmlu fil-ministeru saċerdotali huwa risposta għall-preżenza ta' Alla permezz u fil-komunità li ssejthilna sabiex nagixxu bhala sinjali u aġenti tal-imhabba ta' Alla għall-bniedem. Il-komunità tirrikonoxxi, fis-saċerdot, persuna li twieġeb b'mod liberu l-istedina ta' Alla f' Ġesù li jippartecipa fl-attività dejjem attiva ta' Alla sabiex jistabilixxi patt ta' mhabba mal-poplu u sabiex fl-aħħar mill-aħħar iressaq lil kulhadd f'partecipazzjoni shiħa taht is-saltna ta' Alla. Li l-ministeru pastorali hi vokazzjoni u professjoni jfisser li tirrikonoxxi li r-responsabilitajiet morali li tkun ministru pastorali ġejjin mhux biss mill-konvenzjonijiet soċjali ta' li tkun professjonist imma anki fl-aħħar mill-aħħar mill-istedina ta' Alla sabiex thobb b'manjieri li jirriflettu li twieġeb is-sejha ta' Alla billi timxi t-triq tad-dixxiplu wara Ġesù.

4. Id-dmirijiet professjonali

Kull professjoni ġġib magħha ċerti dmirijiet, u jekk il-vokazzjoni saċerdotali trid tingħex professjonalment allura anki din timplika xi dmirijiet. Meta nassumu

r-rwol ta' ministru professjonali, impliċitament u xi drabi anki espliċitament, inweghdu li nwettqu ċerti dmirijiet li ma jorbtux lill-bqija tal-komunità daqs kemm moralment jorbtu lil xi hadd li daħal għall-ministeru saċerdotali.

Sejjer nqassam dan il-partiskont l-erba' fatturi prominenti li letteratura fuq il-professjonijiet tidentifika bħala marki soċjoloġiċi distintivi sabiex wiehed ikun porfesjsonali: (a) għarfien u teknika speċjalizzati; (b) servizz f'dawk li huma l-htigijiet fundamentali tal-bniedem; (ċ) sens ta' *commitment* għall-aħjar interess tal-oħrajn; (d) strutturi ta' *accountability/responsabilità/trasparenza*.

(a) Għarfien speċjalizzat u teknika speċjalizzata

Il-professjonisti huma komunament imsejha esperti għax ikunu hadmu, għal perjodu estiz ta' żmien, barra mill-edukazzjoni formali, f'speċjalizzazzjoni f'arja ta' għarfien u teknika. Din il-marka li tkun professjonali tikkorrelata mad-dmir morali sabiex tfittex li tkun u żżomm ruhek kompetenti fl-arja speċjalizzata li tkun għażilt. Għalhekk irid ikun żmien għal żvilupp professjonali – li jikkonsisti fi studju kontinwu u riflessjoni personali sabiex wiehed itejjeb u jkollu idejat dejjem aktar ċari.

X'hemm fil-ministeru tas-saċerdot li jtellef li naraw fih professjonalità/espert?

(i) Il-ministeru pastorali huwa mmarkat b'ħafna speċjalizzazzjonijiet. Hemm min jintefa' fid-direzzjoni spiritwali, fil-kura pastorali klinika, fl-edukazzjoni u l-formazzjoni. Mhux dejjem huwa possibbli però li s-saċerdot iwettaq biss il-hidma li fiha jkun speċjalizzat, imma huwa msejjaħ biex iwettaq hidmiet oħra li tagħhom forsi jkollu għarfien u teknika in ġenerali – u forsi din il-ħaġa ma tinkwadrax mal-fatt li s-saċerdot għandu jkun professjonali.

(ii) F'kuntest lajkali, il-professjonalità tas-saċerdot forsi mhix mogħtija dejjem valur daqs professjonijiet oħra bħal mhuma dawk tat-tabib jew l-avukat.

Bħala ministri pastorali, aħna niprofessaw li nkunu kapaċi nirrispondu għall-htigijiet spiritwali, għaliex is-saċerdot huwa riżorsa teoloġika għall-komunità li temmen. Is-saċerdot jibqa' dik il-persuna li lejha in-nies tirrikorri sabiex tikseb għajjnuna halli jaqraw id-dimensjoni sagra li magħha jiltaqgħu fil-ħajja ta' kuljum. Jista' jkun li s-saċerdot għandu diversi teknika li biha jgħin bħal m'għandhom professjonisti oħra, però s-saċerdot huwa uniku sabiex jagħti tifsir u sens teoloġiku lill-esperjenzi umani. L-ebda wiehed fil-Knisja jew fis-soċjetà

mhu daqshekk imharreġ li jgħib fid-dawl ir-rivelazzjoni ta' Alla f' Ġesù sabiex jifhmu u jirrispondu għal dak li jkun qed jiġri f' hajjithom mill-perspettiva tal-fidi, u sabiex jipperseveraw u jsaħħu l-identità tagħhom fi Kristu.

Id-dmir speċjali tal-ministru pastorali huwa li jkun kompetenti fil-qasam tat-teoloġija, speċjalment fit-teknika tar-riflessjoni teoloġika. Dan ma jfissirx li s-sacerdot għandu jkun xi teologu akkademiku, imma li fost il-ħafna hidmiet u funzjonijiet tiegħu, is-sacerdot irid ikollu mira waħda – il-Kelma ta' Alla f' Ġesù Kristu – u jehtieġ li jservi primarjament għan wiehed – li l-Kelma ta' Alla jpoġġiha fis-sitwazzjonijiet konkreti li minnhom il-bniedem ikun għaddej.

Bħala individwu u bħala komunità, il-bniedem jgħaddi minn mumentu ta' tama (twelid), biża' (mewt), tibdil fil-hajja (żwieġ, pensjoni), dilemmi morali (strikes, trattamenti għal dawk li waslu fl-aħħar), traġedji (qagħad), u diżastri (terremoti, għargħar) li jesigū interpretazzjoni u li jisfidawna b' mistoqsijiet sabiex dan kollu jikseb sens. Haġa jkollok l-għarfien eżatt dwar it-tradizzjoni kristjana u l-kunċetti teoloġiċi, però hi haġa oħra li jkollok kapaċità li tuża dan l-għarfien sabiex tgħin lill-bniedem isib valur u sens fl-esperjenzi li minnhom jgħaddi mill-prospettiva tal-fidi.

Sabiex nipprovdu riflessjoni teoloġika lill-komunità jehtieġ li jkollna għarfien u kapaċità li niddixxernu l-preżenza u l-azzjoni ta' Alla. Din hi li titlob il-kompetenza fir-riflessjoni teoloġika. Bħala ministri pastorali naqsmu ma' professjonijiet oħra diversi kapaċitajiet (*counselling*, organizzazzjoni, tagħlim, smieġh attiv, eċċ.) li mhumiex uniċi fil-ministeru tagħna. Il-kompetenza titlob li wiehed ikun jaf il-limiti tiegħu. Li tkun umli fil-kompetenza jfisser li nkunu kapaċi nirreferu għand haddiehor, lil professjonisti oħra meta l-individwu jkollu bżonn għajnuna li fiha s-sacerdot ma jkunx speċjalizzat.

Id-dmir morali li nkunu teoloġikament kompetenti huwa wkoll dixxiplina integrali għall-*commitment* tagħna li nikbru spiritwalment kif ukoll għall-iżvilupp professjonali.

(b) *Servizz f' dawk li huma l-htigijiet fundamentali tal-bniedem*

Il-professjonijiet żviluppaw sabiex jaqdu u jwieġbu għall-htigijiet fundamentali tal-bniedem. F'dan is-sens, l-etika professjonali għandha l-għeruq fil-ġid komuni. Is-soċjetà għandha bżonn ta' nies speċjalizzati fi rwol, għall-*welfare* tagħha stess. B'mod wiesa' nistgħu nġhidu li l-medicina twieġeb għall-htieġa tas-saħħa, il-liġi sservi sabiex jintlaħaq il-bżonn għall-gustizzja, l-edukazzjoni sservi sabiex

tissodisfa l-bżonn tal-gharfien, u l-ministeru saċerdotali jservi sabiex iwieġeb għall-bżonn tas-salvazzjoni permezz tal-missjoni tal-Knisja li dejjem timxi 'l quddiem. Il-bżonn li l-professjoni tissodisfa sservi sabiex jiddefenixxi l-għan tal-professjoni. Dawk li jidhlu għall-professjoni jwegħdu li jilhqu l-htigijiet fundamentali li għalihom teżisti dik il-professjoni partikolari u li jmexxu lilhom infushom b'manjieri li jilhqu l-għan tar-rwol speċjalizzat tagħhom.

Minhabba li l-ministeru saċerdotali jsegwi mal-missjoni tal-Knisja, *l-issue* teoloġika li tinsab hawn taht, sabiex nifhmu is-servizz tal-ministeru pastorali, hija li tidentifika l-missjoni tal-Knisja. Meta naqtgħu l-kuntatt minn mal-missjoni tal-Knisja bħala dik li tiddefenixxi l-iskop tal-ministru pastorali, ikun il-każ li niżbaljaw it-teknika u x-xogħol li jkun mixtieq minnha.

Id-dmir tal-ministri pastorali, fosthom is-saċerdot, hu li jirrapprezenta lill-Knisja b'mod fidil u b'imhabba permezz tal-ministeri varji. Bħala ministru tal-missjoni tal-Knisja wiehed mhux aktar jaġixxi bħala aġent singolu imma bħala rappreżentant tal-Knisja. Il-Knisja infatti tesprimi l-viżjoni, il-valuri u t-twemmin tagħha permezz tal-ministri tagħha.

Hafna ministri pastorali jiġu iffaċċjati minn tensjoni kbira meta jippruvaw jaqdu d-dmir tagħhom f'li jirrapprezentaw il-Knisja meta joffru gwida morali. Waqt li jkunu jippruvaw jipprovdu dan is-servizz pastorali, hafna huma maqbuda bejn żewġ responsabilitajiet konfligġenti: li jirrapprezentaw it-tagħlim morali tal-Knisja, u fl-istess hin li juru kompassjoni u li juru li qed jifhmu lil dawk li qed ifittxu l-għajnuna pastorali.

Gwanni Pawlu II jpoġġi d-direzzjoni għall-eżerċizzju responsabbli tax-xogħol pastorali, speċjalment f'dawk li huma materji rigward il-moralità sesswali, fl-Enciklika *Veritatis Splendor*. Dwar l-għan li lejha kulhadd għandu jithabat li jersaq, sabiex jitwahhad man-normi oġġettivi tal-moralità, il-Papa jgħid:

Anki f'dawk is-sitwazzjonijiet l-aktar diffiċli l-bniedem jehtieġ jirrispetta in-norma tal-moralità sabiex ikun ubbidjenti lejn il-kmandament qaddis ta' Alla u konsistenti mad-dinjità tiegħu ta' persuna. [n.102]

Sabiex jassisti lil haddieħor jilhaq dan il-għan, is-saċerdot irid ikun kapaċi jipprezenta bl-aktar mod ċar possibbli n-normi oġġettivi tal-moralità kif riflessi fil-liġi ta' Alla, il-liġi naturali, u fit-tagħlim tal-Knisja filwaqt li jinkoraġġixxi l-approprijazzjoni sħiħa tal-verità morali li dawn in-normi jesprimu.

Jibqa' l-fatt li, prezentazzjoni ċara u forzata tal-verità morali qatt ma tista' tkun separata minn rispezzt profund u li ġej mill-qalb, ġej minn dik l-imħabba pazjenti u li tafda li l-bniedem dejjem għandu bżonn fil-vjaġġ morali, vjaġġ li jaf ikun xi drabi iebes minħabba id-diffikultajiet, dgħufija u s-sitwazzjonijiet ta' tbatija. [n.95]

Proċedura pastorali propja tipprowa kemm li tespandi l-kapaċità morali tal-persuna billi tippreżentalu l-verità oġġettiva morali, kif ukoll billi ssahħah kemm tista' lill-persuna billi tinkoraġġiha ha tagħmel il-pass bl-imħabba lejn l-approprijazzjoni sħiħa tan-normi oġġettivi tal-moralità. Prospettiva u proċedura bħal din tafferma li s-saċerdot jista' jwettaq id-dmir tiegħu li jirrappreżenta lill-Knisja fit-tagħlim morali tagħha filwaqt li jibqa' kompassjonali u filwaqt li jifhem lill-persuni li jinsabu jissieltu sabiex f'hajjithom iwettqu dak li hu tajjeb.

(ċ) Sens ta' commitment għall-aħjar interess tal-oħrajn

Marbuta mal-għarfien speċjalizzat u l-kapaċitajiet partikolari, u s-servizz f'dawk li huma htigijiet fundamentali tal-bniedem insibu l-*commitment* għall-aħjar interess tal-iehor. Dan ifisser li ma nakkwistawx għarfien u kapaċitajiet speċjalizzati bħala xi possessjoni privata għal xi qliegħ finanzjarju jew *status* soċjali. Anzi l-ewwel *commitment* primarju għandu jkun li nużaw dak l-għarfien li nkunu ksibna sabiex naqdu u nwieġbu għall-htigijiet ta' dawn li magħhom niltaqgħu fil-hidma pastorali tagħna, anki jekk dan ikun ifisser li npoġġu lilna nfusna f'riskju personali jew ikollna nagħmlu saġrifċċji personali. Id-dmir tal-ministri pastorali huwa li jissubordina l-interess personali sabiex jagħti grad oghla ta' preferenza lil dawn li jirrikorru għandu sabiex ifittxu servizz pastorali.

Filwaqt li jibqa' veru li kulhadd huwa taht obbligu morali li jgħin lill-oħrajn, in-nies jistennew aktar minghand il-persuna professjonali. Bħala saċerdoti aħna mistennija b'mod aktar partikolari li nkunu disponibbli għill-oħrajn, u probabilmment is-saċerdot huwa aktar suxxettibbli minn professjonijiet oħra għall-kritika jekk jagħti importanza żejda lilu nnifsu. Dan jista' jkun minħabba l-fatt li s-saċerdot huwa simbolu rappreżentattiv tal-imħabba inkondizzjonata u inklussiva ta' Alla.

Li tkun *committed* għall-aħjar interess tal-iehor ifisser ukoll li l-eżerċizzju tal-ministeru tagħna mhux biss huwa teknikament assessjat imma anki moralment assessjat. Is-saċerdot jista' jkun predikatur ta' kwalità, għalliem

tajjeb, jew amministratur, imma mbagħad jonqos milli jkun bniedem virtuz – billi jonqos milli jkun aċċessibbli għan-nies, jaħdem b’*office hours*, ma jirrispondix *telephones, sms, e-mails*, billi jiddiskrimina bejn in-nies u jservi biss dejjem kwalità wahda ta’ nies, billi juri nuqqas ta’ interess għan-nuqqas ta’ gùstizzja fil-komunità, eċċ. Imma meta wiehed jagħti grad oghla ta’ preferenza għall-interess tal-ohrajn, is-saċerdot ikun jimita lil Ġesù fil-mod ta’ kif kellu simpatija partikolari għal dawk li l-aktar kienu fil-bżonn, imwegġġha, dawk l-aktar li hassewhom mhux maħbuba, u fil-mod ta’ kemm kien inklussiv fl-ispirtu u fl-għemil.

(d) *Strutturi ta’ accountability / responsabilità / trasparenza*

Ir-raba’ karatteristika tal-professjonalizmu, l-istrutturi ta’ *accountability/ responsabilità/ trasparenza*, ifissru li l-professjonisti jirregolaw lilhom infushom billi jistabbilixxu set komuni ta’ prattiċi *standard*, billi jimmoniterjaw lill-kollegi tagħhom skont dawn l-*istandards*, u billi jnehhu jew jirrifurmaw lil dawk li jaqgħu taħt dawn l-*istandards*. It-trasparenza huwa mod ta’ kif wiehed jagħmel gùstizzja mal-istess komunità. Din il-karatteristika tikkorrelata mad-dmir morali li tinternalizza l-prattiċi tal-*istandards* professjonali, toqgħod għalihom, u li żżomm lil xulxin *accountable* għalihom.

Sfortunatament il-ministeru pastorali huwa nieqes xi ftit minn din il-ħaġa. Għal dawk li huma ordnati, id-Drittu Kanoniku huwa l-uniku li jagħti struttura għall-*accountability* billi jpoġġi r-*rekweżiti* għall-ammissjoni u għall-mod ta’ kif wiehed jgħix il-ministeru ordnat. Jidhlu wkoll hawnhekk il-mod ta’ kif jamministra l-propjeta tal-parroċċa [dar parrokkjali], il-flus tal-parroċċa, eċċ... Il-ministeru saċerdotali anki f’dawn l-affarijiet jitlob *accountability* u *trasparenza*. In-nuqqas ta’ *standards* għal mod ta’ kif wiehed jaħdem u n-nuqqas ta’ *strutturi ta’ accountability* fil-ministeru pastorali jdghajfu l-karattru professjonali tal-ministeru u jhallih miftuh għal hafna kritika.

Konkluzjoni

Inhoss li għall-ewwel mistoqsija li joffri dan il-każ, ta’ “x’ inhi l-attività propja tas-saċerdot?,” wegibt tul dan l-istudju qasir tiegħi li għadni kemm qsamt magħkom. Fl-aħħarnett sejjer nislet xi punti mid-Drittu Kanoniku, [il-V Ktieb li jitkellem mill-gid temporali tal-Knisja u l-amministrazzjoni tiegħu], li jiggwidaw lis-saċerdot/l-isqof fit-trasparenza u l-*accountability* tal-ħidma tagħhom, sabiex inwieġeb għat-tieni mistoqsija li poġġejna quddiemna:

“Kemm għandha tkun trasparenti l-hidma tagħna bhala saċerdoti fejn jidhlu l-flus tal-parruċċani?”⁴

L-Ordinarju fid-Djoċesi [l-Isqof/Vigarju Ġenerali] huwa fid-dmir li jirregola l-amministrazzjoni tal-beni ekkleżjastiċi mobbli u immobbli billi johroġ istruzzjonijiet speċjali, fil-limiti tal-ligi universali u partikolari. Huwa fid-dmir li jikkonsulta mal-kumitat finanzjarju u mal-kulleġġ tal-konsulturi fi hdan il-Kurja anki f’dawk il-materji ta’ importanza maġġuri f’dik li hi amministrazzjoni. F’każijiet straordinarji ta’ amministrazzjoni jehtieg saħansitra il-kunsens tal-kumitat u l-kulleġġ tal-konsulturi. [Tiddetermina l-Konferenza Episkopali dawk l-affarijiet li għandhom jitqiesu bhala atti ta’ amministrazzjoni straordinarja]. Kull persuna ġuridika, bhal p.e. parroċċa, jehtieg li jkollha kumitat finanzjarju jew tal-inqas żewġ konsulturi sabiex jassistu fid-dmirijiet tal-amministratur.

Kull persuna, sew kjeriċi jew lajċi, li jieħdu sehem fl-amministrazzjoni tal-beni ekkleżjastiċi huma marbuta li jwettqu d-dmirijiet tagħhom f’isem il-Knisja, u konkordi mal-ligi. Qabel amministratur jidhol għad-dmirijiet tiegħu jehtieg li:

(i) jagħmel ġurament, fil-preżenza tal-Ordinarju/jew delegat tiegħu li ser jidhol għal dan l-uffiċċju b’responsabilità;

(ii) jagħmel inventarju ċar u eżatt tal-beni immobbli u l-beni mobbli l-aktar dawk li huma meqjusa prezzjużi jew għandhom valur kulturali, liema inventarju jinżamm kemm fil-parroċċa u kemm il-Kurja.

L-amministraturi kollha għandhom iwettqu d-dmirijiet tagħhom bid-diligenza ta’ wieħed li jieħu hsieb kif jixraq il-ħwejjeg tad-dar tiegħu personali. Għalhekk jehtieg li:

(i) jieħdu hsieb li dawk il-beni li qegħdin taħt ir-responsabilità tagħhom ma jsufrux danni; f’xi każi wieħed jissuggerixxi assigurazzjoni fuq l-istess beni;

(ii) jassiguraw li l-beni li takkwista l-Knisja takkwistahom b’mod salvagwardjat mil-ligi ċivili;

⁴ Ara: Appendiċi A

- (iii) joqghodu attenti li josservaw il-provizjonijiet proposti mil-liġi ċivili u mid-Dritt Kanoniku sabiex ma jittiehdux azzjonijiet li jistgħu jisfaw ta' ħsara għall-istess Knisja;
- (iv) jiġbru l-*income*/interessi minn beni li hu bi dritt għall-Knisja fil-hin opportun u jużawhom f'konkordanza max-xewqat ta' individwi jew tan-normi.
- (v) iħallsu xi interessi li jista' jkun hemm minhabba self, u jaraw li f'hin opportun il-kapital jerga' jiġi mħallas;
- (vi) bil-kunsens tal-ordinarju jistgħu jagħmlu użu, għall-iskopijiet tal-persuna ġuridika (il-parroċċa), mill-flus wara li jkun thallsu l-ispejjeż tad-*day-to-day* run tal-parroċċa;
- (vii) iżommu *records* tal-*income* u tal-infiq;
- (viii) jagħmlu rendikont tal-amministrazzjoni fi tmiem ta' kull sena, u jingħata lill-ordinarju;
- (ix) iżommu b'mod dekoruż u sigur id-dokumenti u r-*records* li jistabillixu d-drittijiet tal-Knisja; ta' min iżomm id-dokumenti originali il-Kurja.

Fl-aħharnett huwa xieraq li l-amministraturi jagħtu wkoll rendikont lill-fidili ta' dawk il-beni li l-fidili stess ikunu taw lill-Knisja, bi qbil man-normi li jkun hemm mil-liġi partikolari.

APPENDICI A
THE ADMINISTRATION OF GOODS (Can. 1273 - 1289)

Can. 1273 By virtue of his primacy of governance, the Roman Pontiff is the supreme administrator and steward of all ecclesiastical goods.

Can. 1274 §1. Each diocese is to have a special institute which is to collect goods or offerings for the purpose of providing, according to the norm of can. 281, for the support of clerics who offer service for the benefit of the diocese, unless provision is made for them in another way.

§2. Where social provision for the benefit of clergy has not yet been suitably arranged, the conference of bishops is to take care that there is an institute which provides sufficiently for the social security of clerics.

§3. Insofar as necessary, each diocese is to establish a common fund through which bishops are able to satisfy obligations towards other persons who serve the Church and meet the various needs of the diocese and through which the richer dioceses can also assist the poorer ones.

§4. According to different local circumstances, the purposes mentioned in §2 and §3 can be obtained more suitably through a federation of diocesan institutes, through a cooperative endeavor, or even through an appropriate association established for various dioceses or for the entire territory of the conference of bishops.

§5. If possible, these institutes are to be established in such a way that they also have recognition in civil law.

Can. 1275 An aggregate of goods which come from different dioceses is administered according to the norms appropriately agreed upon by the bishops concerned.

Can. 1276 §1. It is for the ordinary to exercise careful vigilance over the administration of all the goods which belong to public juridic persons subject to him, without prejudice to legitimate titles which attribute more significant rights to him.

§2. With due regard for rights, legitimate customs, and circumstances, ordinaries are to take care of the ordering of the entire matter of the administration of ecclesiastical goods by issuing special instructions within the limits of universal and particular law.

Can. 1277 The diocesan bishop must hear the finance council and college of consultors to place acts of administration which are more important in light of the economic condition of the diocese. In addition to the cases specially expressed in universal law or the charter of a foundation, however, he needs the consent of the finance council and of the college of consultors to place acts of extraordinary administration. It is for the conference of bishops to define which acts are to be considered of extraordinary administration.

Can. 1278 In addition to the functions mentioned in can. 494, §§3 and 4, the diocesan bishop can entrust to the finance officer the functions mentioned in cann. 1276, §1 and 1279, §2.

Can. 1279 §1. The administration of ecclesiastical goods pertains to the one who immediately governs the person to which the goods belong unless particular law, statutes, or legitimate custom determine otherwise and without prejudice to the right of the ordinary to intervene in case of negligence by an administrator.

§2. In the administration of the goods of a public juridic person which does not have its own administrators by law, the charter of the foundation, or its own statutes, the ordinary to whom it is subject is to appoint suitable persons for three years; the same persons can be reappointed by the ordinary.

Can. 1280 Each juridic person is to have its own finance council or at least two counselors who, according to the norm of the statutes, are to assist the administrator in fulfilling his or her function.

Can. 1281 §1. Without prejudice to the prescripts of the statutes, administrators invalidly place acts which exceed the limits and

manner of ordinary administration unless they have first obtained a written faculty from the ordinary.

§2. The statutes are to define the acts which exceed the limit and manner of ordinary administration; if the statutes are silent in this regard, however, the diocesan bishop is competent to determine such acts for the persons subject to him, after having heard the finance council.

§3. Unless and to the extent that it is to its own advantage, a juridic person is not bound to answer for acts invalidly placed by its administrators. A juridic person itself, however, will answer for acts illegitimately but validly placed by its administrators, without prejudice to its right of action or recourse against the administrators who have damaged it.

Can. 1282 All clerics or lay persons who take part in the administration of ecclesiastical goods by a legitimate title are bound to fulfill their functions in the name of the Church according to the norm of law.

Can. 1283 Before administrators begin their function:

1/ they must take an oath before the ordinary or his delegate that they will administer well and faithfully;

2/ they are to prepare and sign an accurate and clear inventory of immovable property, movable objects, whether precious or of some cultural value, or other goods, with their description and appraisal; any inventory already done is to be reviewed;

3/ one copy of this inventory is to be preserved in the archive of the administration and another in the archive of the curia; any change which the patrimony happens to undergo is to be noted in each copy.

Can. 1284 §1. All administrators are bound to fulfill their function with the diligence of a good householder.

§2. Consequently they must:

1/ exercise vigilance so that the goods entrusted to their care are in no way lost or damaged, taking out insurance policies for this purpose insofar as necessary;

2/ take care that the ownership of ecclesiastical goods is protected by civilly valid methods;

- 3/ observe the precepts of both canon and civil law or those imposed by a founder, a donor, or legitimate authority, and especially be on guard so that no damage comes to the Church from the non-observance of civil laws;
- 4/ collect the return of goods and the income accurately and on time, protect what is collected, and use them according to the intention of the founder or legitimate norms;
- 5/ pay at the stated time the interest due on a loan or mortgage and take care that the capital debt itself is repaid in a timely manner;
- 6/ with the consent of the ordinary, invest the money which is left over after expenses and can be usefully set aside for the purposes of the juridic person;
- 7/ keep well organized books of receipts and expenditures;
- 8/ draw up a report of the administration at the end of each year;
- 9/ organize correctly and protect in a suitable and proper archive the documents and records on which the property rights of the Church or the institute are based, and deposit authentic copies of them in the archive of the curia when it can be done conveniently.

§3. It is strongly recommended that administrators prepare budgets of incomes and expenditures each year; it is left to particular law, however, to require them and to determine more precisely the ways in which they are to be presented.

Can. 1285 Within the limits of ordinary administration only, administrators are permitted to make donations for purposes of piety or Christian charity from movable goods which do not belong to the stable patrimony.

Can. 1286 Administrators of goods:

- 1/ in the employment of workers are to observe meticulously also the civil laws concerning labor and social policy, according to the principles handed on by the Church;
- 2/ are to pay a just and decent wage to employees so that they are able to provide fittingly for their own needs and those of their dependents.

Can. 1287 §1. Both clerical and lay administrators of any ecclesiastical goods whatever which have not been legitimately exempted from the power of governance of the diocesan bishop are bound by their

office to present an annual report to the local ordinary who is to present it for examination by the finance council; any contrary custom is reprobated.

§2. According to norms to be determined by particular law, administrators are to render an account to the faithful concerning the goods oVered by the faithful to the Church.

Can. 1288 Administrators are neither to initiate nor to contest litigation in a civil forum in the name of a public juridic person unless they have obtained the written permission of their own ordinary.

Can. 1289 Even if not bound to administration by the title of an ecclesiastical office, administrators cannot relinquish their function on their own initiative; if the Church is harmed from an arbitrary withdrawal, moreover, they are bound to restitution.

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RAIMONDO RIVA

**MINISTERIUM VERBI (At 6,4): RIFLESSIONI
SULL'ANNUNCIO DELLA PAROLA, SUSCITATE DAL
LIBRO 'GESÙ DI NAZARET' DI BENEDETTO XVI ¹**

Il Papa, nell'introduzione a *"Gesù di Nazaret"*, enuncia la situazione, in cui si colloca il suo libro. È la situazione dell'esegesi e dell'ermeneutica biblica caratterizzate dalla frattura tra "il Gesù della storia" e "il Cristo della fede". L'espressione è il titolo dell'opera di David Friedrich Strauss, *Der Christus des Glaubens und der Jesus der Geschichte. Eine Kritik des Schleiermacherschen Lebens Jesu*, [Il Cristo della fede e il Gesù della storia. Una critica della Vita di Gesù di Schleiermacher] Berlin 1865. Ritorna nel titolo dell'opera di Martin Kähler, *Der sogenannte historische Jesus und der geschichtliche, bibliche Christus*, [Il cosiddetto Gesù della storia e il Cristo storico biblico] Leipzig 1892. Questa concezione è presente, con preminenza diversa, nelle ermeneutiche successive, specialmente nella produzione di lingua tedesca. Dopo la seconda guerra mondiale influisce anche sulle ermeneutiche d'altre espressioni linguistiche. Quanto la formulazione della frattura esprima un problema fondamentale nella comprensione delle narrazioni evangeliche, si nota anche da una voluminosa pubblicazione collettiva di contributi per la comprensione di Cristo nella ricerca e nella predicazione, di protestanti e cattolici, pubblicata a Berlino, 1962, da Helmut Ristow e Karl Matthiae, che ha per titolo: *Der historische Jesus und der kerigmatische Christus*, [Il Gesù storico e il Cristo del cherigma]. La persistenza di questo problema appare dall'introduzione al libro del Papa. L'ermeneutica espressa nel libro sollecita l'esplicitazione delle nostre stesse letture della Sacra Scrittura. L'esposizione si svolgerà in tre momenti: *Verbum caro factum*; *Verbum abbreviatum*; *Christus totus: caput et corpus*.

1. *Verbum caro factum*

L'esegesi che ha originato e che condiziona la frattura richiamata dal Papa, si caratterizza con denominazioni diventate usuali: critica letteraria, storia delle

¹ Mons. Riva ha dato questa relazione durante un convegno per i sacerdoti di Gozo il 29 Marzo 2008

forme, storia della redazione, critica storica; sono i metodi storici dell'esegesi. L'esposizione seguente esplicita alcune condizioni e risultati che influiscono sulla lettura presente della Bibbia. L'esegesi biblica moderna ha le sue radici nel movimento culturale dell'umanesimo e del rinascimento iniziato nel secolo XIV. La pittura di Cimabue raffigura il dolore dell'uomo-Dio crocefisso e le sue Madri-vergini sono appunto le "madonne": la donna nobilitata nella sua maternità, certo divina, perché il suo trono è attorniato dagli angeli, ma il suo volto e i suoi atteggiamenti sono quelli della donna-madre. I canoni estetici della tradizione bizantina sono mutati. S. Francesco è l'ideatore del presepio "vivente": la nascita del Figlio di Dio a Betlemme è l'evento rappresentato nella nascita di un normale bambino di Greccio. Giotto nella basilica d'Assisi non raffigura più l'icona del santo, bensì narra le vicende umane dell'uomo santo, venerato come "alter Christus". È una visione mutata, certo sempre cristiana, dell'uomo nella sua storia. Il movimento culturale è, infatti, anche "rinascimento". Cresce l'interesse per le memorie del passato; i testi antichi non sono più solo interpretati, bensì sono studiati come eventi storici essi stessi, fattori della storia. Dal secolo XVI la Bibbia non s'interpretò più solo come Parola rivelata, norma della vita di fede; essa si studiò nella sua composizione di testi costitutivi della storia della rivelazione. Si sviluppò *la critica letteraria*, prima del V.T. poi soprattutto dei Sinottici, con qualche attenzione anche a Giovanni e Paolo. Lo studio critico individua nei testi caratteristiche letterarie di tradizioni differenti costitutive delle unità presenti. È l'esegesi, ben conosciuta, che marcò la ricerca per più di duecento anni.

Negli anni dal 1919 al 1921 furono pubblicati i libri che affermarono, nella ricerca biblica, lo studio della *storia delle forme*. Furono ricerche indipendenti; la loro convergenza metodologica è segno di una mutazione nella cultura letteraria, influenzata anche dalla rinnovata storia delle religioni. La presenza delle varie forme letterarie nell'unità dell'opera indirizzò l'esegesi, negli anni dal 1954 al 1959, all'attenzione dei procedimenti e della *storia della redazione*, che manifesta le idee, le concezioni, la "teologia" dell'autore o degli autori. La critica storica dei testi evidenziò gli elementi della formazione delle tradizioni e dei testi, come espressioni di differenti concezioni del passato narrato. La Bibbia è letta come raccolta di documenti del passato, sottoposti a critica come ogni altro scritto antico, per conoscere il passato "così come è avvenuto".

Dagli anni sessanta e negli anni settanta si sono andati affermando i metodi sincronici, con l'estrapolazione di principi e criteri della scienza del linguaggio.

Ha influito soprattutto la linguistica strutturale, che considera ciascuna lingua struttura costituita dalle rete delle relazioni in cui è determinato il significato di ogni elemento. L'applicazione di questi principi ai testi ha dato origine ai vari tipi di analisi narrativa, che individua il senso di ogni istanza testuale come distinzione da ogni altra, funzionale nella rete strutturale che è il testo. Anche la filosofia del linguaggio può orientare l'ermeneutica del testo biblico in quanto atto linguistico.

La Sacra Scrittura, *Verbum incarnatum*, soggiace a tutte le condizioni dell'esistenza storica; anche a tutte le "tentazioni" e a tutti i pericoli di incomprendimento degli eventi storici. La critica storica riguardante Gesù, sulla testimonianza fondamentale dei testi sacri, ricerca la sua figura così come egli è stato in realtà. Egli fu uomo di un'intensissima esperienza spirituale, nella storia dei grandi "illuminati", con tratti caratteristici eminenti ed eccezionali. La sua predicazione attesta l'esperienza del divino ed è insegnamento sublime per l'umanità. È necessaria una prima precisazione dell'espressione "Gesù della storia". Il Gesù della storia è l'uomo che è nato in un certo anno, in un certo luogo, da genitori conosciuti, che l'anno allevato ed educato in un certo modo, aveva un certo aspetto, ecc.: è la persona nelle circostanze reali di tempo e di spazio di tutta la sua vita fino alla morte: la persona nella sua realtà storica. Di questa persona si può fare una rappresentazione, se ne scrive la storia, che ne conserva il ricordo in coloro che l'hanno conosciuta e la fanno conoscere ad estranei. La storia più completa e più fedele non è mai la realtà nella sua compiutezza di evento storico. Le biografie, anche le più fedeli alla realtà storica, sono sempre diverse e tuttavia "vere" nell'inevitabile "interpretazione", che è ogni narrazione, purché l'evento non sia solo il pretesto per dare concretezza di realtà ad una propria idea. I vangeli sono la storia di Gesù, non come biografia, bensì come testimonianza di coloro che ne hanno condiviso la realtà della vita. La testimonianza narra l'evento in modo che se ne manifesti la sua vera realtà nell'intreccio delle circostanze. Un cronista può fare la storia di un bacio tra due innamorati, narrando anche tutte le circostanze reali dell'evento; un amico fedele, che voglia rendere testimonianza dell'amore dei due innamorati, ne farà una narrazione ben diversa da quella del cronista, ma che è pure storia vera dell'evento del bacio nella relazione vitale dei due innamorati. L'amico può anche trascurare circostanze, che il cronista, proprio perché tale e non partecipe della storia, ha dovuto narrare. Il giudizio sulla verità storica della testimonianza non si limita all'esame critico delle circostanze narrate, bensì esamina la credibilità dei testimoni e

della loro testimonianza. Le narrazioni evangeliche hanno la loro origine nella predicazione apostolica, testimonianza di un'esperienza di comunione di vita, di cui, fra poco, si ricorderanno alcune caratteristiche.

I vangeli narrano anche eventi straordinari, per i quali la ricerca storica, secondo i suoi criteri metodologici, può e deve solo constatare l'attendibilità dei racconti. La natura degli eventi narrati, infatti, per la coerenza metodologica, è di pertinenza di un'altra possibilità di conoscenza della realtà dell'uomo. Tuttavia la ricerca storica che vuole affermarsi come la "scienza" della conoscenza certa e in sé compiuta della totalità dell'evento, anche straordinario, può svolgersi, per esigenze del suo metodo, solo con un'interpretazione delle circostanze dell'evento straordinario, che lo riduca nei limiti dei rapporti delle causalità constatabili. In questa concezione i racconti evangelici sono confrontati con racconti di fatti straordinari nella vita di "illuminati", o del così detto "uomo divino", conosciuti dalla storia delle religioni. Si evidenziano le casuali somiglianze, ma non si riconosce, allora, la straordinarietà propria delle opere di Gesù, trascurando non solo la loro relazione alla sua parola, ma la loro funzione caratteristica in tutto il suo ministero. Un'altra interpretazione dei racconti evangelici, per spiegarli nel rapporto delle cause riconosciute dalla scienza storica, suppone la concezione che esclude gli interventi di Dio nella storia come causa degli eventi straordinari, e quindi ritenuti soprannaturali. Infatti, si ritiene che Dio o neppure c'è, o se c'è, non opera in discrepanza con quanto egli stesso ha creato, e, nella sua alterità trascendente, non si rende presente nella storia da lui lasciata alla libertà dell'uomo. I racconti evangelici, quindi, non sono attestazioni storiche di eventi reali nella vita di Gesù; i vari strati, che si ritiene di individuare nella formazione e redazione dei testi, sono attestazioni dello sviluppo della fede dei suoi discepoli nella divinità di Gesù. Vi è dunque il Gesù della storia, di cui poco si conosce e il Cristo della fede, figlio di Dio, operatore di miracoli.

Quest'interpretazione diventa, a volte, un elemento della concezione della vera fede salvifica. Si ritiene, infatti, che la storia è la vicenda dell'uomo segnata dal peccato, i cui eventi non sono mai salvifici; perciò non ha nessun'importanza se Gesù ha compiuto o no le opere straordinarie che sono narrate nei vangeli; che importa è la fede espressa nei racconti, che sono la Parola divina sempre presente, rivelazione in Gesù dell'amore di Dio che si dona fino alla morte, cui credendo si è salvati. Inoltre il linguaggio dei racconti evangelici, creati dalla fede delle varie comunità dei discepoli, è

simile a quello dei racconti mitici, espressione di una concezione del mondo mutata dalla nostra conoscenza attuale. L'adesione della fede esige, dunque, un'interpretazione di "demitologizzazione".

Le letture sincroniche della Bibbia, nella concezione strutturale "solipsistica" del linguaggio, possono concludersi con l'affermazione di un senso, che è solo una formulazione di quanto il testo dice di se stesso. Nella teoria del linguaggio come assieme di enunciati che finiscono con essere contraddittori, non si può pretendere di affermare la "verità".

I brevi accenni di questa storia di esegesi sono pure storia della Parola viva che è la Sacra Scrittura. Essa è parola di storia, creduta come storia della salvezza; essa stessa è evento di questa storia, tesa al suo compimento. La storia della sua comprensione è la storia del *Verbun incarnatum*. La nostra lettura della Bibbia è condizionata da questa storia, che non deve essere avvertita con fastidio come eredità da cui liberarsi. Le conoscenze che si apprendono nelle introduzioni e nelle varie interpretazioni sono i dati da comprendere nei loro principi ermeneutici, per esplicitare i presupposti delle nostre letture presenti. La persuasione della vita storica della Parola premunisce anche dalla convinzione fondamentalista del testo caduto dal cielo per diretta dettatura divina. Il *Verbum incarnatum* ha avuto un inizio; come ogni testo è parola dell'uomo sull'uomo, ma per il fedele è la Parola fondante, in unità indissolubile con il Verbo Unigenito di Dio fatto carne. Con esso si è collegati non per uno sforzo ermeneutico che risusciti un evento morto, superando la distanza locale e temporale. Il *Verbum incarnatum* è l'autorivelazione del *Verbum* che dà compimento alla storia e alla parola passata, affermandosi come la Parola di tutta la storia. Parola viva nella comunità dei suoi discepoli, che sono nel tempo e nello spazio la realizzazione presente della svolta decisiva che è Gesù, nella storia già millenaria di un popolo e di tutta la storia. Nella nuova comunità vive la Parola nella storia, tesa al suo compimento. Il *Verbum incarnatum* è il *Verbum-Persona*, unità e vertice della Parola del passato e del futuro. Il *Verbum incarnatum* è il *Verbum abbreviatum*.

2. *Verbum abbreviatum*

L'espressione – usata dagli scrittori medievali, in consonanza con locuzioni di Ireneo, Origene, Gerolamo, Agostino - è la confessione di Gesù, Verbo incarnato, fondamento dell'unità di tutta la storia come storia di salvezza e della Parola che la rivela. Il detto può bene significare uno dei criteri ermeneutici del

Papa, quando legge i testi nei quali Gesù è il vertice, convergenza e coerenza di tutta la storia della salvezza e della Parola rivelatrice, unico Verbo del Padre. Le circostanze del ministero di Gesù sono le “situazioni vitali”- *Sitz im Leben* – della sua rivelazione e dell’esperienza dei discepoli, inizio del popolo nuovo e della nuova tradizione della Parola. Il gruppo di discepoli prima della pasqua, germe della comunità post-pasquale, si costituisce come sequela di uno che non ha autorità per funzioni nella società, ma ha l’autorevolezza della parola profetica e dei segni nella linea dell’attesa messianica. La sequela caratterizza il modo di vivere, sull’esempio di Gesù e per il suo insegnamento di vita comunitaria. I discepoli sono inviati in missione e sono, quindi, istruiti sull’annuncio del Regno. Si determina, allora, una distinzione dalla situazione legata al passato. Il rapporto della vita e della Parola del presente con il passato è espresso soprattutto come “compimento”. Esso afferma sia continuità che novità: una realtà compiuta non è più quella di prima, appunto perché “compiuta”; ma, nello stesso tempo, il nuovo esiste in continuità col precedente. “Compimento” è criterio ermeneutico permanente nella lettura dell’unità biblica, perché “*Vetus Testamentum in Novo revelatum, in Vetere Novum velatum vides*” (S. Agostino, *In Ps 105*). La valenza ermeneutica del compimento si può esemplificare in alcune rapporti.

a) Il rapporto di Gesù con la Legge mosaica. Gesù afferma che egli non è venuto per abolire Legge o Profeti, bensì per dare compimento, e aggiunge che neppure un minimo elemento della Legge passerà senza che sia compiuto, cf. Mt 5,17-18. Eppure non si preoccupa delle tradizioni per l’osservanza del sabato e proclama che il Figlio dell’uomo è signore del sabato, cf. Mc 2,28. Ancora afferma con autorità “è stato detto, [cioè: Dio ha detto], ma io vi dico”, cf. Mt 5,21-22;... Le sue affermazioni non annullano il valore della Legge, di cui anzi proclamano le esigenze *radicali*: non gli estremismi, ma il fondamento, la *radice* appunto, delle formulazioni della Legge. Questa viene perciò anche purificata dalla pastoie dell’elencazione casuistica. La *sua* “Legge” è la novità della *sua interpretazione* della Legge antica. Il fondamento di quest’interpretazione si manifesta nella risposta di Gesù: “se vuoi essere perfetto, va, vendi quanto hai, dallo ai poveri, vieni e seguimi”, cf. Mt 19,21. Lo scandalo della risposta di Gesù è ben dichiarato nel commento di J. NEUSNER, *A Rabbi talks with Jesus*, pp.75-81, citato più volte dal Papa. Il rabbino americano ricorda la pagina rabbinica del giovane che lascia per tre anni e ancora per altre due volte la giovane moglie e sconvolge gli inizi della sua vita coniugale, disattendendo le indicazioni del Dt 24,5, per studiare la

Legge e termina col commento: “The equation is the same, but Jesus replaces Thora”, p.81: la novità “scandalosa” è Gesù. La comunità – ekklesia – di Gesù, in continuità con quella dell’A.T., non è una comunità di rivoluzionari anarchici e libertini; essa ha una legge: “vi do il mio comandamento: che vi amiate come io vi ho amati”, Gv 15,12. La “verità” delle molteplici attuazioni del comandamento non è la coerenza di un sistema di precetti, bensì il rapporto personale: Egli è “la via, la verità e la vita”, Gv 14,6.

b) La comunità – ekklesia – di Gesù è chiamata, a volte, il “nuovo popolo di Dio”. Il popolo di Dio è la manifestazione nella storia dell’azione salvifica di Dio, della progressiva realizzazione del suo Regno. La fedeltà di Dio al suo piano d’amore salvifico è la continuità di un’unica storia di salvezza tesa al suo compimento nel e per il suo popolo. La comunità di Gesù è ora il popolo di Dio, nel senso in cui Gesù è la “verità”, cioè la realizzazione veridica delle attese dell’A.T. Proprio per questo la comunità di Gesù, popolo di Dio, non è la negazione di quelle promesse e del popolo nel quale esse sono divenute eventi di vita e della storia.

c) Il rapporto di compimento tra V.e N.T. è espresso anche come “figura” e “tipo”. S.Paolo scrive che tra Adamo e Cristo vi è il rapporto di “tipo” ad “antitipo”, Rm 5,14. Personaggi e istituzioni del N.T. sono compresi come la novità di veridificazione di quelle dell’A. In questo rapporto la comprensione del N.T. è sottratta al pericolo di un’interpretazione di figure e simboli come fossero solo delle concezioni “spiritualistiche” disincarnate, più che senso di realtà. Il valore figurativo simbolico di realtà e istituzioni è svigorito in considerazioni di tesi dottrinali o morali. Cf, per esempio, le applicazioni dell’acqua, nelle esortazioni devozionali, dove non è più la realtà di vita nel deserto, nella siccità, per l’agricoltura, che raffigura realtà vere “spirituali” della vita di fede. O ancora, per esempio, la Gerusalemme celeste resa vuota immagine senza la concretezza della città, nella quale il popolo di Dio vive la sua vita. Il testo biblico è pretesto per esposizioni dottrinali, di sapore gnostico.

d) L’attesa del Regno nell’A.T. sosteneva la vita d’Israele, perché si fondava sull’esperienza della presenza del suo Dio rivelatosi a Mosè, come l’unico Dio, Signore della storia, creatore e sostentatore della sua creatura. Gesù annuncia la presenza nuova del Regno per la sua presenza di Figlio, rivelatore del Padre, che segna la novità nella realtà storica del Regno. È la fede, la certezza di questa presenza, che, come ha caratterizzato la vita del popolo del Regno nell’A.T., deve essere la ragione di vita del popolo del Regno reso

presente in Gesù. Il popolo del Regno è il popolo di Dio. Nel nostro mondo, i membri del popolo del Regno sono esposti alla seduzione di ridurre il Regno a valori quali la solidarietà, la giustizia sociale, l'opposizione alla guerra, l'amore del prossimo nella prospettiva ristretta dell'esperienza terrena. Sono tutti valori che fanno pure parte del Regno, ma sono percepiti e vissuti come valori mondani, terreni, non nella certezza salvifica, redenta, per la fede in Dio e nella sua presenza nella storia.

3. *Verbum del Christus totus: caput et corpus*

Il detto ispirato da S. Agostino può ancora esprimere il criterio ermeneutico quando il Papa legge i testi in riferimento al presente. Il *Verbum abbreviatum*, come realtà dell'unica Parola di tutta la storia della salvezza, è la Parola permanente del *Christus Totus: caput et corpus*. La Sacra Scrittura è la parola per la vita del Corpo mistico di Cristo: il "corpo" che è la comunità dei suoi discepoli, la sua Chiesa nella storia. La Parola è viva per l'uomo di ogni situazione e tempo; essa, allora, è viva nella lettura continua della comunità credente. S. Gregorio Magno, scrive: "eloquia sacra cum legente crescunt". La *lectio sacra*, cioè la Sacra Scrittura in quanto viva nella lettura, non è esercizio d'acquisizione di conoscenza, come avviene in ogni lettura, né impegno professionale per poterla ridire, fosse anche nella predica domenicale. Essa è Parola di vita, perché nella lettura diventa vita, che da questa Parola è illuminata, guidata, convertita. Se è così viva per e in ogni membro della comunità credente, questi la può testimoniare perché sia Parola di vita anche per gli altri. Questa è "lectio spiritualis", "intellectus spiritualis" perché lo Spirito Santo, nell'ascolto orante, fa sì che essa sia mia vita, e non per la sola abilità investigativa del mio intelletto; è, dunque, azione "sacramentale".

La Parola è mia vita nella "lectio divina", che di solito si pratica secondo le indicazioni di Guigo il certosino: *lectio, meditatio, oratio, contemplatio*. La preoccupazione dell'attenzione ai vari momenti può ridurre la *lectio divina* a puro metodo, accanto ad altri o in sostituzione di altri, per acquisire delle nozioni utili per la vita spirituale. Alcune disposizioni sono presenti nell'ascolto fruttuoso della Parola, con l'illuminazione e la mozione dello Spirito Santo: l'attenta lettura per l'intelligenza del testo; la riflessione meditativa per configurare il senso permanente del testo e per me; la preghiera d'impetrazione; la quiete contemplativa e amorosa; la consolazione del gusto spirituale suscitato dallo Spirito Santo; il discernimento per le scelte con l'illuminazione dello Spirito Santo; la deliberazione della volontà; l'avvio dell'azione per

il conseguimento del fine e del frutto. La nostra *lectio* è quella anche di ministri della Parola, che impegna in modo particolare il discernimento, la deliberazione e l'azione.

Già la lettura della S. Scrittura come *Verbum abbreviatum*, che è l'unico di tutta la storia della salvezza, e dunque anche del tempo presente, è *ministerium verbi*. Questo richiede anche una mediazione culturale. La nostra visione del mondo e della storia è ben diversa da quella in cui furono scritti i testi della Bibbia. Si parla allora di demitizzazione e di demitologizzazione: problemi conosciuti. La mediazione culturale per il linguaggio non è semplice traduzione lessicale, bensì espressione che si riferisca e dica l'esperienza presente della vita di fede: "il mio dire il dire del testo" (P. Ricoeur).

Due esempi: il linguaggio del "Regno dei cieli": non è il regno sopra le nubi, ma il Regno di "Dio", come già si esprime Luca a differenza di Matteo. "Regno": è sia regalità, sovranità; sia esercizio della sovranità: l'azione sovrana libera di Dio nella creazione e nella storia; sia lo spazio e le istituzioni della società in cui si rende presente la sovranità di Dio. In queste differenti configurazioni dell'espressione "Regno dei cieli" si collocano anche le considerazioni dei rapporti tra Regno e Chiesa.

Il linguaggio della "verità". Nella nostra cultura spesso verità è identificata con conoscenza certa, e di solito, con riduzione arbitraria, questa è la sola conoscenza acquisita con la ricerca scientifica. Quando Gesù si definisce "verità" intende la conoscenza per rivelazione della sua persona di Verbo del Padre, accolta dall'uomo capace di aprirsi alla realtà ultra sensibile, ultra terrena, non attingibile dalla ricerca "scientifica, che è quella di Dio.

Ancora un'indicazione per l'attuazione della Parola che sia vita è suggerita dal distico tradizionale che enuncia i vari sensi della S. Scrittura: *litera gesta docet, quid credas allegoria // moralis quid agas, quo tendas anagogia*. Lo scrisse il domenicano Agostino, soprannominato "di Dacia", ma di origine scandinava, circa il 1260 nella sua opera *Rotulus pugillaris*; divenne detto diffuso dopo che Nicola di Lira lo citò nella sua *Postilla*, nel 1330. Un'interpretazione perspicua della Sacra Scrittura nella comprensione dei quattro sensi è un testo di Gerone, Canonico Regolare di Reichenberg sull'Inn, nella metà del 1200, che legge il racconto delle nozze a Cana: "In questa sola pagina del Vangelo noi possiamo osservare quattro specie differenti di banchetto nuziale: lo storico, il morale, l'allegorico, l'anagogico. Il banchetto

storico è quello, di cui leggiamo alla lettera, che ebbe luogo a Cana di Galilea. L'allegorico è quello che ha luogo in maniera universale tra il Cristo e la Chiesa, essendo la loro unione nuziale celebrata a Cana di Galilea, cioè nello zelo (l'interprete associa "Cana" al radicale ebraico qn' che significa "zelo") della trasmigrazione (l'interprete s'ispira a Is 8,23-9,1 citato da Mt 4,15) col passaggio di Cristo dai giudei ai gentili. Il banchetto morale è quello che si tiene ogni giorno, allorché l'anima credente s'unisce al Verbo di Dio e prende con lui il suo pasto, nel suo ardore di passare dalle cose terrestri alle celesti. L'anagogico è quello del cielo, allorché, con l'esclusione delle vergine folli, le vergini sagge passano da questo mondo al talamo nuziale, dove, nel fuoco di una carità fervente, esse ameranno per l'eternità il loro sposo e saranno per l'eternità amate da lui"(da H. DE LUBAC, S.J., *L'écriture dans la tradition*, Paris 1966, pp.266-267). Le interpretazioni esplicitano i quattro sensi come attuazioni della Parola in quella cultura e in quell'ambiente monastico; i quattro sensi indicano gli ambiti permanenti della vita di fede per la lettura di attualizzazione: l'evento della vita di Gesù, fondamento della fede; il senso di fede per la vita della chiesa, il senso morale per la vita del fedele secondo la carità, il senso anagogico per la speranza del compimento ultimo.

Alcuni criteri ermeneutici individuati nel libro del Papa hanno indirizzato la riflessione sul *ministerium verbi*. Il libro del Papa non è di un esegeta, e tuttavia è scritto nel confronto, implicito o dichiarato, con le interpretazioni dell'ermeneutica presente. È scritto da un teologo, ma non è il trattato del professore. È però uno scritto "teologico", perché è "il dire presente" nella perennità della vita del "*Theo-logos*": la Parola ispirata biblica, rivelazione di chi è il *Verbum incarnatum et abbreviatum*, il Logos nell'unità con il Padre, fatto uomo nella fragilità della carne, Gesù di Nazaret, pienezza della grazia e della verità. Dio mai nessuno lo ha veduto, eppure noi contempliamo la sua gloria di Unigenito Dio: Egli è la rivelazione. Sia anche il nostro *ministerium verbi* testimonianza della vita perenne del "*Theo-logos*".

CHARLES BUTTIGIEG

DIAKONIA IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ERA

Introduction

“The son of man came not to be served but to serve” (Mk 10:45). Jesus himself gave us an example of authentic *diakonia*. By his baptism in the river Jordan by John the Baptist he descended into the mud of the river, he became misery for us. At the last supper he himself washed the feet of the apostles. He taught the great parable of *diakonia* in the story of the Good Samaritan. Therefore Jesus true God and true man lived and taught this *diakonia*.

From the beginning, the New Testament church immediately recognized *diakonia* as preaching the gospel of the Risen Lord in charity instead in words. “Go, sell what you have, and give to the poor” (Mk 10:21), and “Sell your possessions, and give to the poor” (Lk 12:33), were the prophetic words of Jesus which we find concretized into the actual life among the christian communities in the Acts of the Apostles where everyone held all things in common. Everyone sold his possessions and goods, like land and houses and distributed them to all, as any had need: “And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need” (Acts 2:42-47). “There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles’ feet; and distribution was made to each as any need. (Acts 4:32-35).

Therefore *diakonia* in the New Testament was regarded as one of the ways of proclaiming the truth of Jesus Christ. The Church as an active community had to be present where there was human need in order to help and heal. Hence *diakonia* was above all a bearing witness to faith. For the Pagans and Jews this *diakonia* was something unusual and striking. For christians, *diakonia* was changing earth into heaven, transforming poverty, sadness and sickness through the power of the great commandment of love. This is the reason why

our Mother Church took great care to see that there was always a *diakonia* in all the beginning local christian communities.

The term *diakonia*

First we must distinguish between two important dimensions in the church, that of *koinonia* which is the unity of the fellowship of believers and *diakonia*, which is the service, also to the service of those who are strangers and opponents. Therefore the service to others extends outside the community of the church. The Greek term *diakonia* literally means waiting at tables but is usually translated as service or ministry.

In the Old Testament we encounter the Hebrew word *avad* meaning to work as closest to *diakonia*. In the New Testament we actually encounter four different words for service. First we have *diakonia* which occurs 96 times. We have *douleia* which is related to slavery and occurs 165 times. We have *latreia* the service of adoration to God and occurs 25 times and *liturgos* the service with others in worship and this occurs 15 times. The apostles themselves were involved in the *diakonia* of the Word. Also the deacons ordained by the apostles were involved in the *diakonia* of tables and then they became involved also in the *diakonia* of the word.

“It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty ...and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands upon them.” (Acts 6:2-3. 5-6).

There were also female deacons, deaconesses involved in this ministry. The other usage which we are going to elaborate here, signifies the service of helping others which every christian was called to do in faith and in love. *Diakonia* hence implies subordinate service. It can be used for christian pastoral ministry (cf. Acts 1:17; Rom 11:13) or for some particular service as for example Paul’s great theme of bringing famine relief to the christians in Judea as one reads in Rom 15:31ff. Paul frequently uses the word *diakonos* for himself and his companions. It can refer to the entire ministry of a local Church as in Rev 2:19 and of the universal Church as in Ephesians 4:12.

Therefore *diakonia* in the NT is neither exclusively liturgical nor exclusively clerical but it belongs to everyone. In fact it implies a *charisma*, it is a gift of the Holy Spirit. In order for the early Church to exercise this *diakonia* effectively, some as we have mentioned were chosen to the special order of these ministers who are called *diakonoï*.

We must note here also that *diakonia* which is service with love is different from slavery (*douleia*) which is servanthood without choice. “If one of you wants to be great, he must be the servant (*diakonos*) of the rest; and if one of you wants to be first, he must be the slave (*doulos*) of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served (*diakonethenai*); he came to serve (*diakonesai*) and to give his life to redeem many people” (Mk 10:43-45). Jesus is the model of such freely chosen service because he has made choices of self-giving and self-sacrifice rather than allowing his background to dictate his behaviour. *Diakonia* is realised in the life of Jesus, the founder of our Church called for the *diakonia*.

“See how they love one another”

These were the words often applied by the pagan to the christians. Hence this was a pagan observation and not a christian observation. There was no other religion who had this service and social initiative as obligatory as in the new religion founded by Jesus Christ. Christians in fact insisted on the obligatory nature of the ministry of *diakonia* as service for others since the Church of Christ was a church for others. According to the Greek Christian Athenagoras writing in the second century:

Among us you can find uneducated people, craftsmen and old women, who cannot discuss the usefulness of christian teaching in words, but who can prove the usefulness of their decision by their activity. They are not constantly using words, but are exhibiting good deeds. When they are struck, they do not hit back and when they are robbed, they do not go to court. They give to those who ask them and they love their fellow-men as themselves. (*Suppl.* 11).

The core of christianity is therefore selfless activity and selfless attitude. Also in the second century, Minucius Felix wrote: “We do not speak of good things. We do them.” (*Oct.* 38.6). Evidence about this *diakonia* is given also in some mocking way by pagan documents. We encounter for example the non-Christian Emperor Julian (361-363) nicknamed by the christians, the

Apostate who was influenced in some way by the Christians in his childhood; he tried to introduce this *diakonia* to his people through his pagan priests. In fact he urged his priests to help the poor, including the poor of the enemy, to take care of prisoners and to show hospitality as found in Christian *diakonia*. Therefore from all this testimony we understand the great impact and influence of the Christian *diakonia* in the early church.

“Making earth into heaven”

St. John Chrysostom (died 407) as a bishop realized the importance of the question of service and help to his people. He created a vision of redistribution of all the possessions of Christians so that there would be no more poor people. This was therefore his preaching: “God said: I have made earth and heaven. I give you too creative power. Make earth into heaven! You can do this!” (cf. *Ep. I ad Tim. Hom. 15,4; PG 62, 585f.*). He saw this *diakonia* or living for others as something that could transform the earth, as salvation that had already begun.

St. Paul in Gal 6:10: “So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith”, gives us clear light on the *diakonia* in the Church that is solidarity within the Church. One must note however that aid was not given without a process of selection in the sense that the degree of the need had to be assessed and the age and status of the persons had to be considered without any form of discrimination. All this meant that the Christians in being generous to a beggar: “Give to him who begs from you.” (Mt 5:42), had to be sensibly ascertain the need of everyone too since *diakonia* has no limits.

St. Augustine says that the bishop is the ‘procurator’, a servant. The spiritual goods which the bishop distributes to the faithful are not his own but God’s. He takes them from the divine ‘storeroom’, since he is only God’s servant, to share them with the faithful, his ‘fellow servants’, who work in the company with himself in their Lord’s vineyard. He continues to argue that according to the etymology of the Greek noun, a bishop (*episkopos*) is one who keeps watch from height, like a watchman who guards the vineyard from an elevated position. “But the account we have to render from this raised place is in danger, unless we stand there so humble in heart as to pray for you, that he who knows your souls may keep watch over them.” (cf. Commentary on Psalm 126, 3).

The organization of the *diakonia* in the NT Church

Jesus himself gave an example of service in his life. The apostolate itself was a ministry. The word *diakonia* is applied beyond the apostolate as we have seen since it refers also to certain material services in the community. The early church institutionalized the *diakonia* ministry in order to exercise always without prejudice and everywhere. As we have said earlier the apostles have chosen seven deacons from the community in order to help them. The deaconate in which the deacons were ordained by the impositions of hands, was responsible for the material goods of the Church and also in helping the poor and organizing the *diakonia*. But they also became concentrated to the service of the Word. In fact St. Stephen (died c.35), the first deacon and the first christian martyr was martyred because of his preaching, whose wisdom was irrefutable.

There was unlimited care for a number of widows as we can find in 1 Tim 5:8: “If any one does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” This care of widows is an early form of the *diakonia* which in turn they themselves were involved in. From the middle of the second century, Sunday collections were set aside as a precondition for helping the needy and the poor. The organization of the *diakonia* in the early church was in the control of the bishop who had some deacons helping him in such an important ministry. In fact St. Laurence Martyr was one of the seven deacons (in fact the archdeacon, the head of the deacons) of the bishop of Rome, the Pope. The bishop was in charge of the treasury and the places where the food was stored. There were other donations and collections made during days of fast. Therefore the *diakonia* managed by the bishop provided the care to everyone in the community.

“Christ in the poor”

This *diakonia* administered to those in need was not a profane activity, rather the church encountered Christ in helping the needy as we find in Mt 25:35-46 with regards the corporal works of mercy where Jesus finishes by saying: “As long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it to Me”. Gregory of Nyssa states expressly that: “Christ is for you a stranger, naked, in need of food, sick, in prison and everything that is predicted in the Gospel. He goes around without a home, naked, sick and lacking the most necessary things.” (*Orat. I*). Gregory of Nazianzen also declares: “As long as there is still time, we want to visit Christ, care for Christ, feed Christ, clothe Christ,

gather up Christ ...since the All Powerful wants mercy and not sacrifices and mercy is more valuable than thousands of fat lambs, we are to take these things to him in the poor and in those who have been thrown today to the ground. Christ is there in the poor.” (*Orat.* 14, 40; PG 35, 909).

Diakonia as we have seen is serving Christ in others, Christ who is calling for help, who is himself directly in need of help of the poor. According to St. Jerome: “Christ is clothed in the poor, visited in the sick, fed in the hungry and given shelter in those who have no roof over their head” (*Ep.* 130, 14).

Conclusion

The fate of the Church in the coming future will not depend on her external success but on her return to the *diakonia*, to the service of mankind. No man will believe in the message of salvation and of the Saviour, if the Church have not worked to the bone being herself a living testimony in the service of man, whether he be sick in mind or body or in need in his social, economic or moral life. During World War II the protestant theologian Dietrich Bonhoefer in his prison cell came out with a famous statement about the subject of *diakonia* in the Church: “The Church is only the Church when it is there for others.” Above all the image of the *diakonia* is to try to end the hell on earth for many people. It is therefore when the Church stands for others as Christ became the man for others. Christ’s example is not only a model but it is He himself who meets the Church in suffering human beings naked of their dignity, poor and weak.

The Church follows the footsteps of her founder Jesus who he himself was the diaconal human being. The *diakonia* in the Church enables it to help the needy and the least among us (cf. Mt 25:31ff). The Church of the *diakonia* is also the Church of the first commandment, that of love of God and all people. The Church of the *diakonia* is the Church of the body of Christ where we are the different members working and helping each other in the body having Christ as the head. The Church of the *diakonia* is the Church of peace where differences are put aside. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal 3:28). The Church of the *diakonia* is the Church for the disabled, for the suffering, for the dying. Above all the Church of the *diakonia* is the Church in motion towards heaven, its homeland for ever.

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GEOFFREY G. ATTARD

X'INHUMA JGHIDU L-KNEJJES DWAR IT-TEOLOĠIJA TAL-AMBJENT?

Il-kura tal-ambjent ta' madwarna u l-harsien tal-holqien kif tahulna u fdahulna Alla l-Imbierek qeghdin kull ma jmur isiru dejjem aktar parti mit-teoloġija prattika ta' zminijietna. Dr. Celia Deane-Drummond, professoressa tat-teoloġija fl-Università ta' Chester fl-Ingilterra, fil-ktieb taghha *Ecotheology* ilmentat li bosta universitajiet fir-Renju Unit ghadhom ma inkludewx fid-dikasteri tat-teoloġija korsijiet li jirrigwardjaw dik li issa giet imlaqqma bhala l-Ekoteoloġija, jgħifieri dak il-qasam fit-teoloġija li jindirizza l-harsien tal-ambjent minna l-bnedmin. Għalhekk kull kitba li tista' tgħin biex jikber ir-rispett u l-imħabba lejn il-holqien ghandha tigi apprezzata.

Fost dawk li kull ma jmur qed jintebħu b'din il-htieġa, hemm minn ta' quddiem il-Knejjes Insara. Meta ngħidu "knejjes Insara" ghandna nifhmu t-tlett oqsma prinċipali tal-Kristjaneżmu jgħifieri l-Kattoliċizmu, l-Ortodossija u l-Protestantiżmu. Dawn it-tlett "knejjes" jew aħjar "għabriet ta' knejjes u korpi ekkleżjali" qeghdin jagħtu importanza lill-ekoteoloġija. Naraw ftit x'jgħallmu fit-teoloġija tagħhom u kif qed japplikawha biex tikber il-konozzenza tal-harsien tal-ambjent dinji. It-tliet tradizzjonijiet Insara ewlenin huma prinċipalment ispirati mit-testi tal-Iskrittura fit-tifsila tat-teoloġija tagħhom dwar il-harsien tal-holqien.

Il-Knisja Kattolika

Il-Knisja Kattolika ma kinitx minn tal-bidu nett fost dawk li tkellmu favur l-ambjent b'mod formali u kategoriku. Ikollna ngħidu li l-konfessjonijiet Protestanti kellhom il-monopolju f'dan il-qasam għal bosta snin. Madankollu l-Knisja ma qagħditx b'idejha fuq żaqqha u jekk ikollna nistudjaw l-għeruf tal-ekoteoloġija b'mod spażmiku, huwa fi hdan it-tradizzjoni Kattolika li rridu nfittxu. Dan għaliex qaddisin kbar bhala San Kolumba ta' Iona, San Frangisk ta' Assisi u l-qaddisa Hildegard ta' Bingen għejjin mit-tradizzjoni Nisranija Kattolika ta' qabel ir-riforma.

Jekk irridu nfittxu l-ewwel ħjiliet ta' ekoteoloġija u ħarsien tad-dinja ta' madwarna minn aspetti wesgħin ikollna nsemmu l-enċiklika tal-Papa Ljun XIII *Rerum Novarum*. B'ebda mod din l-enċiklika ma hija "ekoteoloġija" – madankollu din kienet l-ewwel enċiklika soċjali tal-Maġisteru Kattoliku u għaldaqstant huwa fil-paragrafi tagħha li rridu nfittxu biex insibu l-ewwel riferenzi għall-ħarsien tal-bniedem u d-drittijiet tiegħu. Qabel xejn, tajjeb ngħidu li l-ekoteoloġija Kattolika hija mibnija fuq żewġ għejjun: l-Iskrittura Mqaddsa u l-prinċipju tal-ġid komuni (Ing. *Principle of Common Good*). Tant huwa qadim fit-tradizzjoni Nisranija Tomistika l-prinċipju tal-ġid komuni, li anke fil-bini tal-ekoteoloġija Kattolika, huwa dan il-prinċipju li jinsab fil-fond tagħha. Ljun XIII kiteb ir-*Rerum Novarum* biex jiddefendi d-drittijiet tal-ħaddiema quddiem dawk li jħaddmuhom u jimpjegawhom. Għalkemm imkien ma jitellem dwar l-ambjent mill-aspett ekoloġiku, Papa Ljun XIII tkellem dwar "l-ambjent tax-xogħol" u l-ħtieġa ta' riġpett lejn id-drittijiet fundamentali tal-ħaddiem. B'hekk huwa qiegħed il-friex għal dik li llum b'mod kategoriku nistgħu nqisuha l-Ekoteoloġija Kattolika.

Pacem in Terris

Fl-1963 Papa Ġwanni XXIII ħareġ l-enċiklika *Pacem In Terris*. Din kienet enċiklika ta' importanza storika kbira għaliex kienet l-ewwel enċiklika li qatt ħareġ il-Papa ta' Ruma u li minflok ma kienet indirizzata biss lill-isqfijiet tad-dinja Kattolika kollha, kienet indirizzata lill-"bnedmin kollha ta' rieda tajba". Permezz tagħha, il-Papa Roncalli kien fetax beaħ il-bibien tal-Vatikan għall-ġnus kollha tad-dinja. Kienet l-ewwel enċiklika frott l-ispirtu ekumeniku tal-Konċilju Vatikan II. Ma nistgħux ma norbtux l-idea tal-*oikumene* jiġifieri tat-totalità tal-ħolqien mal-idea tal-ekoteoloġija; iż-żewġ frażzjiet iwassluna biex nidhlu fil-qalba tal-misteru ta' Kristu kożmiku, jiġifieri Kristu li ġie biex isalva mhux biss lill-Kattoliċi, imma lill-bnedmin kollha u lill-ħolqien kollu, ideat li kienu diġa ġew żviluppati – anke jekk mhux dejjem b'manjiera għal kollox ortodossa – mill-Ġizwita Teilhard de Chardin u aktar tard minn Ladislaus Boros SJ u oħrajn. Fil-*Pacem In Terris* Papa Ġwanni jitratta temi bħalma huma l-interdipendenza bejn l-istati, is-sussidjarjetà (prinċipju żviluppat minn Papa Piju XI), l-iżvilupp ekonomiku, ir-rabta bejn il-faqar u l-paċi fid-dinja, l-urġenza tal-koperazzjoni internazzjonali u l-armonija bejn il-ġnus. Ġwanni XXIII kien stqarr dan:

F'età li tiftaħar bil-qawwa atomika tagħha, ma fadalx sens li wiehed jibqar jżomm li l-gwerra hija strument adattat li bih wiehed jista' jsewwi l-ħsara tan-nuqqas ta' ġustizzja.

It-tema tal-izvilupp u t-temi etiċi li jdawruha kienu żviluppanti mill-ġdid minn Papa Pawlu VI fl-enċiklika tiegħu tal-1967 *Popolorum Progressio*. F'dan id-dokument importanti, il-Papa tkellem dwar it-tagħlim li nsibu fl-ewwel paġni tal-Ġenesi:

Imlew l-art u aħkmuha; il-Bibbja, mill-ewwel paġni tagħha, tghallimna li l-ħolqien huwa kollu għall-bniedem, u hija responsabiltà tiegħu li jiżviluppaha b'ħidma ntelligenti. . . .¹

Id-drittijiet umani kollha, “inkluż dawk tal-propjetà u l-kummerċ hieles” għandhom ikunu subordinati, jgħid Papa Pawlu VI, għall-prinċipju li d-dinja hija ddisinjata minn Alla sabiex taqdi l-ħtiġijiet tal-familja umana universali u l-prodotti tagħha għandhom ikunu maqsuma fi qbil skond il-ħtiġijiet tal-ġustizzja u l-karità. L-izvilupp, jgħid il-Papa, huwa l-isem ġdid għall-paċi imma l-izvilupp għandu jservi d-drittijiet tal-bniedem u mhux jipproduċi profitti biss għal ftit nies.²

Min jista' jilmah irbit bejn dan li qed jgħidu l-papiet Ljun XIII, Ġwanni XXIII u Pawlu VI u l-argumenti tal-ekoteoloġija moderna? Żgur li mal-ewwel daqqa t'għajn ma jidhirx li hemm irbit. Imma kieku wiehed kellu jikkunsidra l-ġid tal-umanità bħala prinċipju globali marbut mal-prinċipju Tomistiku tal-akbar ġid komuni, dan għandu jilmah sens ta' kontinwità bejn il-ħtieġa tal-paċi u t-tqassim ekwu tal-ġid tad-dinja u l-ħtieġa tal-harsien tal-ambjent għalina u għall-ġenerazzjonijiet ta' warajna.

Aktar ma wiehed jidhol fil-fond tat-tagħlim soċjali Kattoliku, aktar jintebah kemm l-argument tal-harsien tal-ambjent wara kollox mhuwiex xi tagħlim ġdid imma joħroġ awtomatikment mill-bżonn tal-harsien ta' dak kollu li Alla tana biex ingawduh.

Il-Papa Ġwanni Pawlu II kiteb enċikliċi soċjali oħra bħal ma kienu *s-Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* u *ċ-Centesimus Annus*; din tal-aħhar kellha tfakkar iċ-ċentenarju tar-*Rerum Novarum*. Fl-1967 il-Papa Pawlu VI kien hass il-bżonn li johloq il-Kunsill Pontifiċju tal-Ġustizzja u l-Paċi. Jibqgħu jidwu l-kliem ta' Papa Ġwanni Pawlu II fiċ-*Centesimus Annus* tal-1991:

Il-bniedem jaħseb li jista' jagħmel użu arbitrarju tal-art, li jissuġġettaha mingħajr kontroll għar-rieda tiegħu daqslikieku m'għandhiex ir-rekwiziti

¹ *Popolorum Progressio*, 32.

² *Ibid.*, 34.

tagħha u saħansitra qabel ma jqis l-għan ta' Alla għaliha. Minflok ma jagħmel xogħlu sew bhala koperatur ma' Alla fil-hidma tal-holqien, il-bniedem kultant jieħu l-post ta' Alla u jispiçça jipprovoka ribelljoni min-naha tan-natura li tisfa aktar tiranizzata milli iggvernata minnu. Id-deçizjonijiet li joħolqu ambjent uman jistgħu jagħtu wisu' għall-bini ta' strutturi speçifici li jimpedixxu r-realizzazzjoni sħiħa ta' dawkl li b'xi mod huma oppressi minnu.³

Din kienet l-ewwel darba li isqof ta' Ruma tkellem b' mod kategoriku dwar il-harsien tal-ambjent bhala entità fih innifsu. Dan il-kliem taç-*Centesimus Annus* huwa l-eku ta' stqarrija tixxiebaħ, din id-darba fil-forma ta' messagġ għall-Jum Dinji tal-Paçi, maħruġ mill-istess Papa Pollakk fl-1 ta' Jannar 1990. Il-messagġ iġib l-isem "Paçi ma' Alla l-Hallieq, Paçi mal-Holqien kollu". Il-Papa beda l-messagġ tiegħu hekk:

Fi zmienna tezisti konoxxenza dejjem tikber li l-paçi tad-dinja hija mhedda, mhux biss mit-tiġrija għall-armi, il-kunflitti reġjunali u l-ingustizzji dejjem jikbru bejn il-popli u n-nazzjonijiet, imma anke minħabba n-nuqqas ta' rispetti li jistħoqq lin-natura, bil-qerda tar-rizorsi naturali u l-waqa' progressiva tal-kwalità tal-ħajja.⁴

F'dan il-messagġ hekk sinifikanti, il-Papa Ġwanni Pawlu jintroduçi frazi li saret sinonima ma' dan il-messagġ u mat-teologija ekologika ta' dan il-Papa Pollakk. Il-Papa tkellem minn "križi ekologika" u insista li din hija problema morali. Dan ifisser li Papa Ġwanni Pawlu qiegħed il-problema tal-bidla fil-klima fl-istess realtà tal-problemi morali l-oħra li prinçipalment huma l-ewtanasja, l-abort, il-materjalizmu u l-konsumerizmu u oħrajn simili. Fil-fatt, jekk wieħed joqgħod, jekk l-umanità ma tagħtix kas tat-twissijiet li qed isirulha, ir-realtà tal-bidla fil-klima u tal-*global warming* tista' anke tkun ta' theddida fatali mhux biss għal bosta speçi tal-annimali imma anke għall-familja tal-bnedmin. Diġa f'pajjiži bħall-Filippini u l-Awstralja, il-problema tan-nuqqas ta' xita u l-bżonn tal-ilma laħqu livell allarmanti hekk li l-isqfijiet taż-żewġ pajjiži tkellmu diversi drabi permezz ta' dikjarazzjonijiet u stqarrijiet. It-terminu "ekologija" ġej mill-kelma Griega għal "dar" jew "għamara". Dan ifakkarna li l-pjaneta dinja hija d-dar tagħna, dar li aħna naqsmu flimkien ma' hutna l-bnedmin kollha. Aħna moralment responsabbli għall-effetti tal-imġieba tagħna. Id-dinja li ngħixu fiha għandha biżżejjed rizorsi biex tieħu sħiebi taqdi l-bżonnijiet bażiçi tal-bnedmin kollha imma minħabba egoizmu u nuqqas ta'

³ Centesimus Annus, 37-39.

⁴ Messagġ tal-Papa Ġwanni Pawlu II għall-Jum Dinji tal-Paçi, 1 ta' Jannar 1990, paġna 3.

hsieb, hafna huma dawk ir-rizorsi li qed jinħlew għal xejn waqt li xi nies qed jispicċaw ma jgawdux minn dawn ir-rizorsi. Jekk ahna neqirdu jew nahlu jew innigġsu r-rizorsi komuni tal-umanità bħalma huma l-arja, l-ilma, il-ħamrija u l-kundizzjonijiet li johlqu l-ħajja, ahna nkunu qed nimponu ħsara irriversibbli u iugustizzja fuq il-bnedmin tal-lum u anke fuq dawk li jridu jiġu. Dan jista' jittqies dnub morali.

Il-Papa jgħid li l-qerda tal-*ozone layer* u l-*greenhouse effect* li huwa marbut haġa waħda miegħu issa laħqu proprozzjonijiet ta' kriżi ekoloġika. Huwa jsejjah il-qerda tal-ambjent bħala aspekk wiehed inkwetanti ta' din il-problema morali profunda. Ġwanni Pawlu II saħansitra jgħid li “id-dritt għal ambjent san u b'saħħtu” għandu jkun inkluz “fil-Karta tad-Drittijiet Umani”. Hu jiddikjara li l-problema ekoloġika ma tistax tkun indirizzata mingħajr solidarjetà internazzjonali. Hu jitlob lis-socjetà moderna “li tagħti harsa serja lejn l-istil tal-ħajja li qed tgħix” u jsejjah “għas-semplicità, il-moderazzjoni u d-dixxiplina kif ukoll għall-ispirtu ta' sagrificcju, sabiex dawn isiru parti mill-ħajja ta' kuljum”. Sabiex dan isehh, hemm bżonn “edukazzjoni fir-responsabilità ekoloġika; responsabilità lejna nfusna, lejn l-oħrajn u lejn id-dinja.”⁵

Matul il-pontifikat tiegħu l-Papa kemm-il darba tkellem dwar din il-htieġa. F'diskorsi li għamel lill-Akkademja Pontificja tax-Xjenzi, huwa semma dan il-bżonn. Anke l-enċiklika tiegħu *Fides et Ratio* kienet tinkludi fost l-oħrajn ix-xewqa li l-Knisja tagħti aktar kas tas-sejbiet xjentifiċi u timxi id f'id magħhom favur il-ħarsien tal-pjaneta. Permezz tal-Kunsill Pontificju *Justitia et Pax*, il-Knisja Kattolika matul il-pontifikat ta' Ġwanni Pawlu l-Kbir indirzzat ir-realtà tal-ekoloġija anke jekk mhux dejjem għamlet dan b'riferenza diretta għat-tema tal-bidla tal-klima. Taht Ġwanni Pawlu II, dan il-Kunsill ippubblika l-*Kompendju tat-Tagħlim Soċjali tal-Knisja* li fih riferenzi għall-ħarsien tal-ambjent. Dan il-volum ġie kkritikat minn xi akkademici li fost id-diversi stqarrijiet tiegħu, paragrafu wiehed biss isemmi b'isimha t-theddida tal-bidla fil-klima.⁶ Jista' jkun li fiż-żmien li fih ġie ppubblikat dan il-kompendju, il-Vatikan bħala istituzzjoni kien għadu ma fehemx biżżejjed l-urġenza ta' din it-theddida kbira minħabba tibdil fil-klima – dan minkejja li l-Papa Ġwanni Pawlu II kien tkellem b'mod ċar dwar il-“kriżi ekoloġika”. Minn dak inhar tal-pubblikazzjoni tal-Kompendju, m'hemmx dubju li kemm il-Vatikan bħala istituzzjoni kif ukoll id-diversi konferenzi episkopali madwar id-dinja

⁵ Messaġġ tal-Papa Ġwanni Pawlu II għall-Jum Dinji tal-Paċi, 1 ta' Jannar 1990, paġna 6.

⁶ SEAN McDONAGH, *Climate Change. The Challenge to all of Us* (Columba Press: Dublin 2007).

– inkluzi dik Maltija – huma hafna iżjed konxji mill-problema u dak li tista' ġġib magħha. Anke l-Katekiżmu tal-Knisja Kattolika huwa relattivament fqir fid-diskussjoni tiegħu tat-tibdil fil-klima. Kif jgħidu bl-Ingliż, *it leaves a lot to be desired*.

Nerġa' mill-ġdid għall-kliem qawwi ta' Papa Ġwanni Pawlu II fil-messaġġ tiegħu ta' Jannar 1999:

Ma nistgħux nilagħbu f'qasam partikulari tal-ekosistema mingħajr ma nagħtu l-attenzjoni tagħna kemm lill-konsegwenzi ta' dan l-indhil f'oqsma oħra kif ukoll il-benessri tal-ġenerazzjonijiet futuri.⁷

L-Ekoteoloġija ta' De Chardin

Ma nistgħux nitkellmu dwar it-tagħlim ekoteoloġija tal-Knisja Kattolika u l-Maġisteru tagħha mingħajr ma nqisu wkoll x'kitbu xi individwi. Dan ifisser mela li l-ekoteoloġija Kattolika, wara li qed inqisu li għandha lill-Iskrittura u lit-Tradizzjoni bħala ż-żewġ ghejjun tagħha, terġa' mbagħad tinqasam fi tnejn jekk inqisu t-Tradizzjoni għaliha b' mod kategoriku. Għandna mela l-Maġisteru fuq naħa u dan jinkludi t-tagħlim tal-Papiet, tal-Isqfijiet u tal-Vatikan u għandna wkoll dak li kitbu u għallmu teologi Kattoliċi individwali. De Chardin jispikka bħala l-ewwel wiehed fl-ordni kronoloġiku.

Pierre de Chardin kien primarjament saċerdot Ġizwita paleontologu. Kien wiehed mill-ewlenin awturi li fittxew li jibnu sintesi bejn ix-xjenza kożmoloġika u evoluzzjonarja u l-fidi Kristjana f'vizjoni kożmika u mistika. L-influenza tiegħu kienet profonda l-aktar f'nofs is-seklu għoxrin u huwa influwenza żviluppi teoloġiċi sussegwenti bħal ma hija dik li nsejthulha *process theology*. Bosta ekoteoloġi jhossu ftit tal-biża' quddiem ix-xogħol tiegħu; ir-raġuni hija li hu jidher li għaqqad flimkien it-teknoloġija xjentifika u l-ideal tagħha ta' progress mingħajr ma' jqis id-diffikultajiet potenzjali ambjentali u soċjali. Il-punt fokali tiegħu kien jiffoka fuq l-*Omega Point*. Jinhass hafna fil-kitba tiegħu t-ton antropocentriku jiġifieri “il-bniedem bħala centru”. Hawnehk ta' min jgħid f'parentesi li kien fuq dan il-punt li l-Vatikan fittex li jiċċara t-teoloġija tiegħu u spiċċa biex kien hemm min anke qiesu bħala mhux ortodoss f'tagħlimu.

Madankollu, illum qed jinhass ritorn lejn it-teoloġija tiegħu. Hafna qed iqisuh bħala awtur ta' spiritwalità tal-holqien. Il-hsieb mistiku tiegħu huwa kożmiku

⁷ Messaġġ għall-Jum Dinji tal-Paċi 1990, paġna 6.

fl-iskop u jservi biex jafferma l-proċessi tad-dinja. Hu rreżista l-materjalizmu li huwa komuni għall-kultura xjentifika. De Chardin jargumenta favur vizjoni li ma tirriduċix kollox għal komponenti. Il-ħsieb tiegħu huwa kemmxejn kumpless li min mhux midhla sew tat-teoloġija u l-filosofija u r-relazzjoni tagħhom max-xjenza empirika. Hu jgħid li l-materja fizika, jiġifieri dak li aħna naraw u mmissu għandha propjetajiet psikiċi – bħal donnu jrid jgħid li l-holqien mela għandu mohħ tiegħu. Dawn il-propjetajiet jiffjorixxu f'kumplessità u konoxxenza. Teilhard jgħid ukoll li dan iwassal għal “vitalizmu”; din l-idea kienet reżistita ferm mill-bijoloġisti. Imma l-idea tiegħu tal-eżistenza tal-ispirtu kożmiku ta' Alla fid-dinja naturali jbiegħdu milli jasal għal xi konklużjoni ta' kif dan isehħ. Għalih, l-partecipazzjoni tal-umanità fil-proċess tal-evoluzzjoni jsir iċ-ċentralizzazzjoni tal-persuni jew l-iskoperta ta' post il-bnedmin fid-dinja.

L-Ekoteoloġija ta' Ursula King

Wahda mill-istudjużi tat-teoloġija kożmika ta' De Chardin hija Ursula King. Fil-kitba tagħha, King tistqarr li hija konvinta mill-kontibut ta' Teilhard de Chardin fil-qasam tal-ispiritwalità ekoloġika. Għalkemm ma tistax tqis lil de Chardin bħala ekoteologu – propju minhabba l-fatt li meta għex u kiteb l-ekoteoloġija *in se* ma kinitx għadha bdiet teżisti – madankollu, de Chardin qies bħala punt tat-tluq li l-bniedem qed jgħix fuq pjaneta u li d-dinja fizika toħloq ambjent għall-bniedem. It-tieni nett, il-vizjoni tiegħu twassalna biex naraw irbit bejn l-ekoloġija, l-ispiritwalità u d-dinja bħala entità shiha. Fit-tielet post, din l-ispiritwalità titlahham aktar fid-dinja bijoloġika bil-mod u manjiera li filhom u bihom de Chardin lemah irbit bejn il-bijosfera, komuni għall-kreaturi kollha u n-“noosphere”, karatteristika tal-umanità. Ta' min jishaq li de Chardin meta kiteb, kellu f'mohħu li johloq teoloġija tkun milqugħa mit-tradizzjoni Kattolika Rumana, anke jekk matul ħajtu kellu l-inkwiet mal-Maġisteru. Fil-fatt, huwa jagħti importanza lill-elementi tradizzjonali bħalma huma l-Ewkaristija u l-Verġni Marija. Il-mod ta' kif hu jifhem lill-Madonna huwa kożmiku fit-ton u f'dan is-sens il-Marjoloġija tiegħu tipponta lejn konoxxenza ambjentali.⁸

Matthew Fox: ekoteologu b'punt ta' tluq Kattoliku

Awtur iehor magħruf li jikteb mid-dimensjoni Kattolika dwar it-teoloġija tal-art huwa Matthew Fox. Dan Fox kien halla l-Knisja Kattolika għax ried

⁸ URSULA KING, “*One Planet, One Spirit: Searching for an Ecologically Balanced Spirituality*” fil-ktieb editjat minn Celia Deane-Drummond *Teilhard de Chardin on People and Planet* (Equinox: Londra 2006), 13.

li jkun hieles minn tradizzjoni jew twemmin partikulari. Hu hass li ma setax ikun hieles biex jiżviluppa t-teoloġija tiegħu jekk jibqa' fi hdan il-Knisja Kattolika. Fox huwa tal-fehma li jekk id-dinja trid tiffaċja l-problemi serji li għandha minhabba t-tibdil fil-ġdid jehtieg li tiffirma spiritwalità ġdida. Hu jgħid li qed jerga' lura lejn l-għeruq tal-Kristjaneżmu u minn hemm qiegħed jerga' jiffirma spiritwalità li kienet ilha riegda u li minnha sa jislet tradizzjoni teoloġika ġdida. Bħal Teilhard hu jipprova jirkupra mod holistiku ta' hsieb sabiex jiswa ta' sfida għall-moderniżmu. Hu jemmen li t-teoloġija Kristjana ma tistax tkun hielsa minhabba fit-toqol tal-ispiritwalità Agostinjana li tenfasizza fuq id-dnub oriġinali. Dan iwassal biex ikun hemm għal ċertu duwaliżmu li jeqred. Għalhekk, minflok, huwa jippromwovi n-nozzjoni ta' spiritwalità tal-holqien li huwa jifhmha bħala "Barka Originali" (Ing. *original blessing*). Din il-barka, skont Fox, tiċcelebra u tunura d-dinja u l-processi kollha tagħha.⁹ Għal Fox, ir-redenzjoni hija maqbuda fit-tiġdid tad-dinja u fir-responsabilità umana li taġixxi b'tali mod li tregġa' lura l-armonija tagħha. Hu jinterpreta wkoll l-inkarnazzjoni u t-tbatija ta' Kristu f'termini ekoloġiċi, hekk li Kristu jidentifika lilu nnifsu ma' dak kollu li huwa ħaj, u kull kreatura ssir sinjal li jirreferina għal Kristu kożmiku, u l-kruċifissjoni ta' Ġesù ssir simbolika tat-tbatija ekoloġika.

L-enfasi espliċita tiegħu fuq il-barka twasslu aktar fil-qrib tan-nozzjonijiet pantejistiċi f'xebh ma' de Chardin. Hu lest li juża ismijiet divini li min-naħa tagħhom kienu jkunu barranin għall-fehma ta' Teilhard. L-aġenda ta' Fox hija aktar ambjentali milli xjentifika bħal fil-kas ta' Teilhard; imma t-tnejn li huma japprezzaw il-potenzjal kreattiv fl-umanità anke jekk l-għanijiet tagħhom huma differenti. Fox irid jgħaqqad flimkien in-nozzjoni tal-kreattività ma' l-idea tal-ġustizzja u l-integrazzjoni. Bħal de Chardin, Fox jemmen fl-armonija u fis-sbuhija inerenti tal-kożmos. Fox fisser il-virtù tal-kompassjoni għad-dinja bħala metodu vitali li jesprimi fil-prattika sens mistiku ta' Alla bħala integrat fin-natura. Bħal Teilhard, Fox afferma wkoll l-istorja evoluttiva tad-dinja, li titkellem permezz ta' storja kożmika ġdida tal-emerġenza tagħha mill-materja mejta għall-konozzenza ħajja. Bħal Teilhard ukoll, Matthew Fox fittex li jippromwovi konozzenza ta' dik li huwa jsejthilha "cosmic interconnectedness".

It-teoloġija ta' Fox sfat attakkata għal diversi raġunijiet. L-ewwelnett, huwa jidher li jagħmel miżinterpretazzjoni ta' xi figuri principali fi hdan it-tradizzjoni

⁹ MATTHEW FOX, *Original Blessing* (Santa Fe, Bear and Co., 1983); *A Spirituality Named Compassion for the Healing of the Global Village*, Humptu Dumpty and Us (New York: Harper, 1990).

teoloġika, bħalma huma San Tumas t' Akwinu, Meister Eckhart u Hildegard ta' Bingen. Dan jagħmlu għall-iskopijiet tiegħu. It-tieninett, huwa juża l-Iskrittura Mqaddsa b'tali mod li m'huwiex aċċettabbli għall-iskulari bibliċi; dan għaliex huwa jaqra t-tifsiriet f' testi b'tali mod li jtappan l-intenzjoni originali tal-awturi sagri. Huwa wkoll influwenzat hafna mill-femminizmu imma b'tali mod li jxaqleb fuq naħa kontra oħra. Hekk huwa jiffoka fuq il-proċess tat-twelid mill-persuna femminili b'enfasi kbira fuq dak li huwa sterjotipiku fil-mara. Hu jenfasisza wkoll il-pantejiżmu u jgħid li dan jitlaq minn interpretazzjonijiet tradizzjonali tal-Kristjaneżmu u jargumenta li l-pantejiżmu jiżvojt lil Alla tat-traxxendenza. Altru mela li Matthew Fox jitbiegħed mit-tradizzjoni Kattolika. Għalih, l-ispiritwalità hija wkoll komuni ma' dik l-ispiritwalità tan-*New Age* li hija aktar individwalista milli komunitarja; b'hekk jenfasisza hafna fuq il-mixja tal-individwu lejn Alla. Għandu fehma idealistika tal-ekoloġija bhala bilanċ u armonija li ma tagħtix kas ta' teoriji ekoloġiċi oħra.

Iċ-Ċiklu Kożmiku ta' Echlin

Teologu iehor Kattoliku li żamm mat-tradizzjoni Kattolika anke jekk forsi b'xi ideat kemmxejn liberali huwa Edward P. Echlin. Echlin huwa teologu tal-ekoloġija li jorbot flimkien lil Ġesù Kristu mal-art. Huwa *Honorary Research Fellow* tat-Teoloġija fl-Università ta' Leeds fl-Ingilterra. Iddedika haġtu għall-kitba tal-ekoteoloġija. L-aktar ktieb imsemmi tiegħu huwa *Earth Spirituality, Jesus at the Centre*. Fil-kitba tiegħu dejjem jishaq fuq iċ-ċentralità tal-persuna ta' Kristu anke meta jenfasisza l-importanza tal-art. Mela ma jitbiegħedx mit-tagħlim ortodoss Kattoliku. Fit-tezi tiegħu huwa jipprova jwassal lill-Insara biex jidhlu f'relazzjoni mal-art, isiru jhobbu l-art u jahdmuha għall-akbar benefiċċju tagħhom u tagħha stess. Huwa jara fir-religjon tama għal ekoloġija aħjar, għal dinja aħjar. Ix-xewqa tiegħu hija anke saħansitra li permezz tal-meditazzjoni tal-art u ta' dak li trodd, in-Nisrani jasal biex jidhol fit-talb, f'komunjoni ma' Kristu kożmiku. Jispira ruhu minn kitbiet poetiċi tal-Ġizwita Gerard Manley Hopkins u ta' Patrick Kavanagh. Għandu post għall-Vergni Marija wkoll. Fil-ktieb tiegħu *The Cosmic Circle* huwa jistudja fil-fond il-hajja ta' Ġesù billi jaqbad xi siltiet u episodji partikulari mill-hajja ta' Ġesù u jorbothom mat-teoloġija tal-art. Jilmaħ ekoteoloġija fiż-żgħożija ta' Ġesù, fil-maġmudija tiegħu, fil-ministeru tiegħu u fl-aħhar nett fil-mewt u l-qawmien tiegħu. Wara li jagħmel dan, jasal għall-konkluzjoni li t-tradizzjoni Kattolika ta' wara l-Konċilju Vatikan II jeħtieġ li tohloq "liturgija tal-ghalqa". Hu jgħid li d-dinja qed tistenna li tesperjenza liturgija ta' din ix-xorta. Isemmi

kif waqt l-istudji tad-dottorat tiegħu fit-teoloġija ekumenika fl-Università ta' Ottawa kien hemm xi Ġizwiti li kienu qed jagħmlu d-dottorat fil-psikoloġija. Wiehed mill-awturi magħrufa f'dak il-qasam f'dawk is-snin kien il-psikologu Awstrijak Erich Fromm. Fromm kien u għadu assoċjat mal-imħabba umana li huwa jsejthilha arti. Lil dawk li m'humiex kapaċi jhobbu, Fromm isejthilhom "non-people", mela nies mingħajr identità, nies li għandhom relazzjoni li ma taħdimx, li ma tiffunzjonax. Fromm jikteb hekk:

Il-bniedem, f'isem il-progress, qed jittrasforma lid-dinja f'post mimli bil-velenu u l-intiena. Huwa qed inigges l-arja, l-ilma, il-hamrija, l-annimali – u lilu nnifsu. Qed jagħmel dan sat-tali grad li qed jinbet dubju jekk id-dnja hix sa tibqa' post abitabbli fi żmien mitt sena mil-lum. Hu jaf il-fatti, imma minkejja li hemm min jipprotesta, dawk li għandhom f'idejhom l-hekk imsejjaħ żvilupp tekniku qed ikomplu jissagrifikaw il-hajja biex iqimu l-idolu tagħhom. Fi żminijiet aktar bikrija, il-bnedmin kienu jissagrifikaw lil uliedhom jew il-habsin tal-gwerra, imma qatt qabel fl-istorja, il-bniedem ma kien lest jissagrifika l-hajja kollha lil Molok – dik tiegħu u tad-dixxendenti tiegħu.¹⁰

Sabiex isahhaħ l-argumenti tiegħu, Echlin jikkwota numru kbir ta' awturi li jiltaqa' magħhom fl-istudju tiegħu li huwa jirnexxilu jaqrahom f'dawk ekoloġiku. Hekk jikkwota lit-teologu Amerikan Avery Dulles li jgħid hekk dwar il-persuna kożmika ta' Ġesù:

Ġesù għandu importanza li tmur wisq lil hinn mill-komunità tad-dixxipli u anke lil hemm mill-umanità intera. L-eżistenza u l-karriera tiegħu għandhom importanza kostituttiva u trasformattiva għall-univers kollu, inkluż anke s-saltniet materjali u spiritwali.¹¹

Echlin ma jonqosx milli jaqra xi testi tal-Kardinal Newman fid-dawl ta' dik li huwa jsejthilha "salvation ecology" mela b'islienna, "ekoloġija tas-salvazzjoni". B'dan it-terminu huwa jrid juri li Ġesù meta salvana, kif jgħid San Pawl, salva l-holqien kollu, jew ahjar, heles il-holqien mill-madmad tad-dnub li kien għadu tahtu. Għallhekk, l-awtur jikkwota lill-kardinal u jgħid li l-ekoloġija tas-salvazzjoni li tinsab fis-silenzju tat-tbatija ta' Ġesù hija waħda mill-"għeġubijiet mohbija" fil-kitbiet ta' John Henry Newman. Waqt li Newman qed jikkumenta dwar is-salvazzjoni, huwa fost l-ohrajn jgħid dan:

¹⁰ *The Erich Fromm Reader*, editjat minn R. FUNK (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1994), 51-52.

¹¹ AVERY DULLES, *Catholicity of the Church*, 36.

Din ma tistax titpitter fuq mappa jew inkella tiġi katalogizzata imma wara d-diligenza kollha tagħna, din għandna nifhumha bħala art li għadha ma gietx studjata u lanqas subordinata, u li fiha għandha għoljiet u widien, foresti u xmajjar, fuq ix-xellug u fuq il-lemin u kullimkien madwarna, u hija mimlija b'għeġubijiet moħbija u b'teżori lesti biex jiġu mħaddna.¹²

It-Tradizzjoni Kristjana Ortodossa

Wiehed jista' jgħid bla biża' li jiżbalja li t-tradizzjoni Ortodossa, frott l-enfasi qawwi tagħha fuq il-kitbiet ta' missirijiet tal-Knisja, bniet matul is-snin teoloġija tal-ambjent jew ekoteoloġija kemmxejn aktar formali minn dik tat-tradizzjoni Kattolika. Dan huwa frott l-istess kwalità tat-teoloġija Ortodossa li tvarja mil-legalizmu Latin li nsibu fil-Knisja tal-Punent. Dan ifisser ukoll li hemm hafna li għad irridu nitgħallmu minghand hutna l-Ortodossi fil-qasam tat-teoloġija tal-ambjent. Fuq kollox ma ninsewx li sal-1054, għalkemm diġa kien hemm differenzi bejn il-lvant u l-punent, il-Knisja Nisranija kienet għadha magħquda haġa waħda.

Qabel xejn irridu nġhidu li karatteristika ewlenija tat-teoloġija Ortodossa hija t-twemmin fis-sens qawwi tat-traxxendenza ta' Alla. Fl-istess waqt, l-Ortodossija temmen li hemm partecipazzjoni kontinwa tal-hlejjaq kollha f'Alla bħala dak li mhux biss jahlaq, imma wkoll isostni l-kreazzjoni jiġifieri l-holqien. Fuq kollox, anke l-istess liturġija tal-lvant hija kożmika fl-iskop tagħha. Hija liturġija li tberrah u mhux li tiffoka. L-Ortodossi jaffer maw is-saċerdozju tal-umanità. L-Ortodossija tradizzjonali tippermetti affermazzjoni ta' kreazzjoni billi tipponta lejn il-*logoi* preżenti fil-holqien maħluq u li dan jikkorrispondi għal-Logos divin. Sergei Bulgakov, wiehed mill-esponenti ewlenin tat-teoloġija Ortodossa, jifhem li s-*Sophia* jiġifieri l-għerf ewlieni preżenti fil-holqien jipprovdni mod alternattiv ta' kif wiehed jafferma l-hlejjaq waqt li din tibqa' distinta u magħzula mill-Għerf prinċipali.

Id-Dikjarazzjoni Kattolika-Ortodossa

It-teologu Ortodoss John Zizioulas jgħid li m'hwiex biżżejjed li l-Kristjaneżmu jipprovdni alternattiva mir-rotta pagana. Jgħid li hemm bżonn li tiġi żviluppata teoloġija preċiża. Jgħid li saħansitra s-sagru u s-sekulari, ir-razzjonali u l-mitiku jeħtieġ li jersqu flimkien.¹³ Dan Ġwanni

12 JOHN HENRY NEWMAN, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Londra: Longman Green, 1999), 71.

13 ĠWANNI TA' PERGAMON, "Orthodoxy and the Problem of the Protection of the Natural

Zizioulas li huwa magħruf ukoll bhala Ġwanni ta' Pergamo minhabba li huwa l-Metropolita ta' din il-belt, kien ta tlett *lectures* f'King's College f'Londra f'Jannar 1989 bit-tema "Preserving God's Creation". Dawn kienu ppubblikati f'diversi rivisti xjentifiċi. Huwa involut ferm fid-djalogu inter-Ortodoss li jitratta l-ekoloġija kif inhuwa involut ukoll l-istess Patrijarka Bartilmew I ta' Kostantinopli. Fil-fatt, f'Ġunju tas-sena 2002, il-Patrijarka Ekumeniku Bartilmew ġabar flimkien bosta speċjalisti f'simposju fuq ir-religjon, ix-xjenza u l-ambjent u dawn ingabru fuq vapur fil-Mediterran u l-Adrijatiku. Bhala konklużjoni tas-simposju, il-vapur daħal fil-port ta' Venezja u hawnhekk, il-Patrijarka, flimkien mal-Papa Ġwanni Pawlu II – dan tal-aħħar permezz tat-televizjoni minn Ruma – iffirmaw dokument jew dikjarazzjoni kongunta dwar is-sens ta' qadi tal-bniedem lejn l-ambjent. Huma talbu lill-Kattoliċi u l-Ortodossi sabiex jaħdmu flimkien u ma' oħrajn għar-rieda tajba sabiex "infejqu u niehdu hsieb il-holqien ta' Alla". Huma esprimew qbil fuq il-prinċipji etiċi li għandhom jiġu applikati fil-qasam ekoloġiku u iddeploraw id-degradazzjoni ta' xi riżorsi naturali baziċi bħalma huma l-ilma, l-arja u l-art, u li sehħew minhabba progress ekonomiku u teknoloġiku li ma jagħraf ebda limiti.¹⁴

Huma temmew id-dikjarazzjoni bi kliem ta' tama:

M'huwix tard wisq. Id-dinja ta' Alla għandha qawwiet terapewtiċi inkredibbli. Fi żmien generazzjoni waħda, nistgħu nindirizzaw lid-dinja fid-direzzjoni tal-ġejjiena ta' wliedna. Ejjew nibdew issa, bit-tama u l-barka ta' Alla.¹⁵

Lejn teoloġija liturġika

It-teoloġija Ortodossa hija fil-baži u s-sustanza tagħha ta' natura liturġika. L-Ortodossija tgħaqqad flimkien is-salvazzjoni tal-bniedem mas-salvazzjoni tal-holqien. Hija ferm differenti ngħidu ahna mit-teoloġija Protestanta ta' Karl Barth; għall-Ortodossi, id-dinja mhjiex sempliċi "il-palk" li fuqu Alla jaħdem l-istorja. Għall-kuntrarju, l-Ortodossi jaraw id-dinja maħluqa bhala parti mill-holqien li huwa l-hidma ta' Alla marbuta mill-qrib mas-salvazzjoni permezz ta' liturġija kożmika. Elizabeth Theokritoff uriet sa fejn il-kreazzjoni

Environment" fil-ktieb *So that God's Creation Might Live: The Orthodox Church Responds to the Ecological Crisis* (The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, 1992), 19-28.

¹⁴ Dikjarazzjoni Kongunta bejn Papa Ġwanni Pawlu II u Patrijarka Ekumeniku Bartilmew I ta' Kostantinopli.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

mhux-umana tipparteċipa fil-liturġija Ortodossa. L-ewwelnett, hija tipponta lejn it-testi li jiċċelebraw it-tifhir li d-dinja fid-diversità kollha taghha toffri fit-twelid ta' Ġesù jew fis-salvazzjoni tad-dinja. Dawn it-testi huma mibnija fuq tema Ebrajka bħalma nsibu f'Izajja 49: 13 li tipponta lejn il-ferh tad-dinja, jew fil-Ġdid Testament, l-ittra lir-Rumani 8: 23 fejn il-holqien kollu jitqabad fl-istorja tas-salvazzjoni. Din li ġejja hija silta liturġika b'rabta mat-twelid tal-Mulej Ġesù:

Kull hlejja li Inti hlaqt troddlok ħajr. L-Angli joffrulek innu;
Is-smewwiet, joffrulek kewkba; il-Magi, id-doni;
Ir-rgħajja, l-istagħġib tagħhom, id-dinja l-għar, ix-xagħri l-maxtura; u ahna
noffrulek Omm u Vergni.¹⁶

It-tieninett, xi testi sbieħ juru li kultant il-holqien mhux uman attwalment jiehu l-ewwel post. Eżempji jinkludu t-testi tal-Ġordan li jerga' lura f'Salm 113:7 li huma applikati għall-magħmudija ta Kristu, hekk li l-Ġordan jindirizza lill-Battista u jgħid:

Għaliex m'intix tippermetti t-tindif ta' bosta? Hu qaddes il-holqien
Kollu; halli mela jqaddes lili wkoll u n-natura tal-ilmijiet, għaliex minħabba
f'hekk Huwa deher.¹⁷

Jeżisti wkoll test tat-tielet seklu wara Kristu magħruf bħala "It-Tradizzjoni Appostolika ta' Ippolitu" li jinkuraġġixxi l-Insara sabiex jitolbu flimkien mal-kwiekeb, il-foresti u l-ilmijiet. Tibdil aktar tardiv jidher li jqiegħed aktar enfasi fuq ir-rwol speċjali tal-umanità fl-artikulazzjoni ta' dak it-tifhir.

Ta' min jgħid ukoll li l-inkarnazzjoni ta' Kristu tibni fuq relazzjoni diġa eżistenti bejn Alla u l-holqien. Hekk per eżempju l-mewt ta' Ġesù fuq is-salib tal-injam hija sinifikanti għas-siġar ingenerali. Għalhekk Theokritoff tikkummenta:

L-umanità tinqeda bi skop ħazin b'siġra u tnigges id-dinja: Alla jnaddaf id-dinja tiegħu bis-siġra tas-Salib. Dan l-użu ħazin iwassal għall-istrument tat-tortura u l-qtil, is-siġra eċċezzjonali tal-mewt: l-użu minn Alla tas-siġra jirrivela li hija siġra tal-ħajja. Dan għandu implikazzjoni għas-siġar kollha.¹⁸

¹⁶ Natività, Vespri minn *The Festal Manaion*, tradott minn Mother Mary u Kallistos Ware (Londra, Faber and Faber, 1969), 254.

¹⁷ Vespri għat-2 ta' Jannar, Apostikha ċitat f'Theokritoff, "Creation and Salvation in Orthodox Worship" fir-rivista *Ecotheology* 10 (2001), 97.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

B'dan il-mod:

L-użu l-ġdid tas-sigra ma jinjorax l-iskop li għalih kienet originarjament maħluqa imma jibni fuqu... hija tiffunzjona b'tali mod li tagħti l-ikel u d-dell, issaffi l-ilma u tarrikkixxi l-ħamrija u dawn għandhom skop spiritwali. Mela għamilna ċ-ċiklu shih; is-sigra li trodd il-ħajja issa tregġa' lura s-saħta fuq l-art.¹⁹

Ta' min jistaqsi xi tisser is-salvazzjoni għall-kreazzjoni mhux umana li tbat i l-effetti tal-waqgħa tal-umanità. It-testi liturġiċi jindirizzaw għal gabra mill-ġdid ta' potenzjalità sagramentali tal-holqien kollu, speċi ta' restawrazzjoni għas-sbuhija originali tagħha li hija l-intenzjoni ewlenija tal-holqien, mela ritorn għall-istat naturali. Hija Elizabeth Theokritoff stess li tista' tipprovdielna spjegazzjoni ta' dan:

Fl-anzjan li jsejjaħ lill-gremxula li tinsab tilgħaq ix-xemx biex tixhed għall-fidi tagħha f'Alla quddiem student xettiku – u hi dan tagħmlu. F'mart il-qassis qaddis tal-Alaska li l-funeral tagħha fix-xitwa jsir qalb kešha barra minn žmienha, u li għalih jattendu għadd kbir ta' għasafar li jmisshom taru lejn in-nofsinhar hafna qabel. F'anzjan ieħor li jitpaxxa bi tbatija biex jiġbor l-għads sabiex xejn ma jinħela u jitpaxxa b'dawk it-“teologi mingħajr vuċi”, jiġifieri l-blat u l-ħaxix ħazin li fihom jgħix. Fir-raħħala li jagħmlu s-sinjal tas-salib fuq il-hobża qabel jaqsmuha. F'kull bniedem li jemen u li jqim ikona jew relikwija, għax il-holqien materjali t'Alla mhuwiex mingħajr parteċipazzjoni fil-grazzja santifikanti tiegħu.²⁰

Dawn it-testi li din it-teologa tiprovdielna jagħtuna ħjiel ċar tat-teoloġija kożmika tat-tradizzjoni Ortodossa.

L-umanità bhala saċerdoti tal-holqien

Semmejna kif Zizioulas jargumenta favur restawrazzjoni tas-sens tal-importanza tal-bnedmin bhala saċerdoti tal-kreazzjoni. Hu jgħid li enfasizzajna wisq fuq ir-razzjonalità umana. Ta' min jgħid li Darwin waqqa' xi ftit minn din it-teorija meta sab li r-razzjonalità mhix limitata biss għall-bnedmin. Forsi aktar jagħmel sens li nitkellmu mill-helsien, mil-libertà fil-bniedem. L-umanità skont dan it-teologu tinsab nofs triq bejn il-limitezza tad-dinja u l-beraħ mingħajr limitu ta' Alla. Zizioulas irid jgħid li anke fil-waqgħa tal-bniedem fid-dnub, il-bniedem zamm biċċa mix-xbieha ta' Alla fih. Anke l-libertà

¹⁹ Ibid., 104.

²⁰ Ibid., 107.

distorta u mtappna tisser li l-umanità tuża l-kreazzjoni bhala possessjoni tagħha b'manjiera li hija utilitarja. Il-mewt fil-ġnien tal-Gheden sehhet mhux għax miet il-bniedem imma għax il-bniedem qiegħed lilu nnifsu bhala l-punt aħhari ta' riferenza flok Alla. Hu jqiegħed l-umanità bhala r-rabta bejn Alla u l-holqien. F'sens ipostatiku, l-umanità takkwista dan permezz ta' dak li huwa jsejjahlu "korporalitá", bl-Ingliż *embodiment*. Il-bniedem flimkien ma' dak kollu ta' madwaru jehtieg joffri lilu nnifsu lill-Ħallieq sabiex jinheles. Għalhekk is-saċerdozju ma jibqax entità ta' kult imma jsir entità ta' offerta lil Alla assolut li ġġib magħha helsien. Anke fl-Ewkaristija, l-umanità toffri l-kreazzjoni lura lil Alla b'tali mod li l-kreazzjoni tidhol f'relazzjoni ma' Alla, meħlus mil-limitazzjonijiet naturali u titrasformahom f'sinjal tal-ħajja. Il-holqien "jakkwista għalina qdusija li hija inerenti fin-natura tagħha imma akkwistata permezz tal-eżercizzju hieles tal-bniedem tal-*imago Dei*, jġigifieri tal-personizzazzjoni tiegħu.²¹

Il-post għoli li Zizioulas jagħti lill-umanità huwa teoċentriku aktar milli antropoċentriku. Imma l-enfasi fuq ir-rwol kruċjali tal-uman f'kontradizzjoni mal-paganizmu jsir qawwi wisq hekk li teologi oħra Ortodossi jikkritikawh. Anke l-istess Theokritoff tgħid li Zizioulas enfasizza wisq fuq l-aspett tal-bniedem hekk li jagħti l-idea li l-holqien fil-kobor tiegħu għandu bżonn tal-bniedem biex ifaħħar lil Alla.²² Mhux ta' min ihalli barra lil Alexander Schememann li f'dan ir-rigward jgħid li ma jaqbilx mal-fehma ta' Zizioulas għax [hu] l-opinjoni ta' dan tmur kontra l-użu tajjeb tal-libertà tal-bniedem fir-relazzjoni ma' Alla; is-saċerdozju kożmiku li dwaru jitkellem Zizioulas jista' jingħata enfasi differenti għax dan is-saċerdozju għandu wkoll ir-rwol ta' radd il-ħajr għall-holqien li huwa element qawwi fil-liturija tal-ewkaristija.²³

Awturi oħra Ortodossi

Xi awturi oħra Ortodossi jizviluppaw il-mod tagħhom ta' kif jifhmu s-saċerdozju kożmiku. Huma jaqblu li d-dinja naturali tesprimi *logoi* jew "patterns" li jimxu fuq il-Logos il-Kbir, dak li fit-teoloġija Latina jissejjah Verb. Din il-fehma tifred għal kollox l-essenza ta' Alla u l-attivitajiet ta'

²¹ ZIZIOULAS, "Preserving God's Creation: Lecture 3" fir-rivista *King's Theological Review*, Vol. 13 (1990) 5.

²² E. THEOKRITOFF, "Creation and Priesthood in Modern Orthodox Thinking" fir-rivista *Ecotheology* 10.3 (2005), 344.

²³ ALEXANDER SCHEMERMANN, *For the Life of the World* (Crestwood, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1973), 73.

Alla minn xulxin. L-attivitajiet ta' Alla jissejhu *energeia* bil-Grieg. Huma deskritti permezz tal-kliem ta' Alla – *logoi*. Dawn il-*logoi* huma l-prinċipji u l-ideat fid-dinja tas-sensi kif nafuha aħna. Imma ultimament, dawn jesprimu lilhom infushom fil-Logos divin. Massimu l-Konfessur kien jemmen li l-*logoi* huma pre-eżistenti f'Alla imma ġew realizzati f'ordni divin. Mela huma għalhekk traxxendenti u immanenti fid-dinja naturali. Alexei Nesteruk jissuġġerixxi li dawn il-*logoi* mhumieq mela maħluqa jew parti mill-ordni tal-hwejjeġ maħluqa. Dan għaliex għandhom gheruqhom fil-Logos divin. Mela fl-origni tagħhom huma traxxendenti imma fil-manifestazzjoni tagħhom huma immanenti b'mod analogu mar-relazzjoni li r-radji għandhom maċ-ċirkonferenza ta' ċirku. Dan l-irbit jahdem biss min-naħa tad-dinja fid-direzzjoni lejn Alla. Mela t-teologija ta' Nesteruk hija kemm xejn oġġla minn dik ta' Zizioulas fis-sens li għal Nesteruk “il-bnedmin, bhala xbieha divina, inghataw ir-raġuni sabieq jidhlu f'relazzjoni dialogika ma' raġuni oħra li hija r-raġuni ta' Alla”.²⁴

Kallistos Ware, teologu iehor miċ-tradizzjoni Ortodossa, jafferma r-relazzjoni bejn Alla u d-dinja f'termini ta' traxxendenza u immanenza, u dan jesprimih fit-termini ta' *pantokrator*. Mill-aspett artistiku dan ma jistax ma jfakkarnieq fix-xbiehat apsidali ta' katidrali kbar Bizantini bhala dawk ta' Palermo u Monreale fi Sqallija u oħrajn li jinsabu f'Bizanzju, l-Istanbul tal-lum. Il-Pantokrator mhuwiegq biss “l-omnipotenti” imma wkoll “dak li jżomm kollox flimkien”. Mela huwa terminu kożmiku per eċċellenza. Ware jenfasizza l-omnipreżenza ta' Alla f'dak kollu li hu maħluq hekk li jgħid li l-ewwel xbieha jew immaġni tagħna trid tkun dik ta' tagħmir fih. 'Il fuq u 'il hemm mill-kreazzjoni, Alla huwa wkoll il-ġewwieni ta' din ir-realtà.²⁵ Il-preżenza attiva ta' Alla bhala dak li jsostni kollox fl-essri hija dipendenti fuq id-dinja kreattiva ta' Alla, li mingħajrha kollox jaqa' fin-non-essri. Dan is-sens qawwi ta' ko-preżenza mal-holqien hija espressa fil-*logoi* “li huwa l-intenzjoni ta' Alla għal dak l-oġġett, mela l-essenza interjuri tiegħu, dak li jagħmlu dak li hu u li jressqu lejn is-saltna divina”²⁶. Dan ċertament jagħti valur lill-hwejjeġ maħluqa għax ma humieq sempliċi oġġetti imma kelma personali mitkellma lilna mill-Ħallieq ta' dak kollu li jeżisti. Fuq il-passi ta'

²⁴ A. NESTERUK, *Light from the East* (New York: Fortress Press/Augsburg, 2003), 101.

²⁵ KALLISTOS WARE, “God Immanent yet Transcendent: The Divine Energies according to Saint Gregory Palamas” fil-ktieb ta' P. CLAYTON u A. PEACOCKE, *In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being: Pantheistic Reflections on God's Presence in a Scientific World* (Grand Rapids (USA)/Cambridge(UK), Eerdmans, 2004), 57.

²⁶ Ibidem.

Massimu l-Konfessur, Ware jghid li l-*logoi* jistghu jkunu maħluqa u jistghu ma jkunux, imma kollox jiddependi mill-perspettiva. Huma maħluqa kemm-il darba huma parti mid-dinja naturali imma bhala prekonċezzjoni m'humieħ maħluqa. Din l-interpretazzjoni tagħmel hafna sens kemm-il darba tqiegħed aktar enfasi fuq il-preżenza interjuri tal-*logoi* in kwantu mhumiex separati mill-essri materjali.

L-Gherf Divin u kożmiku

Sergeii Bulkagov żviluppa t-teoloġija tas-Sophia jew l-Gherf. Hafna drabi s-Sophia u l-Logos jiġu mxebbħa flimkien. Hemm hjiel ta' dan fl-interpretazzjoni Kattolika ngħidu aħna tal-Ktieb tal-Gherf. Massimu l-Konfessur jikteb fuq dan. Wara l-konċilju t'Efesu tas-sena 431 meta Marija kienet dikjarata Omm Alla, kien hemm bidu ta' tradizzjoni fejn l-gherf ġie assoċjat ma' Marija. Dan wassal anke għal żvilupp fl-ikonografija. Bulkagov li tweled fl-1853 żviluppa x-xbieħa poetika u mistika tal-Gherf fil-kitbiet ta' Vladimir Solovyov u Pavel Florensky f'direzzjoni aktar teoloġika. Bulkagov ra fis-Sophia l-għaqda ma' Alla u d-dinja u ddeskriva l-immanenza u t-traxxendenza ta' Alla. Kien hemm żmien meta bħal donnu lemaħ is-Sophia bhala r-raba' persuna tal-Unjoni tat-Trinità. Imma aktar tard ċaħad dan u integraħa fil-ħajja tat-Trinità. Mela s-Sophia saret tesprimi l-imħabba ta' Alla, il-Femminil Etern li toħroġ fil-holqien imma hija wkoll il-glorja ta' Alla fil-kreazzjoni trasfigurata minn dik l-imħabba. Bulkagov jitbiegħed ftit mill-idea tan-nuqqas ta' kapaċità tal-għarfien ta' Alla li hija karatteristika tal-Ortodossija. Madankollu jħalli wisa' għal dan il-kuncett tal-assolutezza ta' Alla. Aktar 'il quddiem huwa jiddistingwi bejn is-Sophia maħluqa u s-Sophia divina.

Fir-rigward tar-rwol tal-umanità, Bulgakov jagħraf l-importanza tal-azzjoni umana għax jghid li n-natura qed tistenna l-“umanizzazzjoni tagħħa”. Imma xorta fadlilha l-ispirtu. Hu jilmah is-sbuhija bhala manifestazzjoni tad-dawl tas-Sophia divina. Il-korrelazzjoni bejn id-dinja u Alla tinsab fis-Sophia li qisha hlejqa. Jaċċetta li hemm disinn preċiż fil-holqien għax fil-bidu Alla qiegħed iż-żerriegħa tiegħu fid-dinja.

It-tradizzjoni eremitika

Fl-Ortodossija hemm dik li nsejħulha t-tradizzjoni tal-eremiti. Qabel San Benedittu, San Romwaldu u San Bruno, kien hemm Sant'Anton l-Abbati.

Hekk ukoll fit-teoloġija, hemm l-eremiti. San Xmun it-Teologu l-Ġdid huwa awtur mistiku tal-lvant. Kien axxetiku imma kien ukoll konxju mid-dimensjoni soċjali tal-ħajja umana. Hu jikkritika lil dawk li jiġbru għalihom dak li suppost jinżamm komuni.²⁷

L-axxetiċiżmu jew ir-rinunzja (ċaħda) ta' dak li jitolbu s-sensi, huwa movement li twieled minħabba li s-sensi ħafna drabi jesprimu diversi bżonnijiet speċjalment meta l-pjaċir isir l-aktar aspekk importanti tal-ħajja. F'dan l-istat, is-sbuhija vera tal-ħolqien tista' tisfa oskurata. Għalhekk, skond it-tradizzjoni axxetika fi hdan il-Knejjes Ortodossi, l-axxetiċiżmu jwassal biex il-bniedem jintebaħ bis-sbuhija vera tan-natura ta' madwaru. Huwa biss f'dawk li huma "bżonnijiet neċessarji" bħal ngħidu aħna l-ikel, il-post fejn tgħix u l-ilbies li jingħataw l-aktar importanza. Anke dawn jitqiesu bhala barka minn Alla. San Xmun jinnota li flimkien mal-konsumeriżmu, in-nuqqas ta' temperanza jew bilanċ u l-edoniżmu, hemm ukoll il-passjonijiet tal-egoiżmu u l-imħabba lejn il-persuna stess li gieli wasslet għan-narċiżiżmu. L-axxetika twassal, jgħidina San Xmun it-Teologu, biex il-bniedem iqis dak kollu li għandu madwaru bhala riżultat tal-azzjoni ta' Alla personali aktar milli oġġetti li jingħataw valur ekonomiku jew ta' utilità. L-axxetiċimu jipponta wkoll fid-direzzjoni ta' apprezzament tal-gustizzja soċjali bħal ma nsibu fl-ordinijiet monastiċi fejn il-komunità tgħix fuq linji li mhumiex anti-natura jew anti-materjali imma permezz ta' apprezzament axxetiku proprju. San Xmun ifahhar il-ħajja monastika; hu stess kien jgħix ħajja ċenobitika imma hu jirrifjuta li jirrestringi s-salvazzjoni għal din il-manjiera ta' ħajja. Bulgakov huwa tal-fehma li din il-ħajja monastika tgħin ukoll biex ikun hemm il-possibiltà ta' hbiberija mal-annimali. Huwa possibli li wiehed jargumenta li l-ħajja tal-qaddisin espressa b'dan il-mod m'hijiex biss eżempju ta' kif wiehed jista' jerga' lura għall-ħajja ta' qabel id-dnub tal-Għeden imma wkoll riferenza għal kif tista' tkun 'il quddiem il-ħajja tal-ħolqien fl-era eskatoloġika.²⁸

Din kienet harsa generali lejn it-teoloġija tal-Knisja jew Knejjes Ortodossi fil-qasam tal-ekoteoloġija. Wiehed ma jridx jinsa li d-diskussjoni għadha għaddejja, ħafna drabi bil-barka u l-inkuraġġiment tal-istess mexxejja spiritwali fi hdan id-dinja Ortodossa. Fiż-żmien preżenti, il-Patrijarka

²⁷ ANESTIS G. KESELOPOULUS, *Man and the Environment: A Study of St Symeon* (Crestwood, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 94.

²⁸ FR MAKARIOS, "The Monk and Nature in the Orthodox Tradition" fil-kitba ta' Ġwanni ta' Pergamon, *So That's God Creation Might Live*, op. cit., 41-48.

Ekumeniku Bartilmew I qiegħed kull ma jmur jistabilixxi lilu nnifsu bhala wieħed mill-akbar esponenti tal-harsien tal-ambjent mill-aspett pastorali. Id-diskussjoni tkompli!

II-Kunsill Dinji tal-Knejjes

Il-Kunsill Dinji tal-Knejjes imsejjaħ ukoll fil-qosor bhala WCC jew *World Council of Churches* huwa dak il-korp li jiġbor fih numru kbir ta' denominazzjonijiet jew konfessjonijiet reliġjużi minn madwar id-dinja kollha f'entità wahda li għandha l-kwartieri tagħha f'Ġinevra fejn Ġwanni Kalvinu kien introduċa r-Riforma Protestanta. Ma nistgħux ma nsemmux l-proċess ta' konsultazzjoni fi hdan din l-entità li tawwal madwar seba' snin u li kien anke sejjaħ laqgħa dinjija f'Seoul fis-sena 1990. Din il-Konvokazzjoni jew Sejha Dinjija kienet ippubblikat it-test tagħha bit-titlu *Ten Affirmations on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation*. Jixraq li naraw ftit x'jgħidu dawn l-affermazzjonijiet ladarba jitkellmu hafna drabi direttament fuq il-ħtiegħa tal-harsien tal-ambjent. Dawn li ġejjin huma xi affermazzjonijiet prinċipali maqlubin għal ilsienja:

F'din id-dinja mmarkata bl-ingustizzja, bil-vjolenza u l-querda tal-ambjent, aħna nixtiequ naffermaw il-patt ta' Alla li huwa miftuħ għal kulhadd u li jzomm il-wegħda tal-ħajja fis-shuħija kollha tagħha. Aħna u nwiegħbuh għall-patt ta' Alla aħna nistqarru l-fidi f'Alla Trinitarju li huwa l-għajn ta' kull għaqda.

Affirmazzjoni 1: Aħna naffermaw li kull eżerċizzju tas-setgħa jagħraf lil Alla b'Mulej. . .

Dawk li għandhom is-setgħa – ekonomika, politika, militari, soċjali, xjentifika, kulturali, legali, reliġjuża – għandhom ikunu qaddejja tal-gustizzja u s-sliem ta' Alla.

Affirmazzjoni 2: Aħna naffermaw l-għażla t'Alla favur il-foqra

Il-foqra huma l-oppressi u l-isfruttati. Il-faqar tagħhom mhux aċċidentali. Hafna drabi huwa r-riżultat ta' sistema *deliberate* li jirriżultaw f'akkumulazzjoni dejjem tikber ta' għana u setgħa f'idejn ftit. . .

Waqt li nappoġjaw il-bżonn ta' servizzi ta' qadi u rispons urġenti għall-emerġenzi, aħna nagħharfu li fi żmienna hemm il-bżonnijiet ta' dawk li huma "l-iċken" u li jeħtiegħ li ngħinuhom billi nibnu d-dinja b'manjiera fundamentali fil-qasam tal-ekonomija.

Affirmazzjoni 3: Naffermaw il-valur ugwali tar-razez u l-ġnus kollha

F'Ġesù Kristu, il-bnedmin kollha ta' kull razza, kasta jew nisel etniku huma rikonoċiljati ma' Alla u flimkien. Ir-razziżmu bħala ideoloġija u diskriminazzjoni bħala Prattika huma ċ-ċaħda tad-diversità għanja tal-pjan t'Alla għad-dinja u l-qerda tad-dinjità tal-personalità umana. Il-forom kollha tar-razziżmu, kemm jekk individwali, kollettivi jew sistematiċi, jehtieg li jitqiesu bħala dnub u l-ġustifikazzjoni teoloġika tagħhom jehtieg titqies ereżija.

Affirmazzjoni 4: Naffermaw li r-raġel u l-mara huma maħluqa xbieha ta' Alla
Kristu afferma lill-mara u taha d-dinjità kollha tagħha.

Aħna naffermaw s-setgħa kreattiva mogħtija lin-nisa...

Aħna nirreżistu l-istrutturi tal-patrijarkaliżmu li jipperpetwaw il-vjolenza kontra n-nisa fi djarhom stess...

Affirmazzjoni 5: Naffermaw li l-verità hija l-fundament tal-komunità tan-nies liberi

Illum, teknoloġiji ġodda joffru possibiltajiet ta' komunikazzjoni akbar għal kulhadd... naffermaw li l-aċċess għall-verità u l-edukazzjoni, l-informazzjoni u l-mezzi ta' komunikazzjoni huma drittijiet umani bażiċi.

Affirmazzjoni 6: Naffermaw il-paċi ta' Ġesù Kristu

L-uniku bażi possibli għall-paċi deġġiema hija l-ġustizzja (Iżajja 32: 17) Aħna sa nirreżistu d-duttrini u s-sistemi tas-sigurtà li huma bbażati fuq l-armi tal-qerda tal-massa u l-invażjonijiet jew l-okkupazzjonijiet militari. Sa nirreżistu d-duttrini tas-sigurtà nazzjonali li għandhom l-għan li jikkontrollaw il-ġnus biex jiproteġu l-privileġġi tal-ftit.

Affirmazzjoni 7: Naffermaw l-ħolqien bħala wild Alla.

Bħala Hallieq, Alla u l-għajn u s-sostenitur tal-kożmos kollu. Alla jħobb il-ħolqien tiegħu. B'modi misterjużi, u bil-ħajja u d-dinamiżmu tiegħu, kollox jirrifletti l-glorja tal-ħallieq. Il-hidma ta' Alla fir-redenzjoni mogħtija fi Kristu tirrikonoċilja kollox...

Illum il-ħajja kollha fid-dinja tinsab mhedda għax l-umanità waqfet milli thobb l-art li hija ħajja; u l-għonja u s-setgħana qed jeqirduha għal għanijiet egoistiċi. Il-kobor tad-devastazzjoni jistgħu jkunu irreversibbli u jwassluna għal azzjoni urgenti...

Affirmazzjoni 8: Naffermaw li l-art hija tal-Mulej

L-art u l-ilmijiet jipprovdu ħajja lill-ġnus... Miljuni huma dawk li m'għandhomx art u jbatu l-għatx għall-ilma... Aħna nirreżistu kull sistema

li thedded dan, u li tippermetti l-ispekulazzjoni tal-art b'dannu tal-foqra; nirreżistu lil min jixhet il-ħmieġ fuq l-art u fl-ilmijiet, lil min jippromwovi l-isfruttament negattiv u d-distribuzzjoni jew kontaminazzjoni tal-art u l-prodotti tagħha. . .

Affermazzjoni 9: Naffermaw id-dinjità u l-impenn tal-ġenerazzjoni żagħżuġha...

Il-faqar, l-ingustizzja, u l-kriżi tad-djun, il-gwerra u l-militariżmu, qed jaffetwaw it-tfal u d-diżlokament ta' bosta familji u qed jisfurzaw lit-tfal jaħdmu sempliciment biex jibqgħu haġġin, u jgħibu l-qerda tas-sopravivenza... Naffermaw id-dinjità tat-tfal li ġejja mill-vulnerabilità tagħhom u mill-ħtieġa li jgħajxu l-imħabba... Nirreżistu kull sistema jew awtorità li tkisser id-drittijiet tal-ġenerazzjoni *future* u li tabbuża minnhom. . .

Affermazzjoni 10: Naffermaw li d-drittijiet umani ġejjin minn Alla

Hemm relazzjoni inseparabbli bejn il-ġustizzja u d-drittijiet umani. Id-drittijiet umani għandhom l-għajn tagħhom fil-ġustizzja ta' Alla li tirrelata mal-poplu li qed ibati, jinsab fl-iskjavitù jew jinsab marginalizzat jiġifieri mwarrab (Eżodu 3: 7b). Id-dritt tal-popli li jaħdmu l-mudelli tagħhom ta' żvilupp u li jgħixu ħielsa mill-biza' u mill-manipulazzjoni huwa dritt uman fundamentali li għandu jkun rispettata u hekk ukoll għandhom ikunu d-drittijiet tan-nisa u t-tfal għal haġja ħielsa mill-vjolenza fid-dar u fis-soċjetà...

Aħna naffermaw li d-drittijiet umani huma mogħtija minn Alla u li l-promozzjoni u l-harsien tagħhom huma essenzjali għall-helsien, il-ġustizzja u s-sliem. Sabiex ikunu protetti u difiżi dawn id-drittijiet umani, hemm bżonn sistema ġudizzjali indipendenti.

Dawn l-għaxar affermazzjonijiet huma xhieda haġja ta' kemm il-Kunsill Dinji tal-Knejjes (WCC) qed jagħmel mill-aħjar li jista' biex f'isem bosta religjonijiet u korpi ekkleżjali jiddefendi l-ekoloġija u d-dinja li writtna minn ta' qabilna.

Din ma kinitx l-ewwel u l-aħhar darba li l-Kunsill Dinji tal-Knejjes ikkometta ruħu fil-hidma favur dinja aktar ekoloġika. Diga fl-1975, permezz tal-Assemblea ta' Nairobi, il-WCC kien wera l-interess u t-thassib tiegħu dwar l-ekoloġija. Fl-1988 il-Kunsill kien sponsorja konsultazzjoni dwar il-*global warming* f'Ġinevra stess li attendew għaliha mhux biss membri ta' knejjes imma wkoll gruppi ekoloġiċi u ambjentali, xjenzati kif ukoll

politiċi u teologi. Osservaturi tal-WCC hadu sehem fil-laqgħat li saru bi thejjija għall-adozzjoni tat-trattat tan-Nazzjonijiet Uniti fis-Summit li sar f'Rio de Janeiro fl-1992.

F'dan is-summit, il-Kunsill tal-Knejjes kien għamel xi rakkomandazzjonijiet. L-ewwelnett, huwa hass li kien importanti li wiehed jidhol aktar fl-appfondiment tar-riflessjonijiet teologiċi u etici tat-tema tal-bidla fil-klima. It-tieninett, hu hass l-importanza li aktar nies ikunu jafu li biex wiehed jiffaċja r-realtà tal-bidla fil-klima, l-ewwelnett hemm bżonn li jsiru bidliet profondi fl-istili tal-ħajja. It-tielet, aspetti ekologiċi, ekonomiċi u politiċi tal-bidla fil-klima għandhom ikunu assessjati minn perspettiva ta' ġustizzja, speċjalment fid-dawl tal-qabza dejjem tikber bejn il-minoranza sinjura u l-maġġoranza fqira. Finalment, il-WCC emmen li huwa kruċjali li wiehed jirrendi l-possibiltà li r-rizorsi jkunu jistgħu jintużaw mill-knejjes individwali sabiex ikun hemm żvilupp fil-programmi edukattivi li jistgħu jwasslu biex tkun stabilita l-klima globali.

Sign of Peril, Test of Faith kien l-isem ta' dokument ippublikat fl-1993 dwar dan. L-ewwel kapitlu evalwa l-evidenza xjentifika favur il-bdil fil-klima u ttaqta li jħabbar minn qabel il-konsegwenzi futuri. Id-dokument aċċetta li fil-waqt li jeżistu inċertezzi mill-qasam xjentifiku, daqshekk ieħor jeżisti taġħrif xjentifiku ta' min joqgħod fuqu. Id-dokument kien favur l-adozzjoni tal-*Framework Convention on Climate Change*. Dan jirrikjedi li l-awtorijiet politiċi jappoġġjaw il-miżuri stretti ambjentali sabiex jevitaw konsegwenzi potenzjalment ta' ħsara anke fin-nuqqas ta' evidenzi xjentifiċi ċerti.

Fit-tieni dokument, hemm *framework* teologiċu u etiku li jgħin lill-Insara sabiex jifhmu l-implikazzjonijiet tal-bidla fil-klima fuq il-fidi taġħhom. Skond dan id-dokument, dawn ir-riflessjonijiet ġejjin mill-aspetti baziċi tal-fidi Kristjana. Dawn jinkludu l-imħabba u l-interess ta' Alla lejn u fil-ħolqien u lejn il-foqra tad-dinja. Fil-kuntest tal-*global warming*, indiema awtentika tkun tinvolvi r-rieda li wiehed jibdel l-istil ta' ħajja, liema stil jeħtieġ li jkun ibbażat fuq is-semplicità u s-suffiċjenza aktar milli fuq l-akkumulazzjoni kostanti tal-ġid u tal-possessjonijiet materjali li jidher li jridu jiddominaw il-kultura kontemporanja tal-Punent.

Id-dokument jirrifletti fuq is-sovrانيتà ta' Alla fuq il-ħolqien, u jfakkar li l-azzjonijiet tal-Insara m'humix limitati biss għall-qasam tal-bnedmin l-oħra imma anke fejn jidhol il-ħolqien li mhuwiex uman. Huwa jsejjah in-nuqqas

ta' rispett lejn il-holqien bhala dnuh. Wiehed minn hamsa tal-popolazzjoni tad-dinja ghandu kilba kontinwa għall-*fossil fuel* u dawn huma responsabbli għal 85% tal-*greenhouse gas emissions* tad-dinja kollha. Mill-banda l-oħra, 20% biss tal-popolazzjoni tad-dinja ghandu bżonn tassew li tkabbar l-użu tal-enerġija *fossil fuel* u dan sabiex tindirizza sempliċiment il-htiegijiet l-aktar bażiċi tagħha. Fi kliem iehor, ir-riflessjonijiet teoloġiċi u etiċi jaffer maw li Alla jhobb kollox fil-holqien. Huwa jitlob lill-bnedmin jabbandunaw l-arroganza u l-kilba li hija ta' tant ħsara għad-dinja u tista' tagħmel ħsara lill-gejjieni tal-holqien.

It-tielet kapitlu jħares lejn it-tifsira ta' rispons pożittiv għall-*global warming* u x'ikun ifisser dan għas-setturi varji tas-soċjetà. Id-dokument jishaq b'qawwa li kull rispons komprensiv fuq livell soċjali, politiku u ekonomiku għandu jsehh malajr kemm jista' jkun.

Ir-raba' kapitlu jiddiskuti kif il-pajjiżi jistgħu jirriduċu l-użu tagħhom ta' *greenhouse gases* permezz ta' skema realistika li tinvolvi inċentivi għall-bidla. In-nies għandhom id-dritt għall-proviżjoni tal-ikel u l-htigijiet bażiċi tal-ħajja imma m'għandhomx dritt li jahlu l-enerġija jew jabbużaw mill-art. Il-gvernijiet u l-industrija għandhom ifittxu sistemi li jippromwovu l-effiċjenza tal-enerġija u jaċċelleraw ix-xift minn *fossil fuel* għal enerġija li tkun ġejja minn sorsi li jistgħu jerġgħu jiġġeddu (*renewable sources*) bħalma huma l-enerġija tar-riħ, l-enerġija tal-mewġ, l-enerġija solari u l-enerġija tal-biomassa.

Is-sitt kapitlu jistaqsi: Jistgħu *t-targets* li ġew stabiliti għall-kontroll tat-tniġġis jintlahqu tassew fi hdan is-sistema preżenti soċjo-politika globali? Ovvjament, fit-tweġiba għal din il-mistoqsija, l-awturi tad-dokumenti għamluha ċara li huma konxji li l-gvernijiet aktar jaqblilhom jagħtu każ ta' dawk il-kumpaniji l-kbar li għandhom il-flus u l-profit mill-entitajiet żgħar preżenti f'pajjiżi foqra tat-tielet dinja! Dan huwa żvantaġġ li mhux la kemm jintegħleb!

Il-kapitlu sebgħa, tmienja u disgħa jeżaminaw ir-rwol potenzjali tal-knejjes f'li jindirizzaw il-kriżi tal-bidla fil-klima. L-ispiritwalità li dan id-dokument jinkuraġġixxi hija waħda mibnija fuq ir-riċerka tal-gustizzja globali, il-paċi u l-integrità tal-holqien. Ir-rapport jinsisti li l-knejjes għandhom johlqu kampanji attivi f'koperazzjoni ma' organizzazzjonijiet ambjentali indipendenti bħalma huma *Friends of the Earth*. Il-kwistjoni kruċjali tal-istili għonja ta' ħajja

tad-dinja tal-punent fid-dinja tal-minoranza hija wkoll indirizzata. L-awturi jfakkru lill-Insara kontemporanji li l-antenati Insara tagħhom ghexu hajja wisq aktar sempliċi minn dik tagħhom illum.

F'Marzu 1996, il-President ta' dak iż-żmien tal-Kunsill Pontifiċju tal-Ġustizzja u l-Paċi l-Kardinal Roger Etchegaray kiteb lill-presidenti tal-Konferenzi Episkopali tal-pajjiżi industrijali u rrikonoxxa l-fatt li l-*World Council of Churches* ha r-rwol ewlieni biex jiġbed l-attenzjoni tal-knejjes membri għar-relazzjoni bejn il-bidla fil-klima u l-attività umana. Huwa nkuraġġixxa lill-knejjes lokali sabiex jikkoperaw ma' din l-inizjattiva f'pajjiżhom. Madankollu, hemm hafna x'għad jista' jsir.

Fl-2002, il-WCC hareġ dokument iehor bl-isem *Solidarity with Victims of Climate Change*. F'dan id-dokument kitbu dwar il-kundizzjonijiet estremi tal-klima kkawżati minhabba l-bidla fil-klima u dwar il-flejjes kbar li qed jintefqu. Ġieli l-kumpanija tal-insurance jkollhom ihallu madwar \$300 biljun kull sena. Id-dokument irrikonoxxa l-fatt li l-IPCC jew *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* flimkien mal-Protokol ta' Kyoto talbu riduzzjoni ta' madwar 60% sa 80% tal-emissjonijiet tal-*greenhouse gases* sas-sena 2050 biex forsi jkun evitati katastrofi kbar bħal ma kien dak li sehħ fl-2004 permezz tat-tsunami tax-xlokk tal-Asja. Madankollu, meta waslu għall-iffirmar tal-ftehim ta' Kyoto, il-pajjiżi s-sinjuri qablu li sas-sena 2050 inaqqsu biss 5.2%. X'faqar ta' kalkoli!

Is-suċċessi tal-WCC b'riżq l-ambjent

Wiehed mill-persuni li hadmu l-aktar b'riżq żvilupp u tkattir fil-konoxxenza tal-global warming fi hdan il-knejjes kien Dr. David G. Hallman. Huwa l-Koordinatur tal-Programm tal-Bidla fil-Klima fi hdan il-WCC. F'konferenza dwar il-bidla fil-klima li kienet organizzata mill-*Catholic Earth Care Australia* f'Canberra f'Novembru 2005, hu ddeskriva x-xogħol kbir tal-WCC madwar id-dinja. Din li ġejja hija lista impressjonanti tal-akkwisti li rnexxielha tagħmel:

1. Il-Konferenza tal-Paċifiku tal-Knejjes u l-*WCC Pacific Office* huma attivi fil-hidma tagħhom biex jghixu l-knejjes fl-istati-gzejjer tal-Paċifiku sabiex ikunu jistgħu jindirizzaw it-theddida serja li l-bidla fil-klima qed tqiegħed lis-soċjetajiet;
2. Fl-Indja, il-WCC ghen biex jappoġġja *network* li ġġib l-isem *Indian Network on Ethics and Climate Change* li tinvolvi Insara Kattoliċi u

Protestanti fil-hidma taghhom fl-organizzazzjonijiet tal-ambjent sabiex jinkludu lin-nies fid-diversi reġjuni tal-pajjiż fejn jidhlu l-kwistjonijiet b'rabta mal-bidla fil-klima;

3. Il-*European Christian Environment Network* kellu programm attiv fir-rigward tal-bidla fil-klima għal diversi snin kif għandhom ukoll il-membri nazzjonali li jinkludu fost l-oħrajn il-*Christian Ecology Link* tar-Renju Unit;
4. L-*All Africa Council of Churches* kienet f'għaqda mal-WCC f'*workshops* fl-imghoddi li ffukaw fuq ir-rabtiet bejn il-bidla fil-klima u l-kwistjonijiet tal-ilma;
5. Il-Kunsill Latin Amerikan tal-Knejjes qed jahdem ma' gruppi oħra fis-soċjetà ċivili dwar *environmental citizenship* li jinkludu kurrikulu mibni fuq il-fidi sabiex jintuza fis-seminarji u fil-parroċċi;
6. Fl-Istati Uniti tal-Amerika, in-*National Religious Partnership on the Environment* (NRPE) kellu programm twil ta' edukazzjoni dwar il-bidla fil-klima. L-NRPE jinkludi fost l-oħrajn il-*US Evangelical Environmental Network* u l-Koalizzjoni dwar l-Ambjent u l-ħajja Lhudija;
7. Fl-aħħarnett, il-Knejjes tal-Kanada qed jikkollaboraw b'mod ekumeniku f'koalizzjoni msejha *Kairos Canada* li għandha programm attiv fir-rigward tal-bidla fil-klima.²⁹

Lejn riflessjoni biblika

“U tniġġset l-art taħt min jgħammarha,
għax hallew il-liġijiet,
ma qagħdux għall-preċetti,
kisru l-patt ta' dejjem.
għalhekk is-saħta kielet l-art;
u dawk li jgħammru fiha ħallsu għall-ħtija” (Iżaija 24:5,6)

Min jista' jiċhad li dawn il-kelmiet tal-profeta Iżaija ma joqogħdux sew bħala deskrizzjoni tal-problemi li fihom tinsab l-umanità u d-dinja minħabba l-fenomeni tal-bidla fil-klima? Tistħajjel lil Iżaija qed iħabbar diga bosta sekli qabel Kristu dak li qed isehh bħalissa! Profezija li qed issehħ quddiem għajnejna! Din hija l-isfida li t-tlett tradizzjonijiet ewlenin Insara; dik Kattolika, dik Ortodossa u dik Protestanta għandhom bħalissa quddiemhom!

²⁹ Ara [www.catholicearthcareoz.net/homepage/Conference 2005](http://www.catholicearthcareoz.net/homepage/Conference%202005).

Digà sar hafna imma hemm iżjed li jenħtieg isir biex id-dinja tigi salvata minn dik il-“križi morali ekoloġika” kif sejjhilha Papa Ġwanni Pawlu II. L-awgurju huwa wieħed: jalla għadna fil-ħin biex dak li ma nistgħux inreggġu lura, tal-inqas inzommuh milli jkompli jisfa ta’ ħsara għalina u għall-ġenerazzjonijiet ta’ warajna!

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Mons. Raimondo Riva, sacerdote dell'arcidiocesi di Milano dal 1953; canonico teologo del Capitolo del Duomo di Monza (MI) dal 2006. Specializzò in Teologia Dogmatica (Facoltà teologica-Milano) e in Sacra Scrittura (Istituto Biblico-Roma). Dal 1960 al 1968 membro della Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milano. Dal 1960 al 1964 professore di Introduzione alla Sacra Scrittura all'Università Cattolica di Milano. Dal 1964 al 1965 soggiornò presso l'Istituto Francescano della Flagellazione a Gerusalemme per ricerche in geografia e archeologia biblica, con viaggi di studio in Medio Oriente, dall'Egitto alla Mesopotamia. Dal 1966 al 1976 professore di Sacra Scrittura nel Seminario Teologico del P.I.M.E., Milano. Dal 1974 al 2000 professore di Ermeneutica Biblica ed Esegese del N.T. nella Università Gregoriana, Roma. Dal 1975 al 2005 professore incaricato e invitato per il N.T. nella Università di "Propaganda Fide", Roma. I suoi studi riguardano i rapporti dell'ermeneutica e dell'esegesi biblica con la filosofia ermeneutica e le teorie linguistiche e testuali attuali.

Rev. Geoffrey G. Attard, is a priest of the diocese of Gozo since 2004. After obtaining a Bachelor's degree in Sacred Theology at the Sacred Heart Major Seminary, affiliated to the Angelicum in Rome, he graduated in M. Litt. (The Bible & The Contemporary World) at the St. Andrews University in Scotland. His dissertation, *The Teaching of the Catholic Church about Climate Change*, was published by himself in 2009. He is currently a full time teacher at the Sacred Heart Minor Seminary in Gozo.

Rev. Charles Buttigieg was ordained priest for the diocese of Gozo in 1999 after achieving his B.A. in Theological Studies at the Sacred Heart Major Seminary, in affiliation with St. Thomas Aquinas Pontifical University (*Angelicum*) of Rome. He completed his Licentiate in Biblical Theology at the Pontificia Università Gregoriana in Rome. His dissertation was an exegetical study of 1 Corinthians 15:20-28. He also achieved three E.I.E. diplomas in Psychology, Child Psychology and Counselling. After five years of studies and pastoral work in Santa Lucia parish in Rome, he returned in diocese and is now parish vicar at Qala parish. He is member of the diocesan presbiterium council and contributes in conferences and in many biblical articles for diverse catholic journals.

Rev. Christopher Caruana OP, a Dominican, was ordained priest in 2001. He completed his studies in Philosophy at the Oxford University obtaining an MA and at the London University where he obtained the MPhil. He is currently preparing his thesis for Doctorate in Philosophy at the King's College of the same University. His research on medieval philosophers does not detach him from contemporary philosophy, perhaps he is convinced that the intellectual and productive acuteness of the scholastic world has still a lot to teach us today. He is currently responsible for candidates preparing themselves for priesthood in the Maltese Dominican Province.

Rev. Joseph Sultana was ordained priest for the Diocese of Gozo in 2001. After obtaining a Bachelor's degree in Sacred Theology at the Sacred Heart Major Seminary, affiliated to the Angelicum in Rome, he acquired a Licentiate in Biblical Sciences at the Biblical Pontifical Institute in Rome. He is Lecturer of Sacred Scripture at the Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Gozo and is currently preparing his thesis for the Doctorate in Biblical Theology.

Rev. Maximillian Grech is a fourth year student for BA in Theology at the Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Gozo. After receiving his primary education at the St. Francis School in Victoria, and his secondary education at the Ninu Cremona Lyceum in Victoria, he completed his post-secondary education course at Sir M.A. Refalo Centre for Further Studies in Victoria. In September 2003 he was admitted to the Gozo Major Seminary to further his philosophical and theological studies. Between 2006 and 2007 he accomplished his pastoral year at the Parrocchia SS. Trinità in Nichelino (TO), Italy. He was ordained Deacon on the 23 June 2009 and will be ordained Priest on the 13 June 2010.

