

LIVING TRADITION

Fr. Lorenzo Carraro, MCCJ

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By

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Jewish Heritage and Christian Spirituality

- ## 3 DIMENSIONS

A GOD TO LOVE

The contribution of the Old Testament to our concept of God is immense. In the Bible, to acknowledge the existence of God is wisdom. The failure to recognize God in creation is the result of a corruption of our humanity. On the contrary, religion becomes a foundation for human dignity and value.

The God of the Bible is one who enters into communication with human beings and speaks to them. In different ways, the Bible describes the initiative taken by God to communicate with humanity in choosing the people of Israel. God makes his word heard either directly or through a spokesperson, like Abraham or Moses. God manifests himself in the Old Testament as the One who speaks.

The first, most important content of God's word is about God himself. The concept of God comes to us in the Old Testament as affirmation and negation. In both aspects, the message is completely original and amazing. In a contest of widespread idolatry, the God of the Bible is the creator and his nature is transcendent and spiritual.

Going to God by affirmation

The first idea is that God is one: "Listen, o Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4). The word: monotheism doesn't exist in the Bible, but the uniqueness of God is expressed by the contrast between the Living God and the dead nature of the other gods as seen in the strong polemic against Idolatry (Psalm 115).

The second idea is that God is good: He rejoices at the goodness of his creatures. "And God saw that it was good" (Genesis 1). Especially, he wants us to be good: God's law: morality. "I am the Lord, your God... You shall not kill" (Exodus 20).

Then the God of the Bible is a personal God who wants to communicate with his creatures, with humanity and cares for us. God's personality and concern for us is witnessed throughout the whole Bible in what we call Salvation History. Already to Abraham, in the beginning, God says: "I will bless you... and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves"

(Genesis 12:1-5). And to Moses: “I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob” (Exodus 3: 6).

God cares for humanity, for his chosen people: “I have seen the affliction of my people...and I have come down to deliver them” (Exodus 3:7-8). God wants to have a covenant with his chosen people (Abraham); He gives them his Law, the content of the covenant, and wants them to understand that the heart of God’s covenant is love (Psalm 23, Psalm 103).

A God to love: from the Jewish confession of faith, the “Shema, Israel” in Deuteronomy, 6:4-5: “You shall love the Lord, your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might”, to the countless expressions of love for God in the Psalms: this shows the originality and uniqueness of the Jewish understanding of God that has passed integrally in the New Testament. No servilism, no magic, but loving obedience, a mature relationship in a worship that enhances our human dignity.

Going to God by way of negation

This is the itinerary of transcendence and it is the most remarkable albeit less known of God’s aspects. God is a great mystery: we cannot see God’s glory, his face, only his back (Exodus 33:18-33). To see God’s face (or to hear his voice) is to die. This is why people are expected to cover their head when they pray.

The mystery of God is underscored by the prohibition to pronounce the name of God. God reveals his name to Moses, in the episode of the Burning Bush(Exodus 3:15):Yahweh. One translation is “I am what I am”, meaning that God doesn’t want to reveal his name, or better: he is ineffable, he is not limited by a name since he is one and transcendent.

The prohibition of the images of God is also stressing the Mystery of God and helping the people to avoid idolatry: to worship the creatures instead of the Creator. The prohibition of making images is strong even nowadays in Judaism and Islam. It is a safeguard for monotheism.

This aspect becomes characteristically very pathetic with the experience of the exile. The Jewish people are taken into captivity, they live among the pagans. As in the famous psalm 137 “By the rivers of Babylon”, they are invited to sing the song of Zion, in the same way they are challenged by their enemies to show their God.

The author of Psalm 42 pours out his painful nostalgia for the temple of the Lord in poetic images: “Like the deer that longs for running streams, so my soul longs for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, the God of life; when shall I go to see the face of God? I have no food but tears, day and night; and all day long men say to me: ‘Where is your God?’”

Jesus Christ is the New Testament

In the New Testament, we have the fact of the Incarnation. “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we saw his glory” (John 1:14). This is without doubt the most important line of the Christian Bible. The fundamental experience of the Apostles is the experience of Jesus, the incarnate Word, an experience of Jesus that is based on the senses as it is proclaimed so by Saint John:

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands concerning the word of life... we proclaim also to you, so that you may have fellowship with us” (1 John 1:1-4). The emphasis on the senses is so pronounced that it is like a healthy intoxication.

It shows the awareness of the unique charism or gift of the Twelve: the gift of the experience of Jesus which they had by being with him from the beginning, throughout his life and especially the extraordinary experience of Jesus’ resurrection. They are the eye witnesses, the first hand testifiers of the reality of the blessed humanity of Jesus, “God with us”.

The experience of the senses, however, must lead to the leap of faith. This is the lesson of the episode of the doubting Thomas. His demands of putting his finger on the wounds of Jesus is legitimate. Jesus himself, in the parallel passage in Luke, exhorts the disciples to touch him. So he yields to Thomas’ demand, but he challenges him to go beyond the senses to the leap of faith.

It is as if Jesus was telling Thomas: Touch, touch... What do you touch? You touch the man! If you want to touch God, you must believe”. Thomas immediately takes the leap of faith and utters the best confession of faith in the divinity of Jesus of the whole New Testament: “My Lord and my God”. Then Jesus said: “Blessed are those who without seeing, yet believe” (John 20:27-29).

“Show us the Father”

It is moving the dialogue of Philip with Jesus, during the last supper, in the Gospel of John. Philip asks Jesus: “Lord, show us the Father and we will be satisfied”. This request is very touching in the context of the invisibility of God which we have seen in the Old Testament, the polemic against the idols and the pagans’ challenge “Where is your God?”.

Then Jesus answers: “Have I been with you so long, and yet you do not know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how can you say: ‘Show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?’” (John 14:8-10). The divinity of Jesus is really the center of the New Testament, and only somebody blinded by prejudice can fail to recognize it.

Jesus is “the image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15). The humanity of “God with us” is the reason of the images of Jesus Christ and consequently Mama Mary and the Saints in the Catholic Church. In the VIII century there was a struggle about the problem of the images. The movement that intended to forbid images and was called Iconoclasm was condemned by the pope and the images remained in the Catholic tradition and gave origin to the masterpieces of art throughout the centuries.

Strictly speaking there is no image of God, but only of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints. The opposition to the images, if pushed to the extreme, results in the denial of the Incarnation as it is in Judaism, Islam and also in some sects which consequently cannot call themselves Christian any more.

ISRAEL’PRIDE

The Law is the content of the covenant between God and the Chosen People. The Law is their great wealth, the reason of their glory in front of all the other nations. The

heart of the Law is love: the Torah is object of meditation, prayer, love and contemplation. In the New Testament, Jesus is the New Law.

“When Jonathan saw that the circumstances were working in his favor, he sent a selected mission to Rome to confirm and renew his treaty of friendship with the Romans. He also sent letters to the same effect to the Spartans and to the other places...”

“The following is the copy of the letter Jonathan wrote to the Spartans: ‘Jonathan, the high priest, the senate of the nation, the priests and the rest of the Jewish people to the Spartans, their brothers, greetings. In the past, a letter was sent to Onias, the high priest, from Areios, one of your kings, stating that you are indeed our brothers, as the copy subjoined attests”.

“Onias received the envoy with honor, and accepted the letter, in which a clear reference was made to friendship and alliance. For our part, though we have no need of these, having the consolation of the books in our possession, we venture to send to renew our fraternal friendship with you so that we may not become strangers to you, for a long time has elapsed since you sent us the letter” (1 *Maccabees* 12:1-12).

This long quotation describes a rather unknown detail in the history of Israel, but very significant: The Maccabees, who have paid with a long struggle and much blood their newly found independence, search for alliance with the contemporary political powers, but in doing so, they affirm their pride in the unique wealth that God has given to the chosen people of Israel: the Scriptures who contain the Law of God.

A very special moment

The Law appears in a very special moment in the history of the chosen people. God has proved his love for them and his faithfulness to the covenant made with their fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob by bringing about the liberation of his chosen people from the slavery of Egypt. Now God brings his people deeper into his covenant giving Moses the Ten Commandments , the Law (Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 5).

The Law is the content of the covenant for the chosen people: if they want to be God's friends, they must keep God's commandments. There is an essential link between Monotheism and Morality. We cannot please God or worship him if we are bad, if we are crooks. It goes against God's holiness, his goodness.

"Torah", the Law refers first of all to the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, and, at the same time, to the historical circumstances of the revelation to Abraham and Moses contained in the first five books of the Scriptures, the Pentateuch. Law, commandments, precepts, ordinances, statutes: these are all terms that we find in Deuteronomy, the second exposition of the Law, more meditative and with greater awareness of the Law as a unique gift of Yahweh.

"For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether such great thing as this has ever happened or was ever heard of. Did any people ever hear the voice of a God speaking out of the midst of the fire as you have heard?" (Deuteronomy 4:32-33). "The Law will be your wisdom in the sight of all peoples" (Deuteronomy 4:1-8).

Essential Importance of the Law

The authority of the Jewish tradition reposed on the conception of the Covenant. The significance lies in the Israelite belief that the obligation of their laws flowed from the Covenant, that life under the law was the duty which Yahweh's covenant promises laid upon them. All law was ultimately the will of Yahweh and was endowed to a degree with the supreme obligation which was imposed upon Israel through Moses.

The conception of the Law as the revealed will of God has no parallel in other Near Eastern collections of legislation. Hence the conception of law as a sacred covenant obligation is unique with Israel and it is fundamental in the Old Testament idea of society as governed by the will of God, and of history as determined by man's attitude towards the law.

The Prophets, fighting for God and the Covenant against the unfaithfulness of the people, already point out that the heart of the covenant is love, in this way anticipating and preparing the New Testament: they do this with the divine allegory of Marriage: Yahweh is the husband and the Chosen People are the Bride (The Song of Songs).

In this they again reflect the very important passage of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (“Shema, Israel”) that represents the Jewish confession of faith: “Listen, Israel: The Lord, our God is one Lord, and you shall love the Lord, your God with all your heart..”. The Law is the prime way by which the people’s love for God is fulfilled and expressed.

“A lamp for my steps”

After the exile, the Law was no longer the rule of an independent society: Judaism preserved it by making it a guide of life, identifying the law with wisdom and finding in it all knowledge, human and divine. The joy of the Jew in the Law is reflected in the “Torah Psalms” 19 and 119. The Torah is object of meditation, prayer, love and contemplation: Psalm 119, the longest psalm, is all this.

The terms used: Commandments/ Laws/ Decrees/Precepts/Ways/Word...show us that the whole Jewish Spirituality is centered on the Torah: “I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways” (verse 15); “I will delight on your statutes; I will not forget your word” (16); “Lead me in the path of your commandments for I delight in it” (35); “Your word is a lamp on my feet and a light on my path” (105). This contemplative prayer is born of love for the Law and generates joy.

The Law as wisdom

The Wisdom Books of the Old Testament are centered on the human condition and describe the drama of the human beings subject to fragility and mortality. Yet, in this grim picture of the human nature described so well in the book of Qoheleth, enters the concept of our dignity because, created in the image and likeness of God, human beings are the only creatures capable of receiving God’s revelation.

It is appreciation and obedience to God’s Law that becomes wisdom by which we are able to recognize the existence of God and appreciate his covenant. “The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord” (Proverbs 1:7). This fear is sense of awe, reverence, respect, obedience, love.

The opposite attitude is foolishness or stupidity as it is stated forcefully in the beginning of Psalm 14: “The fool said in his heart: There is no God”: this foolishness is a consequence of a corrupt behavior, the disobedience of the Law.

Jesus is the Law

Jesus does not abolish the Ten Commandments: the Beatitudes do not take the place of the Decalogue, but are Jesus' "Blessed Attitudes" that he proposes also to us. Jesus completes and perfects the Law, making it new and showing all the implications (Matthew 5:17-48), and yet the two most important commandments are taken from the Old Testament.

The novelty introduced by Jesus is the joining of the two commandments and saying that the second is equal to the first. Moreover, Jesus puts himself as an example of brotherly love: "This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). Above all, Jesus presents himself as the object of our love for the brethren: "Whatsoever you do to the least of my brothers it is to me that you do it" (Matthew 25). By doing for Jesus, we recognize and honor his divinity: Jesus is the New Law.

Jesus rejects the Law as a sufficient means of righteousness. In addition to the Law, a person must accept Him as one whose words are not only equal to the Law, but who comes as a new Moses revealing the Father. If one accepts Him, then one's sinfulness will not be an obstacle to the kingdom of heaven, for the Father is forgiving.

But those who place their confidence in their observance of the Law make an obstacle of the Law. Because the Law is of itself an insufficient means of reaching God; it must be fulfilled, reach its fullness in Him. The Law is fundamentally what Jesus insists that it is: the revealed will of God. Those who accept this revelation cannot make it an excuse for rejecting the fullness of the revelation of God to which the Law is directed, namely Jesus the Christ.

THE THRONE OF GOD'S PRESENCE

When David wants to build a temple, God is reluctant to accept: Heaven is his dwelling and the earth his footstool. But Yahweh overlooks his transcendence and enters

history: first the Ark and the Tabernacle, then the Temple are the symbols of his presence among his people. In the fullness of time, Jesus' flesh is the real Throne of God's Presence.

The worship of the Old Testament consisted in sacrifices of animals, performed in an official place, the temple of Jerusalem, by a specialized priestly group, the tribe of Levi. The animals take the place of the human beings (Substitution); the blood, the symbol of life, is the seal of the Covenant: it means that it binds us with the strength of life itself. To violate the Covenant is to deserve to die.

In the beginning, the sacrifices are performed in the open air. Classic examples of sacrifices of animals in very important moments of the history of the Covenant are the one performed by Abram in Genesis (15:1-21), where God passes as a flaming torch between the halves of the victims and in Exodus (24:1-8), during which Moses sprinkles the blood of the victims on the altar which symbolizes God and then on the people.

“The Mercy Seat”

It is in this moment that the two tablets of the Ten Commandments appear and with them the Ark of the Covenant meant to house them. The lid of the ark is plated with solid gold and it holds the statues of the two cherubim at the two ends. In the middle is the most sacred space called “The Mercy Seat” or “God’s Throne”. “God is enthroned upon the cherubim” (Psalm 80:2). This suggests that the ark was the throne upon which Yahweh stood invisibly upon the cherubim. Since there was no image of Yahweh, only the footstool was represented. God’s Throne is empty.

All the same, the Ark was the symbol of Yahweh’s personal presence, the place where atonement was received, where divine communication were granted. It was carried into battle to symbolize Yahweh’s kingship and leadership. It was also the symbol of the Covenant of Yahweh with Israel: He was present because He had elected them as His people and imposed upon them the Commandment which the Ark contained.

The mobile tabernacle which hosts the Ark, is the house of God among his pilgrim people. The shape of the Tabernacle is the model of the future temple: the outer court (of the Gentiles), the Holy and the Holy of Holies. In the Holy of Holies is The Ark with the “throne of God”(Leviticus 16).

“The sparrow find herself a home”

The first temple, David's dream, was built by Solomon and inaugurated with solemn prayer and abundant sacrifices. During all the vicissitudes of the exile, the wandering Jews had a strong nostalgia for the temple of the Lord. Every restoration, with Esra, with the Maccabees, etc. is centered around the temple where the regular sacrifices are resumed as symbol of the normality which has returned to Israel.

The temple is object of devotion: longing, love, joy: “How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord, God of hosts. My soul is longing and yearning for the courts (the temple) of the Lord. The sparrow finds herself a home and the swallow a nest for her brood...” (Psalm 84:1-3).

The whole section “The Psalms of Ascents” (120-132) develops the spirituality of pilgrimage, the various sentiments, worries and joys of the pilgrims going up to the temple of Jerusalem.”I was glad when they said to me: ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord!’ Our feet are now standing within your gates, o Jerusalem!” (Psalm 122:1-2).

A polemic against the temple and the sacrifices is developed by the Prophets and that finds echo in the Psalms (Psalm 50:9-15). The tragic destiny of prophet Jeremiah is due to his words against the temple where the official worship has become corrupted and about the temple's coming destruction in the conquest of Jerusalem by the Babylonians. All this is a prophecy and a preparation of the New Testament:

Jesus' Body is the throne of God's Presence

The episode of the cleansing of the temple by Jesus is related in all four gospels. John places it at the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus as a keynote declaration: “Destroy this temple and in three days I will rebuild it” (John 2:19). Jesus here affirms that he himself becomes the cultic center, the place where God is present in his dwelling: as such he is greater than the temple (Matthew 12:6). It is in harmony with this saying that he should have predicted the destruction of the temple, as all the Synoptic Gospels relate.

The passion and resurrection of Jesus is the true sacrifice of the New Testament. The sacrifices of animals are declared obsolete i.e. finished and Jesus appears as the High Priest of the New Testament, making the offering of his body once and for all.

Jesus, facing death as an act of supreme obedience and filial love, becomes the true temple that is destroyed by men's evil power but raised to a new life by the Father. Jesus' priesthood is not ritual but personal. Jesus is the mediator of the New Testament, bridging the infinite gap between God and humanity with his obedience and sacrificial love.

The Worship of the New Testament

According to Jesus' example and command, all Christians are constituted priests because of their baptism, continuing in the world Jesus' mission through their mediation of love. The Eucharist, which is the memorial of Jesus' Paschal Sacrifice, is the worship of the New Testament, "the source and the summit of the Church's life".

Ultimately, the theological significance of the temple in the New Testament is based on the saying of Jesus which identifies his body as the new temple. His body in turn is identified with the Church, and the Church herself is the new temple. The Church is the place of God's presence, not merely symbolic but real through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The Apostles and the prophets are foundation of the temple and Christ is its corner stone and principle of unity. The Christians are the living stones of this temple and its consecrated priesthood.

When the earth is renewed by the descent of the heavenly city as in Revelation 21, there is no temple in the city, because the Lord God and the Lamb are its temple. This is no inconsistency in the vision; rather here, in the last page of the Bible, the symbolism of the temple arrives at its fullness. For the symbolic presence of God among his people is at last replaced by his dwelling among them.

Fr. Lorenzo Carraro, MCCJ

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HIDDEN TREASURE

(THE Social Doctrine of the Church)

THE GOSPEL IN THE MARKET-PLACE

The XIX century industrial revolution caused the social question which is the exploitation of the urban masses. Karl Marx and the Communist movement were the first to acknowledge the impact of the social question. The Church also was awoken to that harsh reality and responded with an original interpretation of the Gospel message, applied to the market-place. The Church's Social Doctrine grew slowly and developed from the experience of the people in the field and the teaching of the Popes. When in Western Europe the Christian Democrat political parties took the power, after World War II, they implemented the Christian vision, giving origin to the welfare state. Never in history the state and the private bodies had cooperated with such a success to produce an affluent and egalitarian society. Fifty years after, we now witness the globalization phenomenon which changes completely the scenario and jeopardizes the conquests of the Social Doctrine of the Church. The future is again confused, threatening and challenging.

With the development of science and technology, a great change came in the society of the XIX century especially in the most advanced countries like England and Germany: the industrial revolution and the development of capitalism. Big factories were started in which a great number of goods were produced by means of newly invented machines.

Great masses of people left the countryside and came to work in the factories, swelling up the population of the cities. There were no laws to protect the workers, because, according to the principles of Economic Liberalism, the salaries were fixed through bargaining between the bosses (capitalists) and the workers (proletarians) who were in this way terribly exploited. They could be forced to work up to 15 hours a day, children and women were also engaged without protection; no social security, no insurances and pensions were in existence. This was called “The Social Question”.

The State had nothing to do with the regulation of work because the main liberal idea of the time was non- interference (*laissez-faire*): the State had only to favor the free play of the market place, of the market laws. Society had changed profoundly and a new outlook was necessary. We see therefore the development of socialism: a social theory which intends to abolish the private property of the means of production and come to the rescue of the workers.

The Communist Movement

The most important of the socialist thinkers is Karl Marx, a German philosopher and economist, the founder of the modern Communist movement, who, in 1848, published the famous *Communist Manifesto* with the motto: “Workers of the whole world, unite!”. According to Marx, the only true reality is the economic reality. He sees the history of mankind as the struggle between people for the possession of material goods (class struggle).

Because of the law of private property, mankind is divided into exploiters (bosses or masters) and exploited (workers). The new industrial revolution and capitalistic movement has brought the tension to a breaking point: accumulation of wealth on one side, and accumulation of misery on the other side.

There will come a moment, when, through a violent revolution, the workers will abolish the private property of the means of production and start a new order in which no person will exploit another, but property will be in common and everyone will receive according to his needs. This ideal situation is communism. The Communist Party is the union of the workers in order to overthrow the capitalistic world and bring about this revolution.

Marx was a materialist and an atheist. He said that the only reality is matter, and human beings build up their life through work. But, in the capitalistic system, they are robbed of the fruit of their work by the bosses. Because of this we are unhappy and alienated. Private property is a theft and the original sin of society. Religion is the instrument of the capitalists because it helps them to dominate the workers and keep them quiet with the hope of heaven.

God does not exist and religion is the “opium of the people”. When the workers will overthrow the capitalistic system, abolish private property and start the communist society, they will enjoy the fruit of their work, they will be happy and religion will disappear.

The main work of K. Marx is a book called *The Capital* which became like the Bible of the new messianic religion of the Communists. The communist movement was the greatest movement of ideas and change which appeared in the modern world and because of his international success, it can be compared only with the spreading of Christianity itself.

From Almsgiving to Social Justice

The success of the communist and socialism movements was possible only because Christians were slow in understanding that the new social problems needed a new approach. The preaching of the Church was still based only on the principle that the rich had to come to the help of the poor out of charity. Because of this delay, a gap was created between the Church and the working class which is not yet healed.

But in the second part of the XIX century, the social teaching of the Church developed enormously and Catholic movements started organizing the workers in Trade Unions in order to fight for a new social order. This social movement on the part of the Christians was encouraged by pope Leo XIII, with his encyclical: *Rerum Novarum* (The new things), 1891, which applied the Christian principles of the Gospel to the new social condition.

The Pope condemned the materialistic and revolutionary ideas of Communism and, at the same time, the liberal ideas. He said that work is not a commodity to be put on the market, but it is connected with the dignity of the human person. He spoke of just salaries, or working hours, working regulations, of the right of the workers to organize themselves in trade unions so as to improve their conditions and of their right to go on strike if necessary. He spoke of the social function of private property and of the

duty of the state to bring about social laws and reforms in order to bring equality and harmony among different social classes.

Meanwhile the social movement of the Christians prevailed in the Western World, also because of the political commitment of the different Christian Democratic Parties. Without the communist revolution, the most advanced industrialized countries of the world like the United States of America and the countries of the European Community are those in which the conditions of the working class were far better off than in any part of the world, communist countries included.

This came about also because of the Social-Democrats Movement by which, since the last decades of the XIX century, Socialists abandoned the revolutionary ideas of K. Marx and followed a path of loyalty to the democratic institutions of the State and of social advancement through reform. This course was influenced to a large extent by the Christian Social Doctrine.

In this way, Social Catholicism contributed to the defeat of the Communist threat and to the very survival of Christianity and showed that the principles of the Christian Religion far from being the opium of the peoples, could express an astonishing vitality in solving the problem of the modern age.

Church's Solidarity with Humanity

Further development of the Social Doctrine of the Church came in the post-World War II period when attention turned to the problems of social and economic development and international relations. In 1961 Pope John XXIII released *Mater et magistra*, subtitled "Christianity and Social Progress". This encyclical expanded the Church's social doctrine to cover the relations between rich and poor nations, examining the obligation of rich countries to assist poor countries while respecting their particular cultures. It includes an examination of the threat of global economic imbalances to world peace.

In 1963, Pope John expanded further on this in *Pacem in terris* (Latin: *Peace on Earth*), the first encyclical addressed to both Catholics and non-Catholics. In it, the Pope linked the establishment of world peace to the laying of a foundation consisting of proper rights and responsibilities between individuals, social groups, and states from the local to the international level. He exhorted Catholics to understand and apply the social teachings. This

document, issued at the height of the Cold War, also included a denunciation of the nuclear arms race and a call for strengthening the United Nations.

The primary document from the Second Vatican Council concerning social teachings is *Gaudium et spes*, the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church and the Modern World", which is considered one of the chief accomplishments of the Council. At its core, the document asserts the fundamental dignity of each human being, and declares the Church's solidarity with both those who suffer, and those who are committed to comfort the suffering: "*The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ*"

Worldwide Social Question.

Pope Paul VI gave attention to the disparities in wealth and development between the industrialised West and the Third World in his 1967 encyclical *Populorum Progressio* (Latin: *The Development of Peoples*). Paul called on rich nations to meet their moral obligation to poor nations, pointing out the relationship between development and peace. His definition: "Development is the new name of peace" became famous. According to pope Benedict XVI, *Populorum Progressio* can be compared to the first encyclical by Leo XIII, because of its impact and the conscience of an epochal change.

John Paul II continued his predecessors' work of developing the body of Catholic social doctrine. Of particular importance was his 1981 encyclical *Laborem Exercens* which qualifies the teaching of private ownership in relation to the common use of goods that all men, as children of God, are entitled to. The Church "has always understood this right within the broader context of the right common to all to use the goods of the whole creation: the right to private property is subordinated to the right to common use, to the fact that goods are meant for everyone."

Meaningful Silence

From the last social encyclical of John Paul II "*Centesimus Annus*" which coincides with the first centenary of "*Rerum Novarum*"(1991) until "*Laudato Si*" of pope Francis (2015), no other major pronouncement about social questions came out from the popes. This almost quarter of century silence is the sign of the big changes that are happening in the world, brought about by the huge phenomenon of globalization. These changes make the Social Doctrine of the Church almost a thing of the past, not

because its principles have become wrong or unreal, but because the world is running wild, far from the beautiful synthesis of the Social Doctrine of the Church.

In the meantime, in 2005, there was the publication of the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, a work entrusted to the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, where the different documents of more than one hundred years of reflection and teaching are unified in a kind of encyclopedia, confirming again the impression that we are at the end of an era. Since then the globalization has reshuffled all the cards. It is a new ball game which badly requires to find a sense and expects guidelines befitting the new scenario. It seems that it is easier to complain against the new evils than to propose efficient remedies.

Pope Benedict XVI's 2009 Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* added many additional perspectives to the Social Teaching tradition, including in particular relationships with the concepts of Charity and Truth, and introduced the idea of the need for a strong "World Political Authority" to deal with humanity's most pressing challenges and problems. This idea has proven to be controversial and difficult to accept, particularly by thinkers who are generally suspicious, or even disdainful, of supranational and international organizations, such as the United Nations. The concept was further developed in a 2011 *Note* issued by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace entitled "Towards reforming the International Financial and Monetary Systems in the context of World Political Authority".

Pope Francis, in his apostolic exhortation "*Evangelii gaudium*", explicitly affirmed "the right of states" to intervene in the economy to promote "the common good." Unfortunately, states seem powerless in front of the transnational power of multinational corporations. The pope however doesn't spare his critique: "*While the earnings of a minority are growing exponentially, so too is the gap separating the majority from the prosperity enjoyed by those happy few. This imbalance is the result of ideologies which defend the absolute autonomy of the marketplace and financial speculation. Consequently, they reject the right of states, charged with vigilance for the common good, to exercise any form of control. A new tyranny is thus born, invisible and often virtual, which unilaterally and relentlessly imposes its own laws and rules*".

Pope Francis has warned about the "idolatry of money" and wrote: "*Some people continue to defend trickle-down theories which assume that economic growth, encouraged by a free market, will inevitably succeed in bringing*

about greater justice and inclusiveness in the world. This opinion, which has never been confirmed by the facts, expresses a crude and naïve trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power and in the sacralized workings of the prevailing economic system”.

In his second encyclical, “*Laudato Si*”, the pope lays forth a biting critique of consumerism and irresponsible development with a plea for swift and unified global action to combat environmental degradation and climate change. But this is of yesterday, too near for us to be able to see all the future implications.

[illegible]

box

The Christian Anthill

Like industrious, indefatigable ants, Christian saints and other prominent disciples of Jesus have always, in many ways and with inexhaustible inventiveness, come to the help of humanity's sufferings and sometimes given origin to institutions which are now the backbone of civilized society.

St. Thomas Aquinas is linked to the beginning of the Universities; St. John of God to the hospitals and St. Philip Neri to the Oratory and the development of modern music. In the last two hundred years, Christian charities have targeted the social evils with innumerable, courageous initiatives.

The industrial revolution attracted millions of people from the countryside to the cities and factories. Among them thousands of youth. The young priest Fr. John Bosco felt pity for their condition since he saw them ignorant and exploited and decided to invest in them and their future. This is how the Salesian Congregations originated, with commitment to the technical and professional formation of the youth in view of their successful insertion in

the world of industry. Incalculable is the contribution of the sons and daughters of Don Bosco in that field.

Fr. Luigi Orione, inspired by the education he had received from the followers of St. John Bosco, opened his own oratory to educate the poor boys of the city and started a boarding school for the poor. The socialist writer Ignazio Silone, Nobel Prize for literature, wrote of his encounter as a young man with the fascinating person of the Saint.

In 1908 Fr. Luigi Orione went to Messina, Sicily, and Reggio Calabria, Italy, both of which had been devastated by earthquakes. He dedicated three years to help those in need, most especially the caring of orphans. Over the next two decades, he started foundations throughout Italy and the Americas.

In 1933, during the economic depression, the Catholic Worker Movement was founded by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin in New York. It was committed to nonviolence, voluntary poverty, prayer, and hospitality for the marginalized and poorest in Society. Today over 185 Catholic Worker communities in USA continue to protest injustice, war, racism, and violence of all forms.

Jean Vanier is a

Canadian Catholic philosopher, theologian and humanitarian. He founded *L'Arche* in 1964, an international federation of communities that spread over 35 countries, for people with developmental disabilities and those who assist them. The original approach is to take the persons with disabilities into the bosom of a family and give them affection and a normal life. The families recognize that they have been enriched by their guests with disabilities and their life changed for the better. Jean Vanier continues to live as a member of the original *L'Arche* community in France.

Many times during my service as a missionary in Uganda, I have met Sr. Miriam Dr. Duggan at Nsambya Hospital in Kampala and often knelt at her feet to ask her to pray over me. A native of Ireland, Sr. Miriam Duggan is often referred to as 'The Mother Teresa of Africa'. In response to the HIV/AIDS pandemic which became manifest in 1987, when people were becoming sick and dying, she helped establish clinics, mobile home based care programs to treat the many people ill with HIV/AIDS and to help the many orphans.

She founded *Youth Alive* in an effort to address the root causes for the spreading of HIV and to help young people to make responsible choices and

avoid getting AIDS. This prevention program was very successful in Uganda in reducing the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, causing the cynical world to sit up and take notice. The Program has now been extended to 21 African countries.

After more than twenty years of commitment to the African mission, Sr. Valeria Gandini, Comboni sister, by chance came in touch with the world of human trafficking in 1989, while in Italy. A nurse and midwife by profession and with a Diploma in Pastoral Theology, from that moment she has dedicated her life to the redemption of Italy night street walkers, the prostitutes, modern slaves, many of whom from Africa. She has been interviewed, she has gone on television, she has become an expert. Now, well passed the retiring age, she continues her crusade in Palermo, Sicily.

Two years ago, in April, there was an international conference at the Vatican entitled “Combating Human Trafficking”. The aim of the forum was to build on the work of women religious who, like Sr. Valeria, have been involved in this fight for a number of years. As social justice loses ground because of globalization, social charity maintains its vital importance also for the future.

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The Seven Pillars

The Social Doctrine of the Church doesn't mean to give technical solutions that rightly belong to the legitimate autonomy of the economic, social and political sciences. It is an application of the principles of the Gospel to social problems: it has something essential to say about the concept of human being, family, work, solidarity, destination of goods, development and peace.

The starting point of Catholic social teaching is the correct view of the human person. Being in the image of God, the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone: capable of

self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving self and entering into communion with other persons. Human beings are called by grace to a covenant with their Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give.

The Sanctity of Human Life

The foundational principle of all Catholic social teachings is the sanctity of human life. Catholics believe in an inherent dignity of the human person starting from conception through to natural death. They believe that human life must be valued infinitely above material possessions. Pope John Paul II wrote and spoke extensively on the topic of the inviolability of human life and dignity in his watershed encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae* (The Gospel of Life) of 1995.

Believing men and women are made in the image and likeness of God, Catholic doctrine teaches to respect all humans based on an inherent dignity. Every human person is called to a fullness of life which far exceeds the dimensions of his earthly existence, because it consists in sharing the very life of God.

A belief in the inherent dignity of the human person also requires that basic human needs are adequately met, including food, health care, shelter, etc. Many see this as a basis for the support of the welfare state and of governmental economic policies that promote equitable distribution of income and access to essential goods and services.

Private Property and the Common Good

The Church supports private property and teaches that every person has by nature the right to possess property as his own. The right to private property is not absolute, however, and is limited by the concepts of the "universal destiny of the goods of the earth". Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society. Rights should be understood and exercised in a moral framework rooted in the dignity of the human person and social justice. Those that have more have a greater responsibility to contribute to the common good than those who have less.

The demands of the common good are the commitment to peace, the organization of the state's powers, a sound juridical system, the protection of the environment, and the provision of essential services to all. The common good therefore involves all members of society, no one is exempted from cooperating, according to each one's possibilities, in attaining it and developing it.

The common good corresponds to the highest of human instincts, but it is a good which is difficult to attain because it requires the constant ability and effort to seek the good of others as though it were one's own good. Freedom according to Natural Law is the empowerment of good. Being free we have responsibilities. With human relationships we have responsibilities towards each other. This is the basis of human rights.

The principle of Subsidiarity

According to the Book of Genesis, the Lord God said: "It is not good for the man to be alone". The Catholic Church teaches that man is now not only a sacred but also a social person and that families are the first and most basic units of a society. Together families form communities, communities a state and together all across the world each human is part of the human family. How these communities organize themselves politically, economically and socially is thus of the highest importance. Each institution must be judged by how much it enhances, or is a detriment to, the life and dignity of human persons.

The state has a positive moral role to play. All people have a right to participate in the economic, political, and cultural life of society and, under the principle of subsidiarity, state functions should be carried out at the lowest level that is practical. A particular contribution of Catholic social teaching is a strong appreciation for the role of intermediary organizations such as labor unions, community organizations, fraternal groups and parish churches.

In the Roman Catholic Church, subsidiarity is a principle of social teaching that all social bodies exist for the sake of the individuals so that what individuals are able to do, society should not take over, and what small societies can do, larger societies should not take over. So Pope Pius XI said: "It is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, fixed and unchangeable, that one should not withdraw from individuals and commit to the community what they can accomplish by their own enterprise and industry."

A natural consequence of this principle, illustrated by all the social encyclicals, is that there should be a just distribution of income and wealth so that as many citizen as possible become owners of land, property and social wealth. This calls for the equal distribution of the wealth generated by the more advanced, industrialized societies.

Dignity of work.

We live our lives by a subconscious philosophy of freedom and work. The encyclical *Laborem exercens* (1981) by Pope John Paul II, describes work as the essential key to the whole social question. The very beginning is an aspect of the human vocation. Work includes every form of action by which the world is transformed and shaped or even simply maintained by human beings. It is through work that we achieve fulfillment. So in order to fulfill ourselves we must cooperate and work together to create something good for all of us, a common good. What we call justice is that state of social harmony in which the actions of each person best serve the common good.

Society must pursue economic justice and the economy must serve people, not the other way around. Employers must not "look upon their work people as their bondsmen, but ... respect in every man his dignity as a person ennobled by Christian character." Employers contribute to the common good through the services or products they provide and by creating jobs that uphold the dignity and rights of workers.

Workers have a right to work, to earn a living wage, and to form trade unions to protect their interests. All workers have a right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, and to safe working conditions. Workers also have responsibilities—to provide a fair day's work for a fair day's pay, to treat employers and co-workers with respect, and to carry out their work in ways that contribute to the common good. Workers must "fully and faithfully" perform the work they have agreed to do.

All-embracing Solidarity.

Solidarity is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; solidarity, which flows from faith, is fundamental to the Christian view of social and political organization. Each person is connected to and dependent on all humanity, collectively and individually.

Pope John Paul II wrote in the 1987 encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, "Solidarity is undoubtedly a Christian virtue. It seeks to go beyond itself to

total gratuity, forgiveness, and reconciliation. It leads to a new vision of the unity of humankind, a reflection of God's triune intimate life."

All the peoples of the world belong to one human family. We must be our brother's keeper, though we may be separated by distance, language or culture. Jesus teaches that we must each love our neighbors as ourselves and in the parable of the Good Samaritan we see that our compassion should extend to all people. Solidarity includes the Scriptural call to welcome the stranger among us—including immigrants seeking work, a safe home, education for their children, and a decent life for their families. Charity to individuals or groups must be accompanied by transforming unjust political, economic and social structures.

In *Caritas in Veritate*, the Catholic Church declared that "Charity is at the heart of the Church". Every responsibility and every commitment spelt out by the Social Doctrine is derived from love which, according to the teaching of Jesus, is the synthesis of the entire Law (*Matthew 22:36-40*). It gives real substance to the personal relationship with God and with neighbor.

The Church has chosen the concept of "charity in truth" to avoid a degeneration into sentimentality in which love becomes empty. In a culture without truth, there is a fatal risk of losing love. Truth frees charity from the constraints of an emotionalism that deprives it of relational and social content. In the truth, charity reflects the personal yet public dimension of faith in God and the Bible.

Preferential option for the poor and vulnerable

Jesus taught that on Judgment Day, God will ask what each of us did to help the poor and needy: "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." This is reflected in the Church's canon law, which states, "The Christian faithful are also obliged to promote social justice and, mindful of the precept of the Lord, to assist the poor from their own resources."

Through our words, prayers and deeds we must show solidarity with, and compassion for, the poor. When instituting public policy we must always keep the "preferential option for the poor" at the forefront of our minds. The moral test of any society is how it treats its most vulnerable members. The poor have the most urgent moral claim on the conscience of the nation.

Pope Benedict XVI has taught that "love for widows and orphans, prisoners, and the sick and needy of every kind, is as essential as the ministry of the

sacraments and preaching of the Gospel". This preferential option for the poor and vulnerable includes all who are marginalized: unborn children, persons with disabilities, the elderly and terminally ill, and victims of injustice and oppression.

Care for God's Creation.

A Biblical vision of justice is much more comprehensive than civil equity; it encompasses right relationships between all members of God's creation. Stewardship of creation: the world's goods are available for humanity to use only under a "social mortgage" which carries with it the responsibility to protect the environment. The "goods of the earth" are gifts from God, and they are intended by God for the benefit of everyone. Human beings were given dominion over all creation as sustainers rather than as exploiters, and are commanded to be good stewards of the gifts God has given them. We cannot use and abuse the natural resources God has given us with a destructive consumer mentality.

Catholic Social Teaching recognizes that the poor are the most vulnerable to environmental impact and endure disproportional hardship when natural areas are exploited or damaged. All these aspects are the object of pope Francis' last, very original encyclical letter *Laudato Si'* (2015) which extends for the first time the care to include Mother Earth which has been affected by an abusive, polluting and destructive behavior by we humans.

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BOX

A Success Story

The Social Doctrine of the Church found a favorable time when the Christian Democrat political parties appeared. They are the protagonists of the reconstruction of the

continent after World War II and the result of their victory embodied the most successful realization of its principles.

At the end of World War II, when Europe lay in destruction and desolation as a consequence of the evil leadership of Nazism and Fascism, it was the commitment of the leaders of the Christian Democratic parties that reconstructed physically and morally the continent. They were Conrad Adenauer for Germany, Alcide De Gasperi for Italy, Robert Schuman for France: men formed by the tradition of Social Catholicism, militants in Lay apostolate, champions of Christian witness to the point of personal holiness that may be recognized by the Church in the future.

Another totalitarian ideology, Russian Communism was pressing on their nations from the East. The pressure became dramatic in Italy, that had the strongest Communist Party of Western Europe, in the first political elections in 1948. The victory of the Christian Democrats was a watershed event which opened a time of steady development and prosperity for the majority of the Italian people. The tenets of the Church's Social Doctrine became law through the combined commitment of the government, the workers' Unions and the industrialists.

Alcide De Gasperi was seven times Prime Minister and accompanied the progress of the country and its position in the international arena. He was assisted by other exemplary characters like the saintly mayor of Florence, Prof. Giorgio La Pira, champion of the poor and promoter of peace and Aldo Moro, himself Prime Minister and then European parliamentarian, who became a victim of the Red Brigades.

For West Germany it was even more dramatic: divided into two by the Iron Curtain which in Berlin became a wall, with East Germany under Communist rule, its economic success was even more significant: prosperity joined by freedom: a triumph of Christian social philosophy.

The union of Christian Democratic parties became exemplary of a social change based on moderation, participation and gradualness: the principles of private property, distribution of wealth, trade-unionism, subsidiarity in pursuing the common good and solidarity proved their validity in practice and soon the countries of Western Europe became among the most prosperous and peaceful of the entire world.

The same prominent Catholic leaders who had made possible the reconstruction of Europe and made it a success, are the fathers of the European Union. The fifty years following the end of WWII were the most profitable. Never in history state and private bodies had cooperated with such a success to produce an affluent and egalitarian society.

Other representatives of the Christian Democratic Parties outside Europe are Eduardo Frey for Chile, Benedict Kiwanuka and Paul Semugere for Uganda and Raul Manglapus for the Philippines. They had different vicissitudes according to the different circumstances of their countries: Eduardo Frey became president of Chile, after the dictatorial rule of general Augusto Pinochet, and brought the country to an improved level of democratic development.

In Uganda, Benedict Kiwanuka, after winning the first presidential elections with his Christian Democratic party, in the transition to independence, was imprisoned by Milton Obote and eventually killed by the notorious dictator Idi Amin Dada. Paul Semugere was then the leader of the Christian Democratic Party but the elections were never free and fair. As for Raul Manglapus, he ran into exile in the USA during Marcos' martial law period. After the EDSA Revolution, he took a ministerial post in the government of Cory Aquino.

Things have changed in the meantime: The European parliament has prepared the European constitution which doesn't even mention the Christian roots of the continent; the economic crises and the consequences of globalization have dramatically increased unemployment; destitute Europeans have appeared again. Social justice has again to make room for plain charity. After all nothing lasts forever and Jesus said: "The poor, you will always have them".

[illegible]

Shifting Grounds

With globalization, the world picture has changed. The information technology has brought people nearer and started dynamics which have made the world of economy

run wild. Globalization is an economic tsunami that is sweeping the planet. It can't be stopped, but there must certainly be many steps people can take to slow it down and make it more equitable to wealth distribution, living salaries, social security. Unfortunately, those steps are not yet clear. Especially there seem to be no authority capable of harnessing globalization and putting it at the service of people and not only capital profit.

The World Economic Forum (WEF) is an international institution for cooperation and its declared mission is to improve the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas. The Forum is best known for its annual winter meeting in Davos, a mountain resort in Switzerland. The meeting brings together some 2,500 top business leaders, international political leaders, selected intellectuals, and journalists to discuss the most pressing issues facing the world. The forum was founded in 1971 by Klaus Schwab, a German-born business professor at the University of Geneva.

The rich and the powerful, who meet every year at the World Economic Forum (WEF), were in a gloomy mood last time, January 20-23, 2016. Actually no leader could be in a buoyant mood. The last Davos will remain in the history of the WEF, as the best example of the growing disconnection between the elites and the citizens. The theme of the Forum was: "How to master the fourth revolution," a thesis that Klaus Schwab exposed in a book published few weeks before. The theory is that we are now facing a fusion of all technologies, that will completely change the system of production and work.

The First Industrial Revolution was to replace, at beginning of the 19th century, human power with machines. Then at the end of that century came the Second Industrial Revolution, which was to combine technology with industry, with a total change of the system of production. Then came the era of computers, at the middle of last century, making the Third Industrial Revolution, the digital one. And now, according Schwab, we are entering the fourth revolution, where workers will be substituted by robots and mechanization.

A Growing Inequality

The Swiss Bank UBS released in the conference a study in which it reports that the Fourth Revolution will “benefit those holding more.” In other words, the rich will become richer...It is important for the uninitiated to know that the money that goes to the superrich, is not printed for them. In other words, it is money that is sucked from the pockets of people.

Since the beginning, Davos created two notable reactions: the first came with the creation of the World Social Forum (WSF), in 1991, where some 40,000 social activists convened to denounce as illegitimate the gathering of the rich and powerful in Davos. They said it gave the elite a platform for decision making, without anything being mandated by citizens, and directed mainly to interests of the rich. The WSF declared that “another world is possible,” in opposition to the Washington Consensus, formulated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the Treasury of the United States.

The consensus declared that since capitalism triumphed over Communism, the path to follow was to dismantle the state as much as possible, privatize, slash social costs which are by definition unproductive, and eliminate any barrier to the free markets. Unfortunately, the WSF has no leverage in political life that could influence the position of the rich countries. It has become only an internal debating and sharing among the participants.

At the last Davos, the WSF was not any point of reference. But it was the other actor, the international aid organization Oxfam, which had been presenting at every WEF a report on Global Wealth. Those reports have documented how fast the concentration of wealth is creating a world of inequality not known since the First Industrial Revolution. In 2010, 388 individuals owned the same wealth as 3.6 billion people, half of humankind.

In 2014, just 80 people owned as much as 3.8 billion people. And in 2015, the number came down to 62 individuals. And the concentration of wealth is accelerating. In its report of 2015, Oxfam predicted that the wealth of the top 1 per cent would overtake the rest of the population by 2016: in fact, that was reached within ten months. Twenty years ago, the superrich 1 per cent had the equivalent of 62 per cent of the world population.

No Connection to Reality

It would have been logical to expect that those who run the world, looking at the unprecedented phenomena of a fast growing inequality, would have connected Oxfam report with that of UBS, and consider the new and immense challenge that the present economic and political system is facing. Also because the Fourth Revolution foresees the phasing out of workers from whatever function can be taken by machines. According to Schwab, the use of robots in production will go from the present 12 per cent to 55 per cent in 2050. This will cause obviously a dramatic unemployment, in a society where the social safety net is already in a steep decline.

Instead, the WEF largely ignored the issue of inequality, echoing the present level of lack of interest in the political institutions. Yet there exists a number of studies on how inequality is a drag on economic development, and how its social impact has a very negative impact on the central issue of democracy and participation. The United Nations have made of inequality a central issue. But beside inequality, also the very central issue of climate change was largely ignored. This is a powerful example of the disconnection between the concern of citizens and their elite. We can say that Davos is a macroscopic sign of how much globalization is affecting our world.

Globalization

Globalization is a process of interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments of different nations, a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology. This process has effects on the environment, on culture, on political systems, on economic development and prosperity, and on human physical well-being in societies around the world.

Globalization is not new, though. For thousands of years, people have been buying from and selling to each other in lands at great distances, such as through the famed Silk Road across Central Asia that connected China and Europe during the Middle Ages. But policy and technological developments of the past few decades have spurred increases in cross-border trade, investment, and migration so large that many observers believe the world has entered a qualitatively new phase in its economic development.

Technology has been the principal driver of globalization. Advances in information technology, in particular, have dramatically transformed

economic life. Information technologies have given all sorts of individual economic actors—consumers, investors, businesses—valuable new tools for identifying and pursuing economic opportunities, including faster and more informed analyses of economic trends around the world, easy transfers of assets, and collaboration with far-flung partners.

Globalization is deeply controversial, however. Proponents of globalization argue that it allows poor countries and their citizens to develop economically and raise their standards of living, while opponents of globalization claim that the creation of an unfettered international free market has benefited multinational corporations in the Western world at the expense of local enterprises, local cultures, and common people. Resistance to globalization has therefore taken shape both at a popular and at a governmental level as people and governments try to manage the flow of capital, labor, goods, and ideas that constitute the current wave of globalization.

The general complaint about globalization is that it has made the rich richer while making the non-rich poorer. It is wonderful for managers, owners and investors, but hell on workers and nature. Multinational corporations are accused of social injustice, unfair working conditions as well as lack of concern for environment, mismanagement of natural resources, and ecological damage. Globalization has led to exploitation of labor. Prisoners and child workers are sometimes used to work in inhumane conditions. Safety standards are ignored to produce cheap goods. There is also an increase in human trafficking.

Critique to Globalization

Capital markets have to do with raising and investing moneys in various human enterprises. Increasing integration of these financial markets between countries leads to the emergence of a global capital marketplace or a single world market. In the long run, increased movement of capital between countries tends to favor owners of capital more than any other group; in the short run, owners and workers in specific sectors in capital-exporting countries bear much of the burden of adjusting to increased movement of capital. It is not surprising that these conditions lead to political divisions about whether or not to encourage or increase international capital market integration.

Those opposed to capital market integration on the basis of human rights issues are especially disturbed by the various abuses which they think

are perpetuated by global and international institutions that, they say, promote neo-liberalism without regard to ethical standards. By doing this globalization has created a growth in sweatshops in the developing world, where wages are minimal and unfair, and conditions are unsafe to the workers' health and psychological state.

A related contemporary ideology, consumerism, which encourages the personal acquisition of goods and services, also drives globalization. Anti-consumerism is a social movement against equating personal happiness with consumption and the purchase of material possessions. Social activists hold that materialism is connected to global retail merchandizing and supplier convergence, war, greed, crime, environmental degradation, and general social malaise and discontent.

The global justice movement is the advocate of fair trade rules and perceives current institutions of global economic integration as problems. Its activists support the globalization of communication and people and oppose only the global expansion of corporate power. The movement is based in the idea of social justice, desiring the creation of a society based on the principles of equality and solidarity, the values of human rights, and the dignity of every human being. Social inequality within and between nations, including a growing global digital divide, is a focal point of the movement.

Critics of globalization argue that globalization results in weak labor unions. They also cite an increase in the exploitation of child labor: countries with weak protections for children are vulnerable to infestation by rogue companies and criminal gangs who exploit them. Examples include quarrying, salvage, and farm work as well as trafficking, bondage, forced labor, prostitution and pornography.

Monopolizing the future

The graphic symbol of a globalization without regrets or sense of guilt is represented by the combination of gigantic malls with annexed apartments blocks that ever most frequently appear to go together with the multiplication of the malls. A happily disenfranchised humanity take refuge in the mall to enjoy the air-con atmosphere, they eat, socialize, entertain themselves before climbing the very narrow condos to sleep.

More than often the malls are converted into casinos. The huge expansion of the gambling places is co-extensive to the manipulation of the masses: a

kind of homogenized humanity, underpaid in the contractual system, possibly addicted to gambling, light drugs, liberated sex, incapable of serious family ties which are at any rate discouraged by a culture that doesn't want to pay for them. This is the kind of humanity which is shaped to the future by the constant brainwashing of the media, prepared to be exploited by the masters of the system.

The tenets of the Social Doctrine of the Church: (the legitimacy of private property especially of land and house to be made possible by distribution of wealth; the dignity of work and the need of living wages for the individual and the family; the importance of subsidiarity for a harmonious development of society; the ideal of human solidarity; human development and its function in promoting peace among nations) are systematically ignored and twisted by the violence of the globalization phenomenon.

Globalization is like being overwhelmed by a snow avalanche. You can't stop it – you can only swim in the snow and hope to stay on top. We can't stop globalization but there can hopefully be many policies and strategies we can use to make it more equitable. The harsh critique of the globalized economy which is heavy on people and on nature has marked the courage of pope Benedict XVI who has spoken of “The Ecology of human beings” and especially of pope Francis who has for the first time and originally included Mother Earth among the victims of a wild economic development.

The eye is sharp as far as the problems and the sicknesses are concerned. But the therapy is still uncertain: we need much study and reflection, creativity and an open mind, but especially an understanding heart in order to set in motion a movement which will revalue the principles of the Gospel applied to the life of individuals and society.

Fr. Lorenzo Carraro, MCCJ

July 2016

*BEST WISHES,
DEAR POPE!*

(John Paul II's Silver Jubilee as a pope)

- *KAROL THE GREAT*
- *THE MANY RECORDS OF A PONTIFICATE*
- *MILESTONES*
- *THEY LOVE HIS STRONG WORDS*
- *A MISSIONARY HEART*
- *A CONTRASTING VIEW*

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# KAROL THE GREAT

Popes deserving to be called great have not been plentiful since Leo and Gregory of that title, but the present occupant of St Peter's throne may justly deserve to be known one day as John Paul the Great. Or, as the late Italian vaticanist Domenico Del Rio writes: Karol the great, giving it as the title of his most recent book about the pope. John Paul II has also been called: the Man of the Century.

The pope has a brilliant mind. Many of his encyclicals are masterpieces of intellectual analysis and visionary prophecy and would by themselves establish his papacy as one of the most remarkable in history

Once we can view it with a little historical hindsight, his turn at the wheel of the barque of Peter may begin to look almost as providential for the future of Christianity as the second Vatican Council itself; and there is an intimate relationship between that council and this pope.

Pope John Paul II is the only true world leader at large today. Along with Mother Teresa, he has always been near the top of polls asking who is the most respected human being. He inspires the affection of hundreds of millions of people. He was the first pope to enter a synagogue, and the first to visit a Moslem country, even to take off his shoes and pray in a mosque. He's a stubborn and innovative visionary.

The frail old man wherever he goes collects a massive audience, not just as the vicar of God but because he has a message. Wherever he has gone, especially in his later years, this Pope has been able to say the difficult things, and is often the only person whom his audience has ever heard saying them. It has been an exceptional experience to be addressed by one that is a leader not a follower; who deals in challenges not comfort; who gives us propositions to accept or reject, not platitudes.

As influential and powerful as Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King in their day, Pope John Paul II has been a rock of constancy and belief in an age beset with uncertainty. A ceaseless champion of the causes of human rights and social justice, a man to bring fresh hope to millions of the world oppressed and who became perhaps the most important person in the resolution of the century's greatest story: the rise and fall of totalitarianism.

Paradoxically, we perceive the pope nearer to us now that he is sick and worn out in his body than before when he was younger and vigorous. We feel him as one of us, with his fatigue and infirmity, but also with his passions and his anger towards the evil that is in man. He is all but an impassive guide. The images of the pope who caresses, points the finger,

gets angry show him to the eyes of people as a true man, close to all humanity even that most far away. But at times his closeness becomes uncomfortable especially when he demands from the Christians radical changes. His demands never leave you indifferent, but sometimes elicit a consent that is only a formal one, dictated, as it were, only by the circumstances. And this is because his loyalty to Christ is too great, too demanding for many of us.

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# THE MANY RECORDS OF A PONTIFICATE

**John Paul II** is the 263<sup>rd</sup> successor of St Peter. His pontificate is becoming one of the three longest in the history of the Church. On October 16 he has completed a quarter of a century at the guide of the Catholic Church. He lacks only five months to overtake pope Leo XIII, the pope of *Rerum Novarum*, who died exactly 100 years ago, after a pontificate of 25 years and 5 months.

Longer than them, in the two thousand years of the history of the Church, have reigned pope Leo XIII' immediate predecessor, Blessed Pius IX (31 years, 7 months and 21 days), and San Peter who led the church for about 34/37 years, before been crucified with his head down, during the persecution of emperor Nero.

The exceptionally long pontificate has also been adorned by many records, first of all that of the trips outside the Vatican (102 so far), totaling more than one million kilometers (equal to 29 times the trip around the world).

John Paul II himself has confessed: “Since my election as Bishop of Rome, Jesus’ command to go to the whole world and preach the Gospel to all creatures has resounded within me with a particular intensity and





# MILESTONES OF A PONTIFICATE

*John Paul II is a protagonist While keeping the Church on a steady course, he has performed some of the most original and forward-looking gestures in connection with the great challenges of our time: ecumenism, dialogue between religions, commitment to peace, even geo-politics. The weight of his impact not only in the history of the Church but also of the world at large will only be assessed in the future.*

1. The point of departure is his Polish nationality: after more than 400 years of popes of Italian origin, he is the first non-Italian and a man from East Europe, and from the communist sphere of influence for that matter. Since the beginning, the Pope considered communism as a passing cloud and the **unity of destiny of West and East Europe the real issue** at stake. He defined West and East as the two lungs that enable Europe to breathe and once the united Europe was a reality, he powerfully keeps pointing out the Christian roots of Europe.

2. If we turn our attention to the great drama of our time, **the fall of communism**, we unlock the remarkable hidden history of John Paul II as one of the dominant figures of the twentieth century. He became the inspiration and the protector of Solidarity, a workers' movement in the heart of the Communist world, and contributed to keeping Solidarity alive underground after Moscow seemed to succeed in crushing it.

Exactly what part the Polish Pope played in bringing about the collapse of the Soviet empire with hardly a shot fired - contrary to the predictions of all observers - will be variously estimated by historians. Yet "everything that happened in Eastern Europe would have been impossible without the presence of this Pope," Mikhail Gorbachev has written. "How many divisions has the pope?" Stalin once asked contemptuously. Yet in the end it was Pope John Paul II who held the key to destroying the Soviet empire.

3. From the beginning of his pontificate in 1978, Pope John Paul understood that his commission from the Lord was to **lead the Church into**

**the new millennium.** It is said that the Polish primate, Cardinal Wyszynski, told the Pope, immediately after his election, that this was his task. Since his first encyclical letter, *Redemptor Hominis*, in the spring of 1979, the Pope asked, “What should we do, in order that this new advent of the Church, the end of the second millennium, may bring us closer to God, the “Everlasting Father”? He wrote then that only one answer was possible: ‘Our spirit is set in one direction, towards Christ, the redeemer of man’”.

One cannot fail to notice the consistence in the pope’s teaching if one takes into account that this is exactly the motto of his last great document *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, written in order to lead the Church into the Third Millennium: “Starting afresh from Christ”.

4. At the beginning of the Great Jubilee Year 2000, the pope proposed **the theme of martyrdom** and pointed out the XX century as the century of martyrs: they are people killed not only in the name of Christ but because of defending human dignity, in the name of charity and justice. The pope has proclaimed saints scores of martyrs: martyrdom therefore becomes not a thing of the past but a wealth of the present for the Christian community and this embraces all the Churches.

It is as if the most basic ecumenism were the one of the different Christians who spilt their blood in one of the most violent eras of the history of humanity. The Pope writes in *Ut unum sint*: “The courageous witness of so many martyrs of our times who belong to the different Christian denominations constitute as it were the vanguard of the ecumenical movement.

From the places of their martyrdom, they exhort the Christians to speed up the journey towards unity. We can say that they are the prophets of unity: their blood seals the Lord’s appeal for unity. Their blood is not only *semen Christianorum* (*the seed of new Christians*), but also *semen unitatis* (*the seed of unity*)”.

5. One of the signs of the Great Jubilee Year that has captured the imagination of the international media and of the Non Catholic is **the purification of memories**: the Pope asking forgiveness for the sins and mistakes of the Church committed throughout the past millennia and especially during the last century.

To this purpose, the Pope inserted a written prayer of forgiveness into one of the cracks of the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, during his pilgrimage there. He pronounced a prayer of forgiveness in the synagogue of Yad Vashem, the place dedicated to the memory of the Holocaust, on the same

occasion. These are not an improvised gesture, but the mature fruit of the spirit of Vatican II, and one of the most interesting of his entire pontificate, having a prophetic value: the purification of the historical memory opens wide the Church to the future.

6. The most recent milestone is **the pope's commitment for peace**. In front of the threat of violence triggered by the black cloud of terrorism, looming at the horizon of humanity, John Paul II has embraced the cause of peace with stubborn determination. The absolute condemnation of war on the part of the pope, who had already denied his approval to the Gulf War, has put the Holy See in the front line of the vast worldwide pacifist movement opposing the American war in Iraq.

John Paul II repeated for the occasion the Meeting of Assisi that had been so remarkable for its prophetic value on its first happening in October 1986. Again at Assisi, on January 24, 2002, the leaders of most of the world's major faiths carried lighted oil lamps signifying their hopes for global peace, as they joined Pope John Paul II at a ceremony marking the world day of prayer.

Together with the pope, clerics of faiths ranging from Christianity to Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and traditional African religions called for an end to all war, terror and violence. “Violence never again! War never again! Terrorism never again! urged the pope, who had invited the religious leaders to the birthplace of St. Francis to pray for peace, following the September 11 terrorist attack on the United States.

The ceremony was attended by some 3,000 guests, including Italian President Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and members of the Vatican's diplomatic corps. The Pope, who suffers from the symptoms of Parkinson's disease, appeared in fine form throughout the day, playfully waving his cane to the crowds as he left Assisi.

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## THEY LOVE HIS STRONG WORDS

*The reasons that make very special the old pope's relationship with the youth of the world.*



# A MISSIONARY HEART

*The young churches are the pope's constant concern and he has given the guidelines for the future missionary perspective of the church in the third millennium.*

The evangelization of the young churches is a constant concern for the holy father. We can see it not only in his numerous and tiring apostolic journeys but also in the pope's detailed knowledge of the 1080 dioceses of the missionary world. It is not unusual for his collaborators to hear the pope ask out of the blue: "Have the people of Ouahigouya managed to finish their cathedral?" or: "How many priests were ordained in Port Moresby?"

Out of 102 trips outside the Vatican, 42 were in mission territories. From 1978 up to now millions of faithful of the young churches as well as catechumens have had the chance of seeing the pope and with them millions of non-Christians as well. His visitations are a blessing: "He puts fresh heart into the disciples, encouraging them to persevere in the faith"(Acts 14:22).

John Paul II is the first missionary of the Church. In his words and action we can sense the same passion that animated San Peter, the fisherman from Betsaida, when the Holy Spirit sent him to the house of Cornelius: "The truth I have now come to realize is that God doesn't have favorites, but that anybody of any nationality who fears God and does what is right is acceptable to him"(Acts 10:35).

The pope has dedicated to mission some of the most profound of his reflections about the future of the Church. His letter *Redemptoris Missio* is considered the *Magna Charta* of the Church's missionary strategy in the Third Millennium. According to the pope, the Church has to start afresh from Mission. After 2000 years, the mission of the Church is still, as it were, at its beginning. In Asia, where more than 60% of the world population lives, the Catholics represent only 2,6 %.

In the last decades the missionary enthusiasm of the Christian community has declined: the crises that hit the Church after Vatican II, the exposure to a pluralistic world; even ecumenism: everything has contributed to the weakening of the missionary drive of the Catholic Church.

John Paul II wants to steer the course back to the deep sea: *Duc in altum!* He only points out the new demands that come from the changed circumstances: inculturation of the Faith to avoid the accusation of spiritual

colonialism; formation of the leaders, not only the clergy, but the laity, so that the Christian message may become the leaven of tomorrow's society; and dialogue

## ***Inculturation and Dialogue***

The two more challenging demands of Mission are certainly inculturation and dialogue. John Paul II writes about inculturation in *Fides et Ratio*: “Today, as the Gospel gradually comes into contact with cultural worlds which once lay beyond Christian influence, there are new tasks of inculturation, which mean that our generation faces problems not unlike those faced by the Church in the first centuries.

My thoughts turn immediately to the lands of the East, so rich in religious and philosophical traditions of great antiquity... A great spiritual the spirit from the shackles of time and space and would therefore acquire absolute value. The dynamic of this quest for liberation provide the context for great metaphysical systems".impulse leads Indian thought to seek an experience that would liberate

And especially, inter-faith dialogue. Dialogue should be the style within the ecclesiology of communion; and it is the heart of the ecumenical relationship between Christians. According to what has emerged especially during the last decade, dialogue is an absolute necessity in the contact between different religions and with people belonging to none. With John Paul II, the Catholic Church has become the stander-bearer of dialogue as the strategy of peaceful coexistence within the pluralistic society of the Third Millennium.

These are the old and new challenges that the pope has guided us to face with courage but also with serenity, because, after all, the protagonist of *Mission* is the Holy Spirit.

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## A CONTRASTING VIEW

*For a certain number of Catholics, the pope's uncompromising leadership has polarized the Church and delayed the necessary reforms envisaged by Vatican II. His persistence at the guide of the Catholic Church while debilitated by sickness and old age portrays the incapacity of the Catholic Church to reform and contributes to the marginalization of religion in the progressive world. For that part of the Catholic world, the Silver Jubilee of Pope John Paul II may be a grim occurrence.*

### **A cry for change**

“The intimations of mortality are everywhere: cancellation of next month's trip to the United Nations; photographs of the frail white-robed figure hunched over his walking stick.... Next month Pope John Paul II, 74, celebrates 16 years as head of the world's 900 million Catholics. But the crescendo of concern for his health ensures that the festivities will be low-key; and discreetly, thoughts are being turned to the likely profile of the type of pontiff needed to take the church into the next millennium.

At this point, the globe-trotting political supreme who dictates terms and plays tug-of-war with the more demanding elements of his electorate must give way to the cautious parliamentarian who listens to his constituency—a constituency that stretches from Goa to New York city.”

In 1994, this was the opinion of the editor of the British paper *the Catholic Herald*, Cristina Oddone in her article: *A Pope For the Year 2000*.

Almost ten years have passed and John Paul II has completed his Silver Jubilee at the helm of the Church. He has celebrated successfully the Great Jubilee of the year 2000 and taken the Church well into the Third Millennium.

His health has deteriorated further, but he does not give signs of surrendering the pontificate to any successor yet, his mind is as clear and brilliant as ever before and he may continue like this for other so many years. This must be somehow exasperating for those considerable sectors of the Catholic Church who have expected eagerly a change that they thought could come only by a different pope.

We do not mean only those disgruntled theologians who burned their finger against the pope's uncompromising stance in matters of faith and



morals, but all those thousand of prominent lay people who have come forward especially all over Europe and North America under the label: “We are the Church”; as well as the silent majority that quietly steer their course away from the official position of the Church like in matter of birth control.

Situations have festered like the problem of compulsory celibacy for the clergy: the scandal of the sexual indulgence of the clergy in the young churches and the storm of child abuse in the old ones is compounded by the terminal situation of the clergy in certain countries like Great Britain, soon to be followed by many other in the old world. The cry for change, though often silent, is deafening,

### ***Defeated by the modern world?***

With an iron will, John Paul II set the Catholic Church on an unmistakable theological course in regard to dogma, the role of women, sexuality, contraception, and the unmitigated power of the pope himself. In the process, he has both uplifted and divided the world’s one billion Catholics. Under his administration the signal sent out has sometimes been confusing, even contradictory. At times he has almost seemed to want to reverse the council, and plunge the Church back into rigidities and conflicts of the Counter-Reformation.

Pope John Paul is great man, possibly a saint, certainly one of the most effective popes in history. But he is also a puzzle and a problem. Part of the puzzle lies in the character of the man, Karol Wojtyla, himself. He can never safely be typecast. He has governed the Church conservatively but many of his other attitudes are progressive. No one has done more to mount an ethical critique of global capitalism. He attacked liberation theology in Latin America and yet, during his papacy, the Catholic Church has everywhere confirmed its concern for the poor. He has tirelessly promoted the religious liberty, while the doctrine of human rights, has become the platform of his preaching to the world. Far from being always a conservative, in important ways he is an innovator.

The other part of the puzzle is the pope’s lack of success in his on-going struggle with the inexorable tide of secular materialism. Time and again, this old man has railed against the selfishness, the self-indulgence and the delusions that such thinking produces. He has tried repeatedly to point to the beauty and idealism of the Gospel, but his message in the developed world is falling on deaf ears. Mass attendance and vocations to religious life and the priesthood continue to decline in western Europe, the cradle of Roman Catholicism, and north America.

What makes this dawning realization particularly bitter for the Pope is that as the ideology of communism rolled back in eastern Europe, the faithful did not celebrate their newly found freedom in church, but are increasingly turning their back on what had sustained their identity.

This is a man for whom discipline ensured the survival of a Church under persecution and repression; that is the experience he has brought to the global Church. But the challenge the Church faces from individualism and consumer capitalism is of a different order, and this powerful old man seems to be defeated. He has been rapturously received almost wherever he has gone, and his message respected and admired, but from a distance. Sometimes he has shown his disappointment and even his anger. This discrepancy between the reception of the singer and that of the song is part of the puzzle.

Pope John Paul II has made a huge impact mainly for good. But any harm can be repaired by his successors, who will need to govern in a less monarchical style. They must breathe more freedom into the structure of the Church, to allow it to evangelize the world's freedom more effectively.

*Fr. Lorenzo Carraro, MCCJ*  
*November 2003*

# ***POPE FRANCIS: THE PEOPLE'S POPE &***

## **THE REASONS OF OUR JOY**

*The Christmas season in the Philippines is in full swing with the joy of Mama Mary holding the Baby Jesus in her arms at Bethlehem. It is the joy of Francis of Assisi, the saint of the "Belen". Pope Francis has made this joy the motif of his proclamation, a joy that he discovered as passion for Jesus in his family and in his youth, even through suffering and trials; as commitment to the poor and appreciation of community in his maturity and as fruit of contemplation in his ministry of unity as a pope.*

"This is the first word I would like to tell you: joy! Don't be ever men and women of sadness! A Christian cannot be a sad person! Long faces cannot proclaim good news! Ours is a joy which comes from having met with a Person: Jesus who is in our midst" these are pope Francis' words on Palm Sunday, March 24, only few days after his election and are like the motto of his pontificate.

Speaking to the thousands of seminarians and novices, on July 8, he said: "Every Christian, especially you and I, is called to be a bearer of this message of hope that gives serenity and joy: God's consolation, his tenderness towards all". Then, leaving out the paper and continuing in a spontaneous way, the pope told the future priests and nuns to keep "freshness and joy" in their lives, and took to task seminarians and novices who are "too serious, too sad". "Something is not right here. There is no sadness in holiness" he said.

“A true Christian is a person of joy. There are people who masquerade as Christians, and sin by being excessively superficial or overly rigid, forgetting that a true Christian is a person of joy who rests their faith on the rock of Christ. Some think they can be Christian without Christ; others think being Christian means being in a perpetual state mourning. The former have a superficial happiness. The others do not know what Christian joy is. They do not know how to enjoy the life that Jesus gives us”.

These words that the Pope delivered in one of his spontaneous homilies in the chapel of Santa Martha makes one think of the movie “*Babette’s Feast*”, a movie very dear to pope Francis, where the French refugee, Babette, an accomplished cook, fills with joy and tolerance her stern Calvinist hosts by preparing a sumptuous dinner and making them enjoy God’s creatures in a kind of contemplative experience.

### ***From the experience of suffering***

Jorge Mario Bergoglio was born in Flores, a *barrio* of Buenos Aires, on December 17, 1936. He was the eldest of five children of Mario José Bergoglio, an Italian immigrant from Portacomaro, in the Province of Asti, in Italy. His father had followed his three brothers to Argentina, when the advent of Fascism and the notorious dictator Benito Mussolini had forced many to leave Italy. Pope Francis remembers that his grandmother Rose arrived in Buenos Aires sweltering in the heat, clinging to her coat with a fur collar and didn’t want to let it go because, sewn inside that collar, were all the moneys they had put together by selling their property in Italy in order to face the unknown.

Very soon the Bergoglio were affected by the great Depression and life became a struggle. The four brothers had to part company. Life became bearable when papa Mario José found a job as accountant. After the fifth child, Jorge’s mother was struck by partial paralysis, because of this Jorge grew up at his grandmother Rose’s place. When he visited his mother, he had to cook: to that purpose, his mother used to prepared all the ingredients and was at hand to give instructions of how to go about it. Jorge will treasure this culinary knowledge and, even as archbishop of Buenos Aires, he will often cook his own meals.

He attended the technical secondary school and graduated with a chemical technician's diploma. He worked for a few years in that capacity in a foods section Laboratory. At the age of 21 he suffered from a life-threatening

pneumonia and had part of a lung excised. In the interviews he gave later on, he stated: “I see the holiness in the patience of the people of God: a woman who is raising children, a man who works to bring home the bread, the sick, the elderly priests who have so many wounds but have a smile on their faces because they serve the Lord, the sisters who work hard and live a hidden sanctity.

This is for me the common sanctity. I often associate sanctity with patience as a constancy in going forward, day by day. This is the sanctity of the militant church also mentioned by St. Ignatius. This was the sanctity of my parents: my dad, my mom, my grandmother Rosa who loved me so much. In my breviary I have the last will of my grandmother Rosa, and I read it often. For me it is like a prayer. She is a saint who has suffered so much, also spiritually, and yet always went forward with courage”.

One day when Jorge was five or six and was walking around with his grandmother, two Salvation Army women passed by. He asked her if they were nuns. “No,” she replied, “they are Protestants, but they are good.” Though he was often told that all Protestants were going to hell, being raised in a country strictly linked with Catholicism, Bergoglio reflected back on the incident as archbishop of the capital city and praised his grandmother’s “wisdom of true religion”.

### ***“I cannot live without people”***

After three years in the diocesan seminary of Buenos Aires, Jorge Mario entered the Society of Jesus as a novice 1958. About his choice of vocation he revealed: “Three things in particular struck me about the Society of Jesus: the missionary spirit, community and discipline. I was always looking for a community. I did not see myself as a priest on my own. I need a community. And you can tell this by the fact that, as a pope, I am here in Santa Marta. I chose to live here, in Room 201, because when I saw the papal apartment, so big and so isolated, inside myself I distinctly heard a ‘no.’ I need to live my life with others. I cannot live without people.”

Bergoglio took his Vows in 1960 and was ordained to the Priesthood in 1969. He was master of novices and professor of theology. He served the Society in different capacities, even as Provincial Superior and in 1992 was chosen as Auxiliary Bishop of Buenos Aires and eventually became its Archbishop. One of Bergoglio's major initiatives as archbishop was to increase the Church's presence in the slums of Buenos Aires.

Under his leadership, the number of priests assigned to work in the slums doubled. There were so many beautiful things people did not know about him. Not everyone knew he used to go to the slums of Buenos Aires, the *villas miserias*, to meet the poor. Many of his fellow countrymen are only discovering this now that he is Pope. This was partly because he usually didn't have any journalist following him.

In the year 2000, archbishop Bergoglio said that the Argentine Catholic Church needed "to put on garments of public penance for the sins committed during the years of the dictatorship" in the 1970s, the years known as the Dirty War. Archbishop Bergoglio revealed that he had often sheltered people from the dictatorship on church property, and once gave his own identity papers to a man who looked like him, so he could flee Argentina.

He was made a cardinal by John Paul II in 2001. Cardinal Bergoglio's simple lifestyle contributed to his reputation for humility. He lived in a small apartment, rather than in the elegant bishop's residence which he had changed into a hospital. He took public transportation and cooked his own meals.

### *Contemplation and joy*

Pope Francis showed his humble self-acceptance when he spoke of himself in the extensive interviews he gave: "I can say that the best description of myself, the one that comes more from the inside and I feel most true is this: I am a sinner whom the Lord has looked upon." And he repeated: "I am one who is looked upon by the Lord. I always felt that my motto, *Miserando atque Eligendo* (God has mercy and Chooses), was very true for me."

Pope Francis told the Poor Clares at Assisi: "When one goes along the path of the contemplation of Jesus Christ, of prayer and of penance with Jesus Christ, one becomes immensely human. Cloistered nuns are called to have a great deal of humanity, a humanity like that of Mother Church. And what is the sign of a sister who is that human? Joy... joy... when there is joy! It saddens me when I see nuns who aren't joyful. They might smile, but it's a flight attendant's smile. But not with the smile of joy, the joy that comes from within."

In another occasion he confided his own contemplative, mystical experience: "When the conclave elected me Pope, before I accepted, I asked if I could spend a few minutes in the room next to the one with the balcony overlooking the square. My head was completely empty and I was seized by

a great anxiety. To make it go away and relax I closed my eyes and made every thought disappear, even the thought of refusing to accept the position, as the liturgical procedure allows.

I closed my eyes and I no longer had any anxiety or emotion. At a certain point I was filled with a great light. It lasted a moment, but to me it seemed very long. Then the light faded, I got up suddenly and walked into the room where the cardinals were waiting and the table on which was the act of acceptance. I signed it, the Cardinal Camerlengo countersigned it and then on the balcony there was the "*Habemus Papam*".

“My joy is much greater than my tiredness” pope Francis tweeted from the plane that was taking him home, after the grueling week spent with the youth in Rio de Janeiro. “It is with gratitude and already nostalgia for that unique time spent with you that I address you.”, the pope continued in his interview in the plane, “Many of you have come to this pilgrimage as disciples: I have no doubt that all of you are going back as missionaries.

With your witness of joy and service you must make the civilization of love blossom. You will show with your life that it pays to spend ourselves for great ideals, to value the dignity of every human being, and gamble on Christ and his Gospel. I will continue to nurture an immense hope about the youth of Brazil and of the whole world: by means of them Christ is preparing a new springtime for the world”.

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# CHRIST AT LAMPEDUSA

*The island of Lampedusa, where pope Francis decided to go to honor the immigrants who died at sea, is a symbol. The Holy Father's powerful reminder of God's words to Cain: "Where is your brother?" struck a chord in the heart of many together with the question: "Who wept for these people who were aboard the boats that sunk? We are a society that has forgotten how to cry". Truly, with pope Francis, Christ landed at Lampedusa.*

On July 8, less than two weeks before his scheduled trip to Brazil, Pope Francis, in a surprising move, chose the tiny island of Lampedusa, which lies between Africa and Italy, as the target of his first trip as a pope, in order to meet the plight of the immigrants, he himself being the son of Italian immigrants to Argentina.

An estimated 8000 people entered Europe through Italy in the first six months of this year. From 1994 to 2012, more than 6000 of them died at sea in the attempt. Even now as I write, after the Pope's visit, hundreds of bodies are recovered from the cruel waters of the Mediterranean sea.

On arrival, pope Francis was taken out to sea in a Cost Guard boat, and he threw a wreath on the water in memory of those who had died in the passage. He embraced the refugees, some of whom had arrived that very day, then he delivered a homily directed not to the immediate hearers, but to the world.

The Pope said: "Immigrants dying at sea, in boats which were vehicles of hope and became vehicles of death. This tragedy has constantly come back to me like a painful thorn in my heart. So I felt that I had to come here today, to pray and to offer a sign of my closeness, but also to challenge our consciences lest this tragedy be repeated.

"Adam, where are you?" This is the first question which God asks man after his sin. Adam lost his bearings, his place in creation. Harmony was lost. "The other" is no longer a brother or sister to be loved, but simply someone who disturbs my life and my comfort. God asks a second question: "Cain, where is your brother?" His blood cries out to me, says the Lord. This is not a question directed to others; it is a question directed to me, to you, to each of us. Today no one in our world feels responsible; we have lost the sense of responsibility for our brothers and sisters. The culture of comfort leads to the globalization of indifference.

But I would like us to ask a third question: "Has any one of us wept for the death of these brothers and sisters? Has any one of us shed tears for these people who were on the boat? For the young mothers carrying their babies? For these men who were looking for a means of supporting their families? We are a society which has forgotten how to weep, how to experience compassion: the globalization of indifference has taken from us the ability to weep!"



The Pope, touched by the human tragedy of the migrants, went to Lampedusa to pray for the many who lost their lives at sea, and reconcile the inhabitants of the islands with the thousands of destitute who land there on their way to the fortress Europe. In the heart of the Mediterranean sea, pope Francis, at the same time, launched a life-jacket to the Church, the life-jacket of the preferential option of the service to the poor and the last ones.

# THE CULTURE OF ENCOUNTER

Only nine months have passed from the election of Jorge Mario Bergoglio to the pontifical see, which happened on March 13, but great changes have taken place. Not so much in the doctrinal area but on the style of communication.

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courageous choice of the name Francis, a name totally new in the history of the popes, a name of which he himself gave a very clear interpretation: love for the poor, peace, integrity of creation. The request of a blessing from the people themselves crowding St. Peter's Square and linked by media throughout the whole world: an unusual request the new pope made spontaneously, bending his knees and inclining his head to receive it.

The third sign was the way he washed the feet to the young convicts, kneeling on the ground six times, not a formal rite! And lastly his decision to reside in House Sancta Martha together with many of his collaborators, a most innovative decision for those who consider the Vatican setup.

Of all the images from his first week in office, perhaps the most striking came when pope Francis visited the Vatican's small Church of St. Anne to say Mass on Sunday, March 17, ahead of his first Angelus address. Run by the Augustinian order, St. Anne is where the roughly four hundred people who live on Vatican grounds have what can be considered a normal parish life.

After Mass, pope Francis stood outside the church and greeted people as they left, patting kids on the head and kissing them, shaking hands and exchanging hugs, with a quick word and a smile for everybody. It's a scene that one can see every Sunday at Catholic parishes across the world, but one rarely sees a pope doing it. "A simple gesture is not always a simple gesture when it is the Pope's gesture" (*Theologian Robert Dodaro*)

The choice of the new pope has stirred an extraordinary interest in the whole world. Around six thousand mass media operators had come to Rome to cover the conclave, but then the interest has continued. Also because of his open style, the requests of shooting documentaries on pope Francis or to have interviews are numerous and generally they manifest a genuine and sincere interest in the person of the new pope. The interviews with the editor of *Civiltà Cattolica*, Fr. Antonio Spadaro S.J. and with Eugenio Scalfari, founder of *Repubblica* have made history.

### ***The global "parish priest"***

Everybody has noted the number of people coming to pope Francis' weekly audiences. The crowds seem to grow by the week. They are becoming enormous, forcing police to close the area around St. Peter's Square to traffic as if Mother Teresa or Padre Pio were being canonized. Vendors

across Rome report a boom in sales of papal objects, always a reliable sign of popular enthusiasm.

He is filling an obvious need within the human - and Catholic - family. Around the world, there are reports that Mass attendance and demand for confession are increasing, which many attribute to a “Francis effect.” Francis seems determined to function as a pastor, it’s how Catholics tend to think a parish priest should be.

Perhaps the root lesson of pope Francis’ first eight months in office is that when it comes to spiritual leadership, style really is substance. It’s a mistake to wait for the real pope to emerge from beneath the largely symbolic gestures of his early days. Instead, those gestures are the real pope, insists bishop Lozano, a close friend of the former Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio who worked under him as an auxiliary in Buenos Aires for six years. “They’re an expression of his *magisterium*,” Lozano said.

“He’s sending a message to other cardinals, bishops and priests that this is what we need to do: to reach out to people, not being content to wait for them to come to us,” Lozano said. “More broadly, he’s sending the same message to all Catholics everywhere.” That message can be understood in three defining features of pope Francis’ leadership style: simplicity, humility and being remarkably accessible to ordinary folks.

His popularity is highly positive since it is a sign that people understand that pope Francis has many important things to say and a positive and comforting message for all. A very active and “more free” pope has increased enormously the work of the media. The atmosphere has changed because of a dynamic and least foreseeable Pope, always open to surprises.

His phone call to people who had sent him a particular request are now beyond counting. It is an unusual way for a Pope, but that spells once more that “we must get accustomed to be normal according to the normality of life”. This is what pope Francis answered the journalists who had questioned him while coming back from Brazil after World Youth Day, seeing him carrying his black bag as any traveler with his hand luggage.

### ***Which direction for the Church?***

What are the changes that are happening and what is the direction that the Church is taking under the leadership of pope Francis? Naturally the guidelines for the journey of the Church are first of all those outlined by the

Gospel, and in our historical time, by Vatican II. In all the essential points there is a strong continuity between the last pontificates. Among the novelties brought about by pope Francis we certainly have to single out his style of pastoral closeness to people, his concrete language and direct relationship with people, his simplicity of life.

The perspective of a Church of the poor and for the poor is strongly and credibly manifested not only in words but especially in deeds like the trip to Lampedusa, his encounter with prisoners and immigrants, sick people and handicapped. The strength with which pope Francis assumes attitudes and sends messages of moral and religious inspiration but of strong impact on the economic and political situation of the world makes a deep impression.

The recent commitment to peace in Syria demonstrates that the Holy See can, if necessary, make its voice heard in the international arena with its moral authority. The extraordinary worldwide resonance of pope Francis' peace initiative tells us that the majority of the people in the different countries, including the United States, are tired of wars, but also the unusual pull of this Pope's reputation and moral prestige.

Already in the book *El Jesuita*, published in 2010, containing the conversations of Card. Jorge Mario Bergoglio with the journalists Francesca Ambrogetti and Sergio Rubin, we find this revealing sentence: "It is fundamental that we Catholics –whether priests or laity- go to meet people. Once a very wise priest told me that we are facing a situation which is opposite that envisaged by the parable of the Good Shepherd who had ninety nine sheep in his fold but went to look for the only one who was lost: today we have one in the fold and ninety nine that we fail to go to look for.

I am sincerely convinced that, in the present moment, the fundamental choice the Church has to make is not of taking away precepts, making easier this or that, but to go down to the streets to look for people, to know people by name. And not only because to go and announce the Gospel is its mission, but because if it doesn't do it will damage itself with its own hands".

At the World Youth Day, in Rio de Janeiro, through words and gestures, the Pope has written a page about the theology of encounter and dialogue. He did it physically and spiritually, without sparing himself, from the first to the last moment, in the land of Brazil, dealing with the indigenous people and the heads of state in the same pattern: a word and an embrace. From the last World Youth Day we therefore assume a strong call, a commitment and a



# POPE FRANCIS AND THE RADICAL GOSPEL

*Beyond any polarization of conservatives and progressives, Pope Francis is calling the Church to Gospel radicalism, the radicalism of Francis of Assisi. Far from selling out the traditional teaching of the Church, the Pope is simply asking the faithful to find bigger nets.*

Unlike his predecessor John Paul II, who labored to be the global shepherd and Benedict XVI, the theologian and the guardian of the *Magisterium*, pope Francis, the mystic, wants to inject anew a Christ-like dynamism into the ministry. It is apparent to the Pope that the crisis of the Church today stems from its failure to use its imagination to be culturally visible, proactive and participative in the performance of the most fundamental, most powerful and the greatest Commandment, that of Love.

The Pope said: “The Church has appeared prisoner of her rigid languages. Perhaps the world seems to have made the Church like a shipwreck of the past, insufficient to face the questions of the present: maybe the Church had answers for humanity in its infancy but not for its adult age”. To this disillusioned humanity the Pope wants us to respond bridging the many gaps that separate us, going to meet the poor who are everywhere on the increase lest they lose patience and do not wait for the announcement of the Gospel.

Some thought pope Francis had taken the world by storm in the interview with his Jesuit confrere Antonio Spadaro, editor of *Civiltà Cattolica*, when he said: “We cannot insist only on issues related to abortion, gay marriage, and the use of contraceptive methods”. Yet it was not a new statement.

In the plane, on his way back from Rio de Janeiro, the journalist Patricia Zordan had asked the Pope: “In Brazil a law has been approved which extends the right of abortion and has allowed matrimony between people of the same gender. Why didn’t you speak about this?” The pope answered: “It was necessary to speak about positive things that open the way to youngsters... The Church has already expressed herself perfectly about what you said. Moreover young people know very well what the position of the Church is.” The journalist insisted: “What is the position of Your Holiness, can you tell us?” “That of the Church. I’m a child of the Church” said pope Francis.

The surprise of the media is sign of a certain amnesia of what Benedict XVI himself had said, speaking to the bishops of Switzerland on November 9 2006: “I remember when I used to go to Germany in the 80s and in the 90s, that I was asked to give interviews and I always knew the questions in advance. They concerned the ordination of women, contraception, abortion and other such constantly recurring problems. If we let ourselves be stuck in those questions, we give the impression that we are moralists with a few somehow antiquated convictions, and not even a hint of the true greatness appears. I therefore consider it essential always to highlight the greatness of our faith which is a commitment from which we must not allow such situations to divert us”.

Pope Francis explained that his re-evangelization praxis is not a game-changing scheme, but more of an attitude shift. To discard doctrines will be self-defeating. Pope Francis isn't abandoning Catholic doctrine. He is calling for new ways of spreading it. He is making a different pragmatic point: in a world already blasted by sin, the Church is first and foremost a field hospital for broken souls.

A lover of paintings, literature, music and opera, pope Francis has a visceral empathy for the ravages of sin on human beings. He sees sins as ailments. Heal the wounds, heal the wounds, he insists. His insights on human frailties is in depth. The sexual revolution is sending a steady stream of patients to the wards. The ubiquity of their sad stories, the sheer volume of human beings whose lives are deformed by a consumerist sexual ethos, is precisely what pope Francis is responding to.

He is suggesting that believers work with the facts on the ground and find creative ways of planting the same eternal seed in damaged soil. “Tradition and memory of the past must help us to have the courage to open up new areas for God” he said. The Pope today may as well be standing on top of a hill, healing wounds and spreading beautiful truths just as Jesus did when he delivered the Beatitudes before a huge crowd. During the Middle Ages, another holy man named Francis expressed with moving words the same appeal of pope Francis today: Lord, make me a channel of your peace”.

[illegible]

# POPE FRANCIS' PEARLS

*In a time of predominance of the culture of the image, pope Francis has given back power to the spoken word. Never has a Pope spoken like Francis: human and candid. How refreshing to hear a Pope speak like us: informal, direct, simple and provocative. The Pope's words nail us down and do not allow us to be indifferent.*

They are so many the hints and stimuli to reflection and conversion that come to us from Pope Francis, that it is almost impossible to keep up the pace. Sometimes they are just gestures, more eloquent than an entire document. Sometimes they are half sentences thrown there as if *en passant* in the middle of a speech: but, as soon as you hear them, you understand that you can not overlook them.

Pope Francis often relies on homespun language to make his points. Once, for instance, he compared overly grim Christians to “pickled peppers.” On another occasion, he said that gossip in the Church is like eating honey: it tastes sweet at first, but too much gives you a “stomachache.” Indeed, he even told a worldwide assembly of women Religious: “A theoretical poverty is no use to us.” Pope Francis became visibly moved, speaking to a packed audience in St. Peter's Square, saying that wasting food is like “stealing from the poor.” And to convince his priests to go to the people, he has repeatedly said that a “shepherd must carry on himself the smell of the sheep”. The following are some of the pearls of this extraordinary teacher.

## *Inhabiting the frontiers*

“We are created children in the likeness of God and the Blood of Christ has redeemed us all! And we all have a duty to do good. And this commandment for everyone to do good, I think, is a beautiful path towards peace. If we, each doing our own part, do good to others, if we meet there, doing good, and we do it slowly, gently, little by little, we will make that culture of encounter: we need that so much. We must meet one another doing good. ‘But I don’t believe, Father, I am an atheist!’ But do good: we will meet one another there”. (*homily of May 22*)



“Poverty in the world is a scandal. In a world where there is so much wealth, so many resources to feed everyone, it is unfathomable that there are so many hungry children, that there are so many children without an education, so many poor persons. Poverty today is a cry. You can't speak of poverty in the abstract: that doesn't exist. Poverty is the flesh of the poor Jesus, in that child who is hungry, in the one who is sick, in those unjust social structures. Go forward; look there upon the flesh of Jesus. But don't let well being rob you of hope, that spirit of well being that, in the end, leads you to becoming a nothing in life. Young people should bet on their high ideals, that's my advice. But where do I find hope? In the flesh of Jesus who suffers and in true poverty. There is a connection between the two. (*To the pupils of Jesuit Schools, June 7*)

“Your proper place is the frontiers. This is the place of the Jesuits. Wherever in the Church, even in the most difficult and acute fields, in the crossroads of ideologies, in the social trenches, there was and is the confrontation between the burning demands of man and the perennial message of the Gospel, the Jesuits have been and are there.” Please, be men of the frontier, with that capacity that comes from God. But do not fall into the temptation of taming the frontiers: you must go to the frontiers and not bring the frontiers home to varnish them a bit and tame them. (*to the Jesuits of Civiltà Cattolica, June 14*)

***The Pope to the youth: “I want a mess!”***

“The Gospel is for all! It means that we must go towards the flesh of the suffering Jesus but Jesus' flesh also suffers in those who don't know it, with their studies, their intelligence, their culture. We must go there! That's why I like to use the expression 'go to the outskirts', the existential peripheries. Everyone, all of them, who suffer from physical and real poverty to intellectual poverty, which is also real. All the outskirts, all the intersections of paths: go there. And there you will plant the seed of the Gospel by word and by witness. Let's not think that faith doesn't have a future in our city! (*to the participants of Rome Pastoral Convention, June 18*)

“Personally I think that being a minority is actually a strength. We have to be a leaven of life and love and the leaven is infinitely smaller than the mass of fruits, flowers and trees that are born out of it. I believe I have already said that our goal is not to proselytize but to listen to needs, desires and disappointments, despair, hope. We must restore hope to young people, help

the old, be open to the future, spread love. Be poor among the poor. We need to include the excluded and preach peace. Vatican II, inspired by Pope Paul VI and John, decided to look to the future with a modern spirit and to be open to modern culture. The Council Fathers knew that being open to modern culture meant religious ecumenism and dialogue with non-believers. But afterwards very little was done in that direction. I have the humility and ambition to want to do something." (*Interview to Scalfari*)

"I want to tell you something. What is it that I expect as a consequence of World Youth Day? I want a mess. We knew that in Rio there would be great disorder, but I want trouble in the dioceses! I want to see the Church get closer to the people. I want to get rid of clericalism, the mundane, this closing ourselves off within ourselves, in our parishes, schools and structures. We need to get out" (*at Rio de Janeiro*).

"Fraternity, foundation for and way to peace" this is the message pope Francis has prepared for the World Day of Prayers for Peace, January 1 2014. "In a world where interdependence keeps growing by the day, we cannot lack brotherhood or fraternity. Fraternity counteract the globalization of indifference. The globalization of indifference must give way to the globalization of fraternity. Fraternity must affect all aspects of existence including economy, finance, civil society, politics, development, research and all the public, cultural institutions"

#### ***October 4: in St. Francis' homeland***

"My brother Bishop has said that it is the first time in 800 years that a Pope comes here. In these days in the newspapers, in the media, they fancied that "The Pope will go there to despoil the Church!" "Of what will he despoil the Church?" "He will despoil the habits of the Bishops, of the Cardinals; he will despoil himself." This is a good occasion to invite the Church to despoil herself. But all of us are the Church!

From the first one baptized, we are all the Church, and we must all go on the path of Jesus, who, Himself, followed the way of despoliation. He became a slave, a servant; he willed to be humiliated unto the Cross. And all of us must despoil ourselves of worldliness: the contrary spirit to the spirit of the Beatitudes, the spirit contrary to the spirit of Jesus. Spiritual worldliness kills! It kills the soul! It kills persons! It kills the Church!

When Francis made the gesture here of despoiling himself he was a young man, he didn't have the strength for it. It was the strength of God that pushed him to do it, the force of God that wishes to remind us, what Jesus said to us about the spirit of the world, what Jesus prayed to the Father about, so that the Father would save us from the spirit of the world.

Today, we ask here the grace for all Christians. That the Lord will give all of us the courage to despoil ourselves of the spirit of the world, which is leprosy...The spirit of the world is Jesus' enemy! I ask the Lord to give all of us this grace of despoiling ourselves" ( *Pope's Address at the site where St. Francis embraced Lady Poverty, Assisi, October 4*).

The faithful are thrilled that pope Francis envisions the Church as the home for all. They are comforted that he is sending a message of tolerance and maturity. They consider his remarks more important than an encyclical. Pope Francis refreshes. He flings open doors and windows to let the musty air out. Not for him an exclusionist Church battening down the hatches to keep out those who question or speak against what is and dare to say what can be. He doesn't consider the Church a small chapel that can hold only a small group of selected people. He declares: "We must not reduce the bosom of the universal Church to a nest protecting our mediocrity. The Church must be a house for all".

*Fr. Lorenzo Carraro, MCCJ*

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