THE CULTURE OF ENCOUNTER

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AND PEACE

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PREFACE
INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

Cardinal Lars Anders Arborelius
Bishop of Stockholm and Cardinal of Sweden

It has become a commonplace to say that we live in a global village. Anyway, we have to admit that we live in an age of globalization, whether we like it or not. The media bring us news from all over the world. Immediately we know what is going on at the other side of the globe. There are no frontiers to news, fake or real ones. All the world and what happens there is present in our own i-phone. At the same time, though, there is often a reaction against this global atmosphere. A new kind of nationalism and populism has appeared all over the world. This is indeed a paradoxical fact: a globalized nationalism trying to create new frontiers to people of other cultures and religions and to put up walls to make dialogue and encounter between us impossible. This could be very dangerous and cause new conflicts to arise or make old conflicts come alive. Pope Francis warns us, over and over again, how dangerous it is to build walls instead of bridges.

This book wants to help us to build bridges between believers from different faith-communities. Religion, of whatever kind, ought to be a source of inspiration for a culture of encounter and dialogue. Unfortunately, we can also see that some people misuse and abuse the holy name of God in order to spread hatred and contempt towards people of other creeds or at least to stop believers of different background to grow closer to each other. This is also the reason why faithful of good-will, regardless of religious affiliation, have to work together in order to foster a culture of encounter and dialogue. In order to prevent this spirit of confrontation that seems to pop up all over the place to grow, new means of proclaiming interfaith solidarity have become ever more

necessary. This book would like to make a humble contribution to a renewed interreligious solidarity and friendship.

This culture of encounter between different faith-communities has to be made concrete on the local level. Even if a global effort is needed all over the world, we have to see how it can be incarnated in various local cultures and traditions. Here we want to show how this initiative is realized in the City of Stockholm, even if this city is supposed to be one of the most segregated capitals of Europe. An important source of inspiration comes from another city, Buenos Aires, where Archbishop Bergoglio and Rabbi Skorka and others were able to establish a profound spiritual friendship between faithful of various religions. It is our hope that the encounter taking place in Stockholm can have a similar effect. Actually, it is an interesting fact that the secular atmosphere in contemporary Sweden seems to bring those who believe in God, of whatever faith they might be, closer together. At the same time, though, this harmonious relationship between faith-communities needs to be strengthened and renewed. There are also new threats and dangers that a more nationalistic spirit can bring about more confrontation and new frontiers in our Swedish society.

As a small minority of Catholics in Sweden, we are used to live in multicultural parishes, where faithful from all over the world try to build up a spiritual unity and profound communion in Christ. This fact also helps us to relate to the multireligious reality of modern Sweden. Many concrete experiences and facts could be brought forward to show that bridges are being built, e.g. in Stockholm-Fisksätra and Malmö-Rosengården. The Catholic Church considers it as a part of her mission to promote deeper interreligious relationships. Our faith in Jesus as the unique Saviour of the world is no obstacle to our dialogue with believers of other creeds. On the contrary, the love of Jesus brings us closer to all human beings, whoever they are and however they live and behave. We have the task to proclaim the universal, saving love of Jesus to all and sundry, but always in a spirit of respect and veneration for every single human being created in the image of God. Our faith in Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life helps us and inspires us to enter into a deep friendship with every person that God sends us on our way through life. Pope Francis reminds us ever so often that this culture of encounter is an integral part of the mission of the Church to evangelize the world.

Interreligious dialogue is not an obstacle to evangelization. Jesus sends us to all human beings in order to show them his love and friendship. Thanks to a sincere culture of encounter, we can build bridges between all

faith-communities and offer signs of hope in our global world of today. It is my hope that this fact can show people of today, even those who tend to think that religion as such is a source of conflicts, that belief and adoration of God can create universal solidarity and friendship, always and everywhere.

PRESENTATION

Amb. Antonio Núñez y García-Saúco
President of the European Institute of International Studies

This book is based on the core values of the European Institute of International Studies (EIIS), focused on promoting ideas conducive to furthering peace and tolerance, justice and welfare, and committed to reducing confrontation and tension between people, nations, cultures and religions.

War, as UNESCO so rightly puts it, is born in people's minds. The way to firmly embed peace in peoples' hearts, consciences and attitudes towards life, therefore, inevitably starts in their minds.

Culture and religion are the most fertile breeding grounds for ideas and, thus, for the development of a universal culture of peace and respect for different beliefs.

Throughout history, like human nature itself, civilisations and religions have caused –or been instrumentalised for– confrontations and wars, even between peoples of similar cultures and kindred religions. People have forgotten that the overarching dignity of our human condition ought to overcome differences and restrictions of identity, be they natural, cultural or political, and that different religions, as this book suggests, are diverse approaches of worshipping one God who has different names.

No good is conceivable without peace, and while conflict is part of human nature, so is the pursuit of peace.

Among initiatives aimed at resolving conflicts or preventing clashes of civilisations, to use Huntington's term, the United Nations' Alliance of Civilisations deserves special attention.

The religious communities of the Bible – Christian churches as well as the other monotheistic religions have, for some time, established contacts and

developed exchanges of opinions, ideas, experiences and best practices aimed at improving mutual understanding and respect.

The creation of an intergovernmental institution like KAICIID, reflects the specific objective of furthering intercultural and inter religious dialogue on a global level.

State actors have thus been gradually joining the ongoing initiatives of different confessions as well as of countless public and private, religious and civilian, confessional and non-confessional institutions working for more dialogue, understanding and respect between civilisations and religions.

Pope Francis has added a third concept to those already established as alliance and dialogue: that of "incontro" –encounter– which, far from substituting or contradicting the former two, is poised to strengthen and enrich them.

While, in relation to the concept of alliance, that of "encounter" is, in our understanding, externally less formal and internally more committed, both coincide in the essential positive dimension, the fusion of wills. In relation to the concept of dialogue, "encounter" appears to be less concrete and instrumental, but wider and more embracing. In terms of personal attitude, it is an indispensable precursor and successor to dialogue: without the will to "meet" no dialogue can be initiated or continued as permanent dialogue, leading to find in the other "not an enemy or adversary but a welcome brother to embrace" with whom we can "walk together".

This was the motto of the seminar "Walking together" which EIIS recently organised in Stockholm and which served to launch the publication which you are now holding. The event was generously supported by the institutions mentioned with gratitude in the acknowledgements.

One of the seminar's conclusions features the need to lend universal character to encounter and dialogue via an international platform comparable to the one UNESCO offers for education, science and culture, but, in our case, directed towards the encounter and dialogue between civilisations and religions.

INTRODUCTION

Pedro Merino Camprovín, OAR
Vicepresident of the European Institute of International Studies

On occasion, it is considered, unjustly, that the variety of diverse religious observances is at the root of the main armed conflicts throughout the world. In an evident discrepancy, the actors involved in international relations bypass, in the same consideration, the spiritual dimension of the human being; and frequently, in the resolution of conflicts, they relegate the cultural and religious aspects of peoples to a subordinate position in the face of negotiations surrounding military capacities, borders and the jurisdictional spaces of nations.

This book will not accept a simple reply to these assessments, which are so clearly biased. It deals, most of all, with developing a double conviction. First of all, we must understand that peacebuilding is the shared responsibility of all peoples, of all human beings. Above all, it is about explaining that the value of the spiritual dimension of man, of the performance of confession, in particular of the three monotheistic religions –Judaism, Christianity, Islam– that we shall study, represent, in their peace proposals, a significant part of the solution. In short, it deals with understanding that interreligious dialogue can create a culture of encounter that contributes to improving international relations and peace.

In the current international context, it becomes necessary to establish dialogue as the main instrument and human privilege, one to be implemented not only in conflict resolution, but also in the development of a culture of encounter which will prevent these conflicts. International dialogue has been relegated to the hands of states. Thus, state instruments get to decide whether to declare war or peace between peoples. The UN was formed in the middle

of the last century as an organism tasked with finding peaceful resolutions to the clashes between nations. In part, its work has contributed to maintaining peace; however, its powers are limited. As a society, we must go further.

We must promote the culture of encounter from the very root of humanity, from its core, in which, under physical space, the deepest, constitutive, determinant, structuring dimensions come together: affection, intelligence and above all, spiritual reality.

Modern society has suffered an intense deterioration of human sensitivity. There are many reasons, such as the focus on individualism in Western cultures, the loss of family references or the misuse of new technologies. Modern communication and media allow access in real time to dramatic scenes which, far from bringing the harsh realities of war closer, have provoked a breakdown of sensibilities. The *intrahistorical* project of human liberation has brought about the rejection of the spiritual dimension of the human being. Religion has been identified as an enemy to be fought against, without recognizing that the transcendental space represents the identifying nucleus of the human condition.

The plenipotentiary state has misinterpreted its role. Contemporary secularism, transferred to international relations, forgets the supernatural dimension of the human being, which is the foundation of the construction of any reality in which man is the protagonist. There is no state without the human beings it is composed of and each one of them contains, in all of his or her dimensions, the inalienable truth of their own existence.

The culture of encounter, from the innermost essence of human existence, complex and passionate, from its material, moral, intellectual, and above all, spiritual construction, is the basis for the new international relations, of peace between human beings, between peoples, between nations. This book, from very diverse scientific interpretations, tries to highlight this matter.

Finally, on behalf of the European Institute of International Studies, we want to express our gratitude to each of the authors, for their contributions, and the Catholic Diocese of Stockholm and Bonifatiuswerk, for their support and funding of this book.

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THE ENCOUNTER AS A REAL POSSIBILITY. THE THEOREM OF ABRAHAM

José Antonio Calvo Gómez

1. Introduction

The scheme of this essay is simple. Firstly, we will recover two historiographic responses on violence in the twentieth century. Both Eric Hobsbawm (1917-2012) and Francis Fukuyama (Chicago, 1952) have tried to interpret the development of the last decades from their respective intellectual positions, not always coinciding.

The Great War, and its continuation in World War II, found, in Hobsbawm's *20th Century History*, an abrupt end with the fall of the Berlin Wall, German unification and, above all, with the collapse of the communist bloc. Fukuyama, however, interpreted this victory of Western liberalism as the end of history, as the natural conclusion of every process of human growth.

How, then, to interpret the events related to 9/11 both in Europe and the United States and in the various Muslim-majority countries involved in the conflict? Are we facing a new chapter of the clash of civilizations of Samuel P. Huntington's theory? Is there a solution for interreligious dialogue between the Western Judeo-Christian tradition and the Eastern Muslim interpretation? Is it even legitimate to divide the world between the Judeo-Christian West and the Muslim East?

In the twentieth century, Pope Pius XI and his successors, especially Pius XII and John XXIII, found the solution for World War II in the founding of the United Nations Organization and, above all, in the constitution of the European Union. In this essay, at the beginning of the 21st century, we propose

a solution for the interfaith dialogue between Jews, Christians and Muslims and, in a sense, a response to the violence that, illegitimately, pretends to have its justification in the faith and the profession of religion.

The solution for interreligious violence is Abraham's theorem as the father of peoples who confess to one God, to one Lord, Creator of the world: the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Israel; the Father of Jesus Christ and God of all comfort, who sends his Holy Spirit so that we may have life, and life in abundance; the God of Ishmael, the God, Mercy and Loyalty, of the Prophet Mohamed.

This theorem is simple: the peace is possible. The encounter between peoples is a real possibility. It is realizable. It is attainable. The death of the Son is no longer necessary to honor God. God has rescued us from the violence, consequence of the sin, so that we may live in truth and freedom. We will try to develop these ideas. The twentieth century has been the time to kill and die in the name of great ideals. At the beginning of the 21st century, we want to recover some previous intuitions and propose a solution to build peace in the name of a common ideal.

2. Two studies on the war in the XX century. Rric Hobsbawm vs. Francis Fukuyama

In 1994, the British historian, Eric Hobsbawm, born in Egypt, aligned fundamentally with Marxist historiographical theses, wrote a book about the twentieth century, which was about to end. He titled it: *The age of extremes.* In Spain, it was published in Barcelona by editorial Crítica*,* in 1995, under the title: *Historia del siglo XX*, *History of the 20th century*.

The interpretative field of Hobsbawm had been centered, until that moment, on the 19th century. His previous works included: *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789-1848*, published in 1962; *The Age of Capital: 1848-1875,* in 1975; and *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914*, which came out in 1987. When he tried to analyze the twentieth century, he discovered, as a novice in the literature, that, beyond the advances in medicine and science, beyond the evolution of transport and social rights, what characterized the twentieth century was war, was the violence. The Hobsbawm's *History of the 20th century* has a subtitle: *1914-1991*. This he explains as: short century, long war. The historian

confesses that he took that concept from Iván Berend, president of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. We have wanted to rescue it for our essay.

Is war and violence the key to the 21st century? We use the concept of *short century* to interpret the last century; although we will not analyze war in the twentieth century, which is already well understood. We seek to reflect on peace, on the fragility of peace, on the construction of peace in this century; particularly on the peace that is built and destroyed in the name of God.

In 1992, two years before the publication of the first edition of Hobsbawm's work on the twentieth century, the work of Francis Fukuyama *The End of History and the Last Man* came out in New York in the Free Press Editorial. Fukuyama tried to develop here the idea that he had already presented in the essay "The End of History?" in the international magazine *The National Interest* of the Center for the National Interest of Washington. His position was harshly criticized by Marxist historians such as Perry Anderson, among others.

Fukuyama argued that, after 1991, with the breakup of the USSR and collapse of the communist bloc in Europe, liberal democracy had definitively triumphed and, therefore, according to Hegel's thesis, a turning back was no longer possible. The collapse of communism was irreversible. Anderson criticized Fukuyama for his optimism and pointed out how capitalist democracies were riven with poverty, racial tension and violence. Democracy, Fukuyama argued, compared to other communist or religious fundamentalist options, represents the end of the history.

On September 11, 2001, after the attack on the Twin Towers in New York and other US government buildings, the Marxist historians went back to question Fukuyama. In his dialectical interpretation between real socialism and liberal democracy, Fukuyama had forgotten other ways of understanding the world like that represented by the Eastern world and Muslim thought.

Fukuyama immediately responded with a new essay, published in *The Wall Street Journal* on October 5 of the same year. He titled it: "History is still going our way", with a subtitle: "Liberal democracy will inevitably prevail". In particular, he responded to the arguments of George Will (Champaign, Illinois, 1941), who claimed that "history had returned from vacation" and of Fareed Zakaria (Bombay, 1964) who argued that the fall of the Twin Towers symbolized "the end of the end of the history".

He also wanted to answer to Samuel P. Huntington (1927-2008) and his argument about the clash of civilizations. According to the American historian,

free market and liberal democracy could only be sustained in the West. These mental structures were neither compatible with the Muslim mental conformation nor with the human conditions of Southeast Asia. The evolution of Islamic fundamentalism, continued Huntington, that in recent years was dominating much of the Middle East and Africa, made these regions of contemporary Muslim societies spaces exceptionally resistant to the Modernity.

The most important thing Fukuyama tried to argue to Huntington is that those who sympathized with the theories of Osama bin Laden and the fundamentalist terrorist groups were only a minority of Muslims. Although some countries had certain difficulties in developing democratic systems, the majority of the population was horrified by what happened in New York in 2001 and, it could be added, on March 11, 2004 in Madrid; on July 7, 2005 in London; and on January 15, 2015 in Paris.

In fact, most of those who die in terrorist attacks in Kabul or Mogadishu are Muslims. 85% of Somalia residents profess the Muslim religion. On October 14, 2017, the attack with a truck bomb in a Mogadishu market caused 587 dead and 228 wounded, mostly Muslims. After the Twin Towers, it is considered the worst terrorist attack in history. On August 18, 2019, in the capital of Afghanistan, 63 people died and another 180 were injured in a double attack perpetrated when a wedding was held in a neighborhood populated by the Hazara minority, that professes Shiite Islam. On July 23, 2016, this same Muslim ethnicity had suffered another attack in which 83 people had died.

Where is the clash of civilizations? Probably the most correct interpretation is another. It would be, rather, to observe many people trying to provide for their family, who desire to live in peace, and who do not want to know anything about the terrorists who claim to kill in their name. For most of those who profess Islam, the extremist groups neither know God nor understand what the faith in God, the Compassionate, the Merciful means.

3. The solution of Pius XII before the Second World War

Pope Pius XII experienced firsthand the drama of war. During his time in Germany as ambassador of Pius XI, the nuncio Pacelli was able to analyze and understand the growth of Hitler's national socialism and actively collaborated in the drafting of the encyclical letter *Mit Brennender Sorge*, *With fervent concern*, on the situation of the Catholic Church in the German Third Reich,

published on March 14, 1937. Most scholars agree today that the fundamental text of the document of Pius XI came out the hand of the nuncio Pacelli, later Pope Pius XII. It was the first time, for centuries, that the Church wrote a document in German, renouncing, on this occasion, entitling an encyclical with the traditional Latin words that usually began the Pope's texts.

Expressly, in article 12, Pius XI condemned the action of the Third Reich and its pretensions to alter the order of the natural law: "If the race or the people, if the State or a determined form thereof, if the representatives of State power or other fundamental elements of human society have in the natural order an essential position worthy of respect, who, however, tears away from them this scale of earthly values by raising them to be the supreme norm of everything, even of religious values, and, deifying them with idolatrous cult, perverts and falsifies the order created and imposed by God, and is far from true faith and a conception of life according to it".

Because the law of God, as sated in article 14, "does not recognize privileges or exceptions" that legitimize the action that, at that time, the German state was developing against those it considered second-class citizens.

In case there was any doubt, the condemnation was expressed in article 15, in the words of the prophet Isaiah: "Only superficial spirits can fall into the error of speaking of a national God, of a national religion, and undertake the crazy task of imprisoning in the limits of a single people, in the ethnic narrowness of a single race; to God, Creator of the world, King and legislator of the peoples, before whose greatness the nations are like waterdrops in a bucket (Is 40, 5)". He continued in article 20, "the revelation, that culminated in the gospel of Jesus Christ, is definitive and obligatory forever, it does not admit complements of human origin, much less successions or substitutions by arbitrary revelations, that some modern Coryphaeus wanted to derive from the so-called myth of blood and race".

Article 24 of the encyclical, in the light of the events that occurred later, finds, without a doubt, a true expression of faith and martyrial commitment:

> With hidden and manifest pressures, with intimidations, with prospects of economic, professional, civic advantages or of another gender, the adhesion of the Catholics to their faith […] is found subjected to a violence as illegal as inhuman. […] We feel and suffer deeply with those who have paid so heavy a price for their adhesion to Christ; […] as the only way of salvation for the believer, there is the path of a generous heroism. When the tempter or oppressor approaches him with the treacherous insinuations to leave the Church, then there

> will be no other choice but to oppose him, even at the price of the gravest earthly sacrifices, the word of the Savior: "Get thee behind me, Satan, for it is written: Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve" (Mt 4,10; Lk 4,8).

The truth is that the Great War, which had ended with the fragile armistice of Compiègne, signed in a train carriage, in the north of France, on November 11, 1918, was reopened soon after in a new contest still difficult to analyze. It's not easy to interpret the death of around 70 million people and an unprecedented destruction of the natural order. The Jewish holocaust, the *Shoah*, which caused the death of more than 6 million people for the mere fact of belonging to this people, is inconceivable to the human sensibility.

On March 2, 1939, Cardinal Pacelli was elected as a Successor of Pius XI, who died on February 10. The outbreak of the World War II, after the invasion of Poland on September 1 of 1939, forced Pope Pius XII to resume the condemnation of the Nazi regime and, above all, to propose a permanent solution for the peace in Europe.

On December 24, 1941, in homage to the forty years of the letter *Rerum novarum* of Pope Leo XIII, Pius XII congratulated the faithful on Christmas in a radio message in which he could not leave aside the drama of the war: "The guiding star of the Redeemer's cradle […] teaches never to despair: it shines before the people even when on the earth, as on an ocean roaring with the storm, black clouds are piled up, loaded with ruin-and calamities" (n. 2). And he continues: "In these bitter times of war convulsions, we are afflicted by your afflictions and sore with your pains; We, who live, like you, under the very heavy weight of a scourge, that tears apart humanity for three years, in the vigil of such a great solemnity, we want to address, with the touched heart of the Father, the word to exhort you to stand firm in faith and to communicate comfort to you" (n. 3). The Christmas antiphon, reminiscent of Christ the peaceful King,

> resonates in raucous contrast with the events that rush loudly over mountains and plains with frightening din, devastating lands and houses in vast regions and throwing millions of men and their families into misfortune, into misery and death. Certainly, admirable are the many displays of indomitable value in defense of right and homeland; of serenity in the pain; of souls that live as flames of the holocaust for the triumph of truth and justice. But also, with the anguish that oppresses our soul, we think and, as in dreams, we contemplate the terrible clashes of arms and blood in the year that declines towards its sunset; the

> unfortunate fate of the wounded and prisoners; the bodily and spiritual sufferings, ravages, destruction and ruins that the air war carries with it and pours over large and populous cities, over centers and large industrial territories; the wealth of the dilapidated States; the millions of men that the enormous conflict and harsh violence are throwing into misery and hunger (n. 4).

At this time, in 1941, Pius XII tries to present a way out of the war, although he warns of the dire consequences of a solution not in accordance with the natural order:

> It would not be the first time that men who are waiting to girdle the laurel of warrior victories dreamed of giving the world a new order, opening to it paths conducive, in their opinion, to well-being, prosperity and progress. But always whenever they yielded to the temptation to impose their own construction against the judgment of reason, moderation, the justice and noble humanity, they found themselves fallen and amazed by contemplating the ruins of their failed hopes and their unsuccessful projects. Therefore, history teaches that peace treaties stipulated with spirit and conditions opposed to the moral standards, and to a genuine political prudence, never had life, if it is not petty and brief, thus uncovering and demonstrating an error of calculus, human without a doubt, but no less deleterious (n. 14).

Pending a clearer proposal, which will arrive shortly after, Pius XII already points out some principles that should be present in the peace:

> The ruins of this war are too enormous to add to it also those of a frustrated and illusory peace; for this reason, to avoid such a great misfortune, it is convenient that with sincerity of will and energy, with the purpose of a generous cooperation, collaborate for the peace not only this or that group, not only this or that people, but all the peoples, even the whole humanity. It is a universal enterprise of common good, which requires the collaboration of Christianity, for the religious and moral aspects of the new building that one wishes to build (n. 15).

The proposal is firm: “This new order that all peoples yearn to see realized after the trials and ruins of this war, must rise up on the indestructible and immutable rock of the moral law, manifested by the Creator himself through the natural order and sculpted by Him in the hearts of the men with indelible characters” (n. 17). And he continues: the moral law, whose observance must be instilled and promoted by the public opinion of all nations and all States with such unanimity of voice and strength, that no one can dare to doubt it or weaken its obligatory force” (n. 17).

In the following articles, Pius XII developed five principles that he considered fundamental to the reconstruction of the world order, destroyed by the war, according to the natural structure, established by God, "essential preconditions of an international order that, assuring to all peoples a just and lasting peace, be fruitful in well-being and prosperity" (n. 18). These five principles are: freedom, integrity and security of the nations, large or small, regardless of their extension or defensive capacity (n. 19); freedom for the cultural and linguistic expression of the national minorities (n. 20); common access to the planet's natural resources (n. 21); limitation of the arms race, beyond the legitimate defense of the national limits, progressive and adequate reduction of offensive weapons and construction of a true mutual trust between States with the emergence of international institutions dedicated to ensure sincere compliance with the treaties (n. 22); and religious freedom (n. 23).

The reality is that the horse of violence did not step back. World War II continued devouring men and women, territories and borders; and all the efforts seemed too few to limit its effects. Pius XII addressed several messages in the long years of war to comfort the suffering people and, above all, to propose a just and definitive solution. If in 1941, he tried to establish some principles for international relations, in 1942 *Christmas Radio Message* he wanted to go further and indicated some norms for the internal order of States and peoples.

This double proposal was based on the following precondition set out by the Pope:

> The international relations and internal order are closely linked, because the balance and harmony between the nations depend on the internal balance and inner maturity of each one of the States in the material, social and intellectual field. Neither is it possible to realize a solid and undisturbed front of peace outside without a front of peace inside that inspires confidence. Therefore, only the aspiration for an integral peace in the two fields will be able to free people from the cruel threat of war, gradually diminish or overcome the material and psychological causes of new imbalances and convulsions (n. 4).

In article 34, the Pope Pius XII presented the five "military stones, sculpted with a chisel made of bronze", the five fundamental instruments to build peace: dignity and rights of the human person, that he specified as follows:

> The right to maintain and develop the bodily, intellectual and moral life, and particularly the right to a religious formation and education; the right to private

> and public cult of God, including religious charitable action; the right […] to marriage and achievement of its own purpose, the right to marital and domestic society; the right to work as an indispensable means for the maintenance of family life; the right to free choice of state; therefore, also of the priestly and religious state; the right to an use of the material goods aware of their duties and social limitations.

And he continues: defense of the social unity and, in particular, of the family; the dignity and prerogatives of work; the reintegration of the legal system; and the conception of the State according to Christian principles, not as a theocracy, alien to the thought of the Church, but as a State at the service of the society and of the person. That is why the Pope launches a harsh attack on the war:

> This world war and everything related to it, whether remote or immediate, and its proceedings and material, legal and moral effects, what else does it represent but the collapse, unexpected perhaps for the carefree, but foreseen and feared by those who with their eyes penetrated to the bottom of a social order that, under the deceptive face or the mask of conventional formulas, hid their fatal weakness and their unbridled instinct of gain and power? (n. 37).

The construction of peace, the Pope concludes, will require the union of all the peoples, the union of weapons, it could be said, and the creation of a world political authority that, as we know, will made concrete, above all, in the texts of his successors: John XXIII (*Pacem in terris*, year 1963, n. 136-141); Benedict XVI (*Caritas in veritate*, year 2009, n. 67) and Francisco (*Laudato si', 2015,* n. 175*).* John XXIII expressly recalled n. 19 of the 1941 *Radio Message* (*Pacem in terris,* n. 124). Pope Roncalli, in 1963, added: "The meaning of this principle is that no nation has the right to unfairly oppress others or to unduly intervene in its affairs. On the contrary, it is essential that all provide help to the others, so that the latter acquire an increasing awareness of their own duties, undertake new and useful companies and act as protagonists of their own development in all sectors" (n. 120).

There was still a step further: the reception by the leaders of the nations of this peace proposal for Europe and, by extension, for all the nations of the Earth. There was probably a bridge that facilitated the understanding of the Social Doctrine of the Church among the national leaders in Europe. The Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain (1882-1973), of Protestant origin, married to a Jewish woman of Russian origin, synthesized in his work some of the

best intuitions of contemporary Catholic thought, in accordance with his reading of Saint Thomas Aquinas. Uncomfortable for many, especially because of his condemnation of European regimes, including communism, the Vichy government, Nazi national socialism, and the positions of Franco and Queipo de Llano in Spain, he was, however, one of those who best translated the work of Leo XIII, Pius XI and Pius XII on the common good and peace. For Maritain, democracy, in a contemporary sense, the unity and freedom of the nations, should be the translation to the political regime, of the law of Christian charity.

The European leaders Robert Schuman (1883-1963), Konrad Adenauer (1876-1967) and Alcide de Gasperi (1881-1954), along with Jean Monnet (1888-1979), all of them Catholics, put this thought into practice in building peace. The European Union, after seventy years, despite its difficulties, is the best realization of the thought of Pius XII and his predecessors, Leo XIII and Pius XI, with whom, as we have said, Cardinal Pacelli collaborated closely.

4. The solution to a new violence. The theorem of Abraham

We reach the end of our essay in which we seek a solution to the non-structural rupture between the three great monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Twentieth century war found a solution in the words of Pius XI, Pius XII and his successors in Peter's chair. In the 21st century, there is a new form of violence in our small world which seeks to destroy the path travelled.

The recovery of the sense of the transcendent, revealed by current sociological analysis, although good in itself, may have led, as an unwanted consequence, to the entrenchment of the positions and the growth of religious fundamentalism. This radicalization is recognized not only in the Muslim world, which would seem evident after the attacks in Europe and the United States; but is discovered also, to a certain degree, in the different Christian confessions and Judaism, both Israelite and the diaspora. This fundamentalist radicalization demands a new reflection, forces us to deepen the analysis of rupture and, above all, to find new solutions. As far as this essay is concerned, leaving for others the analysis of the rupture, we want to present, in conclusion, a solution: to return to the origin of the unity, to Abraham's theorem: that peace is possible.

The answer does not seek to obscure the complexity of the starting position, that is of the rupture. More complete analysis of contemporary social reality and the new racial segregation would be necessary; of the migratory

movements, which cause the rise of xenophobia; of the economic structure of nations and relocation of power centers, which leads the population to fear for their professional future; of the limits of the legitimate defense of territories and the escalation of violence at national borders; of the threat of nuclear war.

Certainly, it is not possible, nor desirable, to blur diverse and legitimate theological interpretations. Dialogue demands well-defined, contrasted theological positions sustained by each tradition: Masorti, Haredi, Hasidic, Mitnagdim or Sephardic; Catholic, Evangelical, Anglican or Orthodox; Shiite, Sufi, Kharijite or Sunni. It is not about underestimating the differences, but of seeing them as a richness in the confession of the God of Abraham, father in the faith of all these believers.

It would be irrational if, in the dialogue, so as not to hurt the sensitivities of interlocutors, there was a renunciation of one's expression of faith. *Mutatis mutandis*, it would be like giving up eating so as not to offend those who, whether by tradition or personal choice, have different food tastes. The body would die. Similarly, if the soul did not feed, it would die. But this diverse and legitimate interpretation of the revelation of God, the Almighty, the Merciful, cannot become a cause of violence and, on occasion, to force the brother to embrace an interpretation of the revelation that unlocks his conscience.

Abraham's theorem has two fundamental starting hypotheses: the active construction of peace and renunciation of the son's death. That is, to achieve peace, you have to build peace.

The Judeo-Christian bible (Gen 14,7-20) gathers the first part of this theorem at the end of an act of the war against the enemies of Abraham, still with his primitive name: Abram, with the meaning of an excellent father, a powerful father. The text says:

> After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). Then Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought out bread and wine. He was priest of the God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying: "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth. And praise be to God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hand". Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

In the ancient Torah tradition, God's blessing could be based on a long life and the death of his enemies. However, Melchizedek, king of Salem, who many have identified with Jerusalem, the city of the peace, blessed

Abraham for being faithful to the Creator; and he delivered him the tenth of his spoils, that is, he handed him the means to build the peace. Abraham wanted Melchizedek, priest of God Most High, to exercise his ministry in the construction of the peace. Today it would not be difficult to interpret this passage in terms of active policies in favor of-peace, social promotion and justice among the nations. Peace is actively built recognizing my leading role and limiting the causes of-war: inequality, injustice and envy, among others.

A little further on, the Torah narrates the strange request that God makes to Abraham, whose name he had already changed to the father of multitudes: "Deliver me your son". Genesis says (22,1-8):

> After these events, God tested Abraham. God said: "Take your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the region of Moriah and sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you". Abraham got up early, loaded his donkey and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac; when he had cut wood for the burnt offering and he set out for the place God had told him about.

The text continues: "On the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place from afar. Then Abraham said to his young men, "Stay here with the donkey; I and the boy will go over there and worship and come again to you." Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son, and he took in his hand the fire and the knife. So, they went both of them together. And Isaac said to his father Abraham, "My father!" And he said, "Here I am, my son." He said, "Behold, the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son." So, "they went both of them together."

It is true that the tradition of the Koran includes a different version, where the protagonist of the story, along with Ibrahim, is his son Ishmael (Surah 37, verses 102-111). But, the meaning is the same: it is God's request for the son's sacrifice and, above all, the son's rescue. It is not necessary, God tells him, to deliver your son to be faithful to my word. God has destroyed the old sacrifices. Death and violence are no longer necessary to placate God. Today even the expiatory sacrifices are not celebrated in the Temple of Jerusalem, after the destruction of the year 70; and neither are those offerings for which the firstborn son was rescued.

Significantly, although the Koran does not include the substitution for the lamb, in the transposition of ideas that took place in Antiquity, Muslims maintain the *Eid al-Adha*, the Festival of the Lamb, on the tenth day of the month of

Zil-Hajj, the seventy days of *Eid al-Firt*, to remember that God did not claim Ishmael's life. He did not want the son delivered to show him faithfulness. God does not want the death of the son. Neither does he want the death of the enemy. This is the Abraham's theorem.

We know how the story ends (Gen 22,9-14):

> When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." The angel ordered him, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind him was a ram, caught in a thicket by his horns. And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering instead of his son. So, Abraham called the name of that place, "The Lord will provide"; as it is said to this day, "On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided."

In Jerusalem, on the Mount Moriah, God continues to say to his children: do not lay the hand against the boy. Your son doesn't have to die to prove that you love me.

5. Conclusion. Back to Jerusalem

If Jerusalem is the city of peace, there must also be the peace. It is the key of the peace. Abraham is the father of Ishmael and Isaac, of Muslims, Jews and Christians. These three religions represent almost half of the world's population. In any case, they represent the majority of-believers. From them, from the children of Abraham, from whom he gave his goods so that peace could be built, from whom he received the rescued son, comes the proposal of peace for humanity. Today, the children should not miss their origin, the reason for being, in their father Abraham, the father of peace. This solution is to be found in Jerusalem, where God did not want Abraham to offer his son in sacrifice. Where Melchizedek, king of Salem, maintains, forever, the cause of peace.

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2
THE CULTURE OF ENCOUNTER DIPLOMACY: A NEW DIPLOMATIC PERSPECTIVE FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Mario Torres Jarrín

1. Introduction

Fabio Petito & Scott M. Thomas in their article "Encounter, dialogue, and knowledge: Italy as a special case of religious engagement in foreign policy" write that since the nineties, the study of religions has begun to be included in the foreign policy and diplomatic training of several states, including the United States, France, Italy and the United Kingdom, as well as the European Union. This group of states consider it necessary to know the different religions existing in the world to be able to understand better countries' culture and traditions. The knowledge of the other can obviously help solve most current conflicts: armed, political, social, environmental, etc.

Many times, the solution of a conflict has been sought without considering the culture and traditions of the people involved. On other occasions, attempts have been made to impose a completely different way of seeing and facing life both personally and socially on populations that have another culture, traditions or religion.

Pope Francis' concept "Culture of Encounter" is both a theoretical and practical concept, a means to seek mutual understanding between peoples in order to achieve peace in our societies and in the world, a proposal based on the need to know each other better, to look for and appreciate the existing values in every culture, and to identify the common points which can be shared

as a set of universal values and principles. The best possible instrument for getting to know other cultures is dialogue. The interfaith dialogue intensively promoted by the Catholic Church, as well as by some other religions, is a good meeting point for various cultures.

This chapter will consider two processes of interreligious dialogue: the Jewish-Catholic and the Muslim-Catholic as case studies and will seek to answer the following questions: What is the culture of encounter? How can the culture of encounter be a solution to armed conflicts and promote peace? How can the culture of encounter be a new diplomatic perspective for the 21st century?

The conclusion of the answers to these questions is that the experiences developed in the encounters between Catholics, Jews and Muslims have helped shape the content of the culture of encounter. These three religions have three elements in common: first, the three religions believe in only one God; second, the believers of these religions have a common history, since the three come from a common father, Abraham, the "father of all nations"; third, the three religions defend and promote peace among all the peoples on earth.

Interreligious dialogues can serve as a basis to create, develop and promote a new way of conceiving international relations, through the culture of encounter. If we consider that several world powers are incorporating consideration of the religious component into their international relations; and if we also consider the culture of encounter as a valid experience for peace promotion, then we can conclude that the culture of encounter can be a new way of conceiving international relations, and whose application can contribute to solve conflicts and achieve peace. The experience of the culture of encounter can contribute to a new dimension of the 21st century diplomacy which we can call: "The Culture of Encounter Diplomacy".

2. Religion and diplomacy

In the modern history of international relations, the idea has prevailed that religion is not a public matter. Relegated to the sphere of individual conscience, religion has been expelled from the political and social sphere, as the principle of separation between church and state, on the one hand, and ideas of secularism and non-denominationality, on the other, developed and extended.

Petito & Thomas in their above-mentioned article indicate that this tendency has started to be reversed, that is, religion is once again part of foreign policy. Diplomats and experts in international relations have concluded that in order to understand a political or international situation it is necessary to know the cultural, traditional, religious and customary elements prevalent or present in it. Both authors point out that religions not only have played an important role in the development of societies, but they still do, and studying and understanding them can contribute to creating more lasting bonds over time favoring stability and peace.

As these authors also point out, *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft* (Johnson and Sampson, 1994) was the first of the books that address the need to study the relationship between religion and foreign policy. For Johnson and Sampson, international conflicts are increasingly based on racial, ethnic, national and religious confrontations which conventional diplomacy has failed to solve. Since then a trend has developed involving more countries. The first was the United States. In 2006, the former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright argued: "When I was Secretary of State, I had an entire bureau of economic experts I could turn to, and a cadre of experts on nonproliferation and arms control… I did not have similar expertise available for integrating religious principles into our efforts at diplomacy. Given nature of today`s world, knowledge of this type is essential" (Albright, 2006; Petito & Thomas, 2015).

The authors say also that, in 2008, the Chicago Council on Global Affairs created the Task Force on Religion and the Making of US Foreign Policy, co-chaired by Scott Appleby and Richard Cizik, which published in 2010 an influential policy report titled "Engaging Religious Communities Abroad: A New Imperative for U.S. Foreign Policy". Some years later, between 2011-2013, the US State Department created an internal Religion and Foreign Policy Working Group and its reports created in 2013 the Office of Faith-Based Community Initiatives, whose mission is to implement a new "U.S. Strategy on Religious leader and Faith Community Engagement". In 2015, the State Department renamed the Office as the Office of Religion and Global Affairs (Petito & Thomas, 2015, 41).

This new US policy has emphasized the need to understand the political role of religion in international affairs, and highlights the fact, already mentioned, that other countries, like the UK, Italy and France are following suit. Even the European Union has begun to develop its own approach to religion

and international relations, using intercultural dialogue as an instrument (Annicchino, 2014). On the other hand, it is worth noting that the European Union treaties include the promotion of dialogue between the European Union and the different religions that inhabit the Union space. Article 17 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union says:

> The Union respects and does not prejudice the status under national law of churches and religious associations or communities in the Member States. The Union equally respects the status under national law of philosophical and non-confessional organizations. Recognizing their identity and their specific contribution, the Union shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with these churches and organizations (Art 17 TFEU).

Within the European Commission presided by Jean-Claude Juncker, we can identify the following responsible for promoting dialogue with religions: Vice President of the European Commission, Frans Timmermans, whose duties include dialogue with religious leaders. The Vice President of the European Parliament, Mairead McGuinnes, in charge of dialogue with religious and non-confessional organizations. She also coordinates the works of the "Intergroup on freedom of Religion and Belief and Religious Tolerance". Finally, the Special Envoy for the promotion of freedom of religion or belief outside the European Union, Ján Figel.

3. Pope Francis's proposal: The Culture of Encounter

On March 22, 2013, Pope Francis gave his first speech to the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See. Three points from this intervention should be highlighted. The first two are related to the motives why he chose the name Francis, and the third to his role as Pontiff (bridge builder):

1. Francis of Assisi's love for the poor. Pope Francis points out that there two types of poverty: material and spiritual. He seems very concerned about "the spiritual poverty of our day, which also seriously affects the countries considered the richest. It is what my predecessor, the beloved and revered Pope Benedict XVI, calls the "dictatorship of relativism".
2. Francis of Assisi says: "Strive to build peace. But there is no true peace without truth. There can be no true peace if each one is the measure of

himself, if each one can always claim only his own right, without worrying at the same time about the good of others, for all, starting with nature, that embraces every human being on this earth".

3. Pope Francis reminds us that one of his titles as bishop of Rome is "Pontiff", which means "the one who builds bridges". In this regard, he points out:

> I would particularly like the dialogue between us to help in building bridges between all men, so that each one could find in the other not an enemy, not a contender, but a brother to welcome and embrace. The role of the religion is also essential in this task. Indeed, bridges cannot be built between men forgetting God. But the opposite is also true: true relationships with God cannot be lived ignoring¬others. That is why it is important to intensify the dialogue between different religions (Francis, 2013a).

Given that his speech was addressed to diplomats, we can deduce that Pope Francis's intention was that these representatives of states should listen to his message and try to put it into practice when dealing with foreign policy, establishing as part of their priorities: fighting against poverty (material and spiritual), promoting interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding.

A few days prior to this meeting with diplomats, on March 20, 2013, Pope Francis had an encounter with representatives of churches, ecclesiastic communities and various religions, where he underlined the Jewish-Catholic and Muslim-Catholic interfaith dialogues. In relationship with the first, he said:

> And now my words are addressed to you, distinguished representatives of the Jewish people, to that very special spiritual bond which unites us, because, as the Second Vatican Council says, "the Church of Christ recognizes that, according to the saving mystery of God, the beginnings of their faith and choice are already found in the patriarchs, in Moses and in the prophets" (*Nostra aetate* 4). I appreciate your presence and I am confident that, with the help of the Most High, we can continue with benefit this fraternal dialogue that the Council wanted, and that has actually been carried out, giving not a few fruits, especially over the last decades.

And then he turned to the representatives of other faiths, and in first place to the Muslims:

> I also greet and cordially thank all of you, dear friends, belonging to other religious traditions; in the first place, Muslims, who worship the only, living and

> merciful God, and invoke him in prayer, and to all of you. I greatly appreciate your presence: in it I see a tangible sign of the will to increase mutual respect and cooperation for the common good of humanity. The Catholic Church is aware of the importance of promoting friendship and respect between men and women of different religious traditions, I want to repeat it: the promotion of friendship and respect between men and women of various religious traditions, this is also witnessed by the valuable work that the Pontifical Council for the Interreligious Dialogue develops (Francis, 2013a).

It is not surprising that the Pope privileges dialogue with Jews and Muslims, since they have a common origin: "Abraham, our father in the faith" (*Lumen fidei* 8).

In the encyclical letter, *Lumen fidei*, Francis reminds us:

> In "modernity" attempts have been made to build universal fraternity among men based on equality. Little by little, however, we have come to understand that this fraternity, without reference to a common Father as the ultimate foundation, cannot survive. It is necessary to return to the true root of fraternity. From its very origin, the history of faith is a history of fraternity, although not without conflicts. God calls Abraham to leave his land and promises to make from him a single great nation, a great people, upon which the blessing of God descends (cf. Gen 12,1-3) (*Lumen fidei* 54).

In order to understand the concept of "culture of encounter", we should consider these terms and analyze their meanings separately: *Culture* can be defined by the ensemble of material and immaterial elements, including values and rules, beliefs and customs that shape the way of life of a social group. *Encounter* means the action of two or more people meeting of their own free will with a specific purpose, which implies to talk or to do something together and the beginning of a new relationship.

When Pope Francis talks about creating, developing and sharing a culture of encounter, he is talking about translating to the public sphere a common human action, trying to conceive a new form of international relations built from this human perspective, which consists in listening, knowing and understanding the other who may think differently, who has a different vision of life, but who shares the same hope of being respected. Unlike traditional international relations mainly developed from a perspective of national interests, whether military, political or economic, Pope Francis proposes a new more generous and ethical diplomatic approach: the encounter.

This proposal represents the continuation of an endeavor that Pope Francis began as a young Jesuit in Argentina, whose pastoral work taught him that the first –and perhaps also the best– way to help others is to listen and try to understand the life and needs of the people. The social work that he began as a priest, soon incorporated the interfaith dialogue with Jews and Muslims, an experience that little by little was extrapolated in his field of action, firstly, when he was appointed bishop and then archbishop of Buenos Aires, subsequently cardinal and now Pope of the Catholic Church.

Francis presents us with cultural and social change based on the encounter among cultures. The interreligious dialogue is a perfect mechanism to create this new culture. Better knowledge, understanding and cooperation of and among religions, and their subsequent and beneficial relationship, can only have a positive impact on international relations, first by preventing, then by helping resolve the main global problems, conflicts and challenges of our time, not only those originating in interreligious misunderstanding and confrontation, but also those originating in poverty, climate change and other causes.

4. The Culture of the Encounter between Jews and Catholics

The declaration *Nostra aetate* is a document of the Vatican Council II on the Catholic Church's relations with the non-Christian religions, including Judaism.

The first steps of the Jewish-Catholic dialogue were initiated under the pontificate of Pope Paul VI, on October 22, 1974. He created the Commission for Religious Relations with Jews, attached to the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the Unity of Christians. The objective of this Commission is linked to the promotion of the Jewish-Catholic dialogue. In 1974 the Commission published the first official document entitled: *Guidelines and suggestions for the application of the conciliar declaration Nostra aetate n. 4*. The document says that: "On a practical level, in particular, Christians should strive to gain a better understanding of the basic components of the religious tradition of Judaism; they must strive to learn by what essential traits the Jews define themselves in the light of their own religious experience" (Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, 1974). Similarly, the document also recalls that the roots of the Christian liturgy and Old Testament teachings in their womb are Jewish. This fact can be a meeting point between both cultures, an

approach that can help develop joint actions in the areas of teaching, education and social action.

On June 24, 1985, the Holy See Commission published a second document entitled: *Notes for a proper presentation of Jews and Judaism in preaching and catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church*.

On March 16, 1998, the Commission publishes a third document entitled: *We remember: a reflection on the* Shoah. This text addresses the 2000 years of relationship between Jews and Christians, the document concludes by saying that relations between both religions have been difficult. It memorizes the attitude of Christians towards the anti-Semitism of National Socialism and underlines the Christian duty to remember the *Shoah* as a human catastrophe. Pope John Paul II expressed his hope that this document *Truly contributes to healing the wounds of the misunderstandings and injustices of the past* (John Paul II, 1998).

Among the documents issued by the Commission, is worth mentioning the one published by the Pontifical Biblical Commission, on May 24, 2001: *Jewish People and their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*. The document considers the Holy Scriptures of the Jewish People as the "fundamental component of the Christian Bible" and illustrates the manner in which to present the Jews in the New Testament.

John Paul II continued the work of his predecessors promoting the Jewish-Catholic dialogue and sought a greater rapprochement with the Jewish people through concrete actions. For example, he was the first Pope who visited the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, prayed for the victims of the *Shoah* and went to the Roman synagogue to express his solidarity with the Jewish community. In 2000, he made a trip to Israel where he participated in interfaith encounters, met with the two chief rabbis and prayed before the Wailing Wall (or, as the Jewish texts say, Western Wall of the Temple). During his visit, he urged the promotion of dialogue between the three religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam:

> I pray that my visit will contribute to increasing the dialogue that will lead Christians, Hebrews and Muslims to individualize in their respective beliefs and in the universal brotherhood that unite all the members of the human family, the motivation and perseverance to act in favor of that peace and justice, that the peoples of the Holy Land do not yet possess and yearn for so deeply (*La Nación*, 2000).

On his behalf, the Israeli president, Ezer Weizman, highlighted the visit of the Pope saying: "We appreciate your role in the condemnation of anti-Semitism as a sin against Heaven and Humanity, and your asking for forgiveness for the actions against the Jewish people perpetrated in the past by the Church (referring to the Catholic Church)" (*La Nación*, 2000).

Pope Benedict XVI was another great promoter of Jewish-Catholic dialogue before becoming Pope. As a university professor he devoted part of his studies to interreligious and cultural dialogue as the basis for the promotion world peace. Judaism should not be considered simply as another religion; the Jews are rather our "older brothers" (John Paul II), our "fathers in the faith" (Benedict XVI). Jesus was a Jew, who felt at home following the Jewish tradition of his time, significantly formed in that religious environment (*Ecclesia in Medio Oriente* 20).

In Benedict XVI's mind an important goal of the Jewish-Christian dialogue was the joint commitment at global level in favor of justice, peace, preservation of the creation and reconciliation. It is possible that in the past –in a context of reductive search for truth and consequent intolerance– religious differences could have contributed to generate conflict. But today religions have to be envisaged mainly as part of the solution. When religions are committed to a mutually beneficial dialogue, they contribute to world concordance and peace can also reach social and political levels (Jewish People and their Holy Scriptures in the Christian Bible).

Francis has continued the work of his predecessors, promoting interfaith dialogue. As earlier indicated, Francis had already started his own pastoral work in these areas, when he was priest, bishop and archbishop in Argentina. Father Jorge Mario Bergoglio dedicated himself to fostering the Jewish-Catholic and Muslim-Catholic dialogue.

It is interesting to note that there are several types of communities within Judaism, and since the Catholic Church cannot maintain bilateral dialogue with each of those Jewish communities, groups and organizations, it was decided that the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultation (IJCIC) would develop the dialogue with the Catholic Church. The IJCIC acts therefore as the official Jewish interlocutor with the Commission of the Holy See for Religious Relations with Jews. The IJCIC began its work in 1970, and in 1971 organized its first joint conference in Paris. Since then, the meetings have been held frequently.

Along with the dialogue with the IJCIC, there is also a dialogue with the Great Rabbinate of Israel, a resulted of the encounter of John Paul II with the two Chief Rabbis of Jerusalem, during his visit to Israel in March 2000. The first meeting was organized in Jerusalem in June 2002. Since then meetings have been held annually, taking place alternately in Rome and Jerusalem. Issues like the sanctity of life, the situation of the family, the importance of the Holy Scriptures for social life, religious freedom, the ethical foundations of human behavior, ecological challenges, the relationship between secular and religious authorities and the essential qualities of religious leadership in secular societies have been part of the topics included in the Jewish-Catholic dialogue, oriented to develop relations based on this dialogue for the promotion of peace, understanding and mutual respect. After each encounter a joint declaration is produced in which the points of agreement between the parties are made public.

The last encounter between Jews and Christians was held in Rome during November 18 to 20, 2018. The sixteenth meeting of the bilateral Commission of the delegations of the Grand Rabbinate of Israel and the Commission of the Holy See for the Religious Relations with Judaism, was focused on: *The dignity of the human being. Teachings of Judaism and Catholicism about children.*

Extending the culture of encounter to the broad social bases of both communities, Christian and Jewish, beyond the actors of the dialogue is one of the great challenges in the relations between both religions. The dialogue between the religious leaders is important, but "the knowledge of the other" must expand to the whole community of both religions.

The encyclical letter of Pope Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*, states that:

> While some Christian convictions are unacceptable to Judaism, and the Church cannot fail to announce Jesus as Lord and Messiah, a rich complement exists that allows us to read together the texts of the Hebrew Bible and help each other to unravel the riches of the Word, as well as to share many ethical convictions and a common concern for the justice and development of the peoples (*Evangelii gaudium* 249).

5. The Culture of Encounter between Muslims and Catholics

In 1964 Paul VI created the Secretariat for non-Christians. This would be the precursor institution of the current Pontifical Council for Interreligious

Dialogue. The relations between Catholics and Muslims are the responsibility of the Commission for Religious Relations with Muslims, which is part of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, created by John Paul II, in 1988, through the apostolic constitution *Pastor bonus*.

The Council has created the Foundation Nostra aetate-Scholarships in order to help scholars of other religions who wish to deepen their knowledge of Christianity for teaching, publishing or other activities related to the interfaith dialogue.

Since the creation of the Commission to date there have been held frequent meetings. The last official encounter between Muslims and Catholics took place in Abu Dhabi, on February 4, 2019, whose result was the joint declaration entitled: *A document on the Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, signed by Pope Francis and The Grand Iman of Al-Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayyeb. This document says:

> We, Muslims and Christians, are called to open up to others, knowing them and recognizing them as brothers and sisters. In this way, we can tear down the walls raised by fear and ignorance and try to build together the bridges of friendship that are fundamental to the good of the whole of humanity. We cultivate in our families and in our political, civil and religious institutions, a new way of life, in which violence is rejected, and the human person is respected (*A document on the Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, 2019).

2019 is a fairly significant year in the history of the Catholic-Muslim relations, as Pope Francis highlighted in his apostolic trip to the United Arab Emirates on 3-5 February 2019. He recalled that this year celebrated the Eighth centenary of the encounter between Saint Francis of Assisi and Sultan al-Malik al-Kāmil: "I have accepted the occasion to come here as a believer thirsty for peace, as a brother who seeks peace with brothers. Wanting peace, promoting peace, being instruments of peace: we are here for this" (Francis, 2019a).

During his visit to the United Arab Emirates, Pope Francis met with Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktum, with Dr. Ahmad Al-Tayyib, Great Imam of Al-Azhar, and with the Council of Elders in the Great Mosque of Sheikh Zayed. The visit ended with the signing of the Abu Dhabi Declaration on human fraternity. Francis highlights the following points of his visit to Abu Dhabi:

> The point of departure is the recognition that God is at the origin of one human family. He who is the Creator of all things and of all persons wants us to live as brothers and sisters, dwelling in the common home of creation which he has given us. Fraternity is established here at the roots of our common humanity, as "a vocation contained in God's plan of creation". This tells us that all persons have equal dignity and that no one can be a master or slave of others.
>
> The enemy of fraternity is an individualism which translates into the desire to affirm oneself and one's own group above others.
>
> As for the future of interreligious dialogue, the first thing we have to do is pray, and pray for one another: we are brothers and sisters! Without the Lord, nothing is possible; with him, everything becomes so! May our prayer –each one according to his or her own tradition – adhere fully to the will of God, who wants all men and women to recognize they are brothers and sisters and live as such, forming the great human family in the harmony of diversity (Francis, 2019a).

To all this, we should add the emphasis placed on the importance of education and justice:

> Education –in Latin means "extracting, drawing out"– is to bring to light the precious resources of the soul. […] Education also happens in a relationship, in reciprocity. Alongside the famous ancient maxim "know yourself", we must uphold "know your brother or sister": their history, their culture and their faith, because there is no genuine self-knowledge without the other.
>
> Investing in culture encourages a decrease of hatred and a growth of civility and prosperity.
>
> Justice is the second wing of peace, which often is not compromised by single episodes, but is slowly eaten away by the cancer of injustice.
>
> Peace and justice are inseparable! The prophet Isaiah says: "And the effect of righteousness will be peace" (32,17). Peace dies when it is divorced from justice, but justice is false if it is not universal. A justice addressed only to family members, compatriots, believers of the same faith is a limping justice; it is a disguised injustice!
>
> The world's religions also have the task of reminding us that greed for profit renders the heart lifeless and that the laws of the current market, demanding everything immediately, do not benefit encounter, dialogue, family – essential dimensions of life that need time and patience (Francis, 2019a).

Francis concludes his intervention by saying that the Abu Dhabi Joint Declaration is a document that "is born of faith in God who is Father of all and Father of peace, and condemns all destruction, all terrorism, since the first

terrorism of history, that of Cain" (Francis, 2019a). The Pope also spoke of the importance of developing within diplomacy; the search for the "closeness to each other in order to launch possibilities for dialogue. This is done in diplomacy (he affirmed). Because peace is a work of wisdom and fidelity, human fidelity, among the peoples" (Francis, 2019b).

6. Conclusions

Religion has always been a factor of identity, since it has played a determining role in creating cultural values and in shaping a specific way of seeing life and facing it. But the identity based on religion has a specific dimension.

Although in its identitarian aspect religion is an element of distinction and differentiation, the aspect of faith provides also a factor of union, not only with those sharing the same religion, but also with those whose identity is based on another faith and different beliefs. The three religions aspire to the knowledge of God and the union of all human beings with their Creator. This common aspiration generates –or should generate– a certain communion with every human being, as created after God's image and called to union with Him. This sentiment, on the base of religion, makes "the other" not a stranger, but a brother, since we are all part of the human family, God's family: the whole mankind. However religion is not the only factor of identity, there are others like nations and states. The relationships among religions, nations and states are complex.

The first civilizations were created and developed on the pillar of a religion, but our current global societies have been built and are sustained on the base of different faiths. This has generated numberless conflicts. These days we frequently use Huntington's terminology; of the clash of civilizations. Many wars have been declared in the name of religion. This is a great paradox, since all religions, according to their essence, values and principles, advocate peace.

In this regard, it would be convenient to make a brief reflection on the values we have used to build our current societies, and the concepts on which we have laid the foundations of our coexistence as members of a cultural and political entity: the *Nation State*.

The signing of the peace treaties of Osnabrück and Münster, called "Peace of Westphalia" (1646-1648), convened the first diplomatic congress

in modern history. This encounter established a new order, firstly at European level, then worldwide. There is a broad consensus recognizing Westfalia as the birth of the so called *Nation-State.* The Nation is described as a group of people supposed to have the same origin and the same traditional culture (including religion). The State is defined as a sovereign country that is recognized by the international order as a political entity established in a territory and endowed with its own governing bodies.

From an etymological perspective, we can see some difficulties. If a *Nation-State* has to be a sovereign country that brings together people from the same ethnic origin, with the same common language, and the same religion, then we can easily conclude that there are very few Nation States in the world.

In the current international community of states, many of them do not have the same ethnic origin or the same religion. Neither can we affirm that they share a common language and even less the same culture. Modern societies tend more and more to be multicultural, multiracial and multilingual.

In geographical terms, all countries have modified their territory and borders –and some, many times– over the centuries.

The conclusion is clear: although States are still major players on the chessboard of war and peace, there is a wider scenario whose actors are cultures and civilizations.

The constitution of UNESCO includes the following paragraph:

> That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed; […] That ignorance of each other's ways and lives has been a common cause, throughout the history of mankind, of that suspicion and mistrust between the peoples of the world through which their differences have all too often broken into war.

In other words, the attainment of peace cannot be limited to the borders of states, just because these have often caused wars, nor to the decoy of the nation, just because, as Rousseau says, wars are not made by man on man, but by national on nations. We must now add war made by members of one religion against members of another, as well as the "Clash of Civilizations" (Huntington, 1996).

Peace has been traditionally conditioned by states, nations, civilizations and religions, but cannot be limited to them. Peace needs to transcend them to flourish in the field of the human condition itself. Only in peace can human beings meet and recognize each other as brothers. Only in peace can peoples

be respected as friends and equals. Only with peace on earth can human beings enjoy and care for nature and, through the love of nature, admire and feel the entire universe and God.

If war is born in the mind of men, so is peace. If mutual misunderstanding between people, distrust and suspicion among nations and disagreements between political leaders lead to war, mutual understanding between peoples, building trust and confidence among nations and favoring accords between responsible political and religious leaders must necessarily lead to peace. But, to achieve this goal, the concept of encounter, particularly the encounter of cultures and religions to build stronger confidence and to create human harmony, is essential.

The goal is to create a world where all human beings can not only live together, but live together peacefully, where everyone is ready to understand and accept one another not only to tolerate each other. Tolerating means accepting without expressed approval, as someone not fully accepted. We should not have religious tolerance only. What we should seek is to create a culture of encounter, a natural human empathy, which allows us to know and understand the world we live in and the people we live with in order to make everything better together.

Dialogue is indispensable. But for this, we must build a new language, based on the universal principles set forth by the different religions, which have as one of their supreme values the promotion of human understanding. God is in the name of all religions, since all religions express the only name of God, and His name –never pronounced in vain–, should guide our words and our language: a language of moderation and respect in order to help get the fruits of the dialogue in the encounter.

Peace is born in the mind of the men, but grows and develops in their words and in their deeds. We need words, language, dialogue of peace, in peace and for peace. But we also need action.

First of all, we need every action to be understood as a personal commitment to the values of our own conscience, according to the religious and moral beliefs of each one, but always based on moderation, as an ethical expression of respect for the other and sincerely oriented to a mutual understanding. This personal commitment is of particular importance in the case of religious, social, cultural, political and diplomatic leaders. It is of extreme importance that they add a strong and deep sense of responsibility to their high capacity of influence both with their words and their deeds.

But, peace, as a universal value, has to be globalized in the same way the world is. In fact, as essential components of every civilization, the concepts of religion and peace transcend the framework of states and nations and demand their world dimension.

But also, religious intolerance is global and is spreading everywhere. Some of the greatest world threats are falsely involved in religious claims. And this happens beyond the frontiers of any state and beyond the limits of any nation. Therefore, an international platform for dialogue and encounter, as global as possible, is needed.

It is important to remember that of the 7,408 million inhabitants in the world, it is estimated that by 2020 there will be: 31.1% Christians, 24.9% Muslims, 1% Jews (together they represent 57% of the world population), 14.6% identify as not affiliated with any religion (they are not necessarily atheists, they simply do not identify with any religion), 15.2% Hindu, 6.6% Buddhist, 5.6% popular religions, and 1% other religions (Pew Research Report on the Global Religious Landscape, 2019). According to the Pontifical Yearbook published in 2019, of the 7,408 million people worldwide, 1,313 million are Catholics. On the other hand, other sources estimate that 1,800 million people are Muslim, and 14, 6 million people are Jewish.

These numbers reveal that the vast majority of the world's population professes a religion and that religion plays an important role in world societies. But religions have not always been sources of war. They have also been sources of human development. As the Pope John XXIII said in his Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris*: "It is about making grow a culture of peace founded on the four pillars of truth, justice, love and freedom". This culture of building peace can be implemented through the "Culture of Encounter Diplomacy".

The welcome initiative by countries like the US, the UK, and France, among others, referred to above, to introduce the religious factor into the analysis and design of foreign policy constitutes a realistic and important step forward, but it not sufficient, it also has to be global.

But where to look to? The United Nations are plunged into a long, insoluble, anachronistic structural crisis, with the maximum guarantor of peace worldwide, the Security Council, ideologically divided and politically and economically challenged, and the General Assembly relegated to a second rank of rhetoric and irrelevance.

The Secretary General has incorporated the Alliance of Civilizations into his institutional sphere of competences as an Office, but without the more autonomous and relevant status of an Agency.

UNESCO seems to have a more obvious affinity with issues related to religions and civilizations. In fact, in 1996, the World Commission on Culture and Development published the report "Our creative diversity", which subsequently served as the basis for the signing of UNESCO's Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity in 2001. Both documents evidenced the need for understanding and cooperation among different religions and cultures.

The Vienna Center for Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue, (KAICIID) created on initiative of King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia with Austria and Spain as full members and the Vatican as an observer, was an excellent project that has achieved good results in various areas. But the very small number of Member States, and Austria's constant warnings of giving up its membership have reduced its potential as a global actor.

The Catholic Church has many institutional actions that promote the interreligious dialogue and peace. In institutional terms, the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue or initiatives as the World Days of Prayer for Peace in Assisi, and lately, the Scholas Ocurrentes Foundation, that aims to foster among young people a "Culture of Encounter".

So far, the greatest impulse and the most important initiatives in the international sphere of interreligious dialogue have been carried out by the efforts of the main religions, as we have seen. Due to their special nature, capable of shaping civilizations, religions exceed political and national boundaries and are obviously configured as supra-states and supra-nation spaces.

The Vatican, for instance, is a good example. Although it is a state and is part of the International Community of States and has its own diplomatic service, its institutional religious network, formal and informal, (communities, congregations, religious institutes, social work agencies, foundations, universities, schools, training centers…), makes it a "member of civil society" in the multiple countries where the Catholic faith is present and a "public diplomacy actor" (Golan, Arceneaux & Soule, 2018)

As a conclusion: the vast majority of the world's population professes several religions and a global platform for interreligious dialogue, where religious and political leaders can meet and pursue dialogue, is urgently needed to contribute to world's peace. If there is an international organization for education, science and culture (UNESCO), something similar should be created for

civilizations and religions (The United Nations Civilizations and Religions-UNCIREO).

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3

TOWARDS A CULTURE OF ENCOUNTER: ST. FRANCIS, POPE FRANCIS, THE FRANCISCAN TRADITION, AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Scott M. Thomas

> Theodor W. Adorno formulated the problem of faith in progress quite drastically: he said that progress, seen accurately, is progress from the sling to the atomic bomb. Now this is an aspect of progress that must not be concealed [i.e. slingshot used for war and hunting by Neolithic and Upper Paleolithic peoples].
>
> Benedict XVI (2007). *Spe Salvi: Encyclical letter on Christian Hope*, 22.[1]

> Francis of Assisi is one of the most extraordinary examples of beauty captured and reflected in a historical human figure. In St. Francis the power of beauty shines… The greatest beauty is love. And love is the perfect unity of truth, goodness, and beauty.
>
> Alberto Methol Ferré and Alver Metalli (2014). *Il Papa e il filosofo.*

Only the 'attraction,' the 'Christian attractiveness' of a Christianity lived as a visible expression of the unity of the transcendentals – the beautiful, the good, and the true – can assume the ideal of beauty, distorted by libertine hedonism, and bring it back to truth. In this testimony, Methol identified the path of

1. In fact, Benedict XVI is paraphrasing Adorno, and the actual quotation reads (in English), "No history leads from savagery to humanitarianism, but there is one that leads from the slingshot to the megaton bomb." Adorno, Theodor W. (1987) *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton. New York: Continuum Press, 320. His analysis of critical theory, and *Negative Dialectics* continues in *Spe Salvi*, 42-43, and the encyclical also develops the concept of "encounter" 15 times. See: Gad Y. (2014). "Pope Benedict XVI on Instrumental Reason and the Hidden Theology of Critical Theory". *Oxford German Studies* 43/2, 172-189.

> Christianity in the contemporary world, a way fully embraced by the sensibility and the thinking of Jorge Mario Bergoglio.[2]
>
> Massimo Borghesi (2018) *The Mind of Pope Francis: Jorge Mario Bergoglio's Intellectual Journey*.

Francis of Assisi was more intuitive than analytical, but in his transformative life story, and those of his early followers what can be identified is a holistic and integrative understanding of theology, spirituality (i.e. prayer, meditation, and contemplation), and action – including those types of events, activities, and social actions that are the foundation for the study of international relations. His story includes a variety of types of *encounter* which articulate the basic elements of a radical, counter-cultural way St. Francis performed the gospel life – encounter, conversion, knowledge, and transformation. This constitutes a specific "way of seeing the world", a holistic and integrative way of bringing together theology, spirituality, and action in the world, including the world of international relations.[3] The problem this poses for all of us who seek to live faithfully and responsibly in the world was examined by Thomas Merton, the Cistercian (Trappist) monk, with a Franciscan heart, at the dawn of the nuclear age and the Cold War.

Furthermore, this understanding can also be seen in the theology, spirituality, and pastoral practice of Jorge Mario Bergoglio in the variety of Argentine cities, villages, and communities he was based, and finally as Archbishop of Buenos Aires before he was elected as Pope Francis, since it was

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2. Methol Ferré, A. & Metalli. A. (2014). *Il Papa e il filosofo*, Siena: Cantegalli, 158-159. In Borghesi, M. *The Mind of Pope Francis: Jorge Mario Bergoglio's Intellectual Journey*, Foreword by Guzmán Carriquiry Lecour. (2018). Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press Academic, 186. Borghesi is also the author of a biography of Luigi Giussani, who founded the international Catholic movement Commune e Liberazione (CeL). Kepel, G. (1994). *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Modern World.* Oxford: Polity Press, argues CeL has been one of the most successful grassroots movements promoting, especially in Europe, "re-Christianization from below", and then, "re-Christianization from above", 61-76. I first reviewed this book in (1995). "The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Study of World Politics". *Millennium: journal of international studies* 24/2, 289-299.

3. These basic elements of a radical, counter-cultural way St. Francis performed the gospel life are set out in Thomas, S. M. (2018). "St. Francis and Islam: A Critical Appraisal for Contemporary, Muslim – Christian Relations, Middle East Politics and, International Relations". *The Downside Review* 136/1, 3-28; Thomas, S. M. (2018). "A Trajectory Toward the Periphery: Francis of Assisi, Louis Massignon, Pope Francis, and Muslim – Christian Relations". *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 16/1, 16-36; Thomas, S. M. (2019). "The Encounter Between Francis of Assisi and al-Malik al-Kāmil and its Relevance for Muslim-Christian Relations and Contemporary International Relations". *The Muslim World* 109/1&2, 144-168.

in Argentina where "the culture of encounter", his signature concept as pope was developed. Bergoglio was nested, embedded, in a set of intersecting social traditions – his Jesuit formation, European theology and philosophy, and especially, and far less well known in the English-speaking world, the Rio de la Plata school of Catholic, Latin American, theologians, philosophers, and intellectuals who developed a specific "theology of the people" – and, its main agents, actors were God's holy faithful people in society, the state, and the Church – and, now as Pope Francis he has brought this perspective to the global Catholic Church – and, now the world, given his unprecedented popularity, even outside the Church in Europe or the West. Through his concept of the culture of encounter, he his intensified ecumenical dialogue (i.e. among Christians) and interreligious dialogue (with non-Christian religions).

1. How do we see the world, especially the world of international relations?

This section provides the necessary background for how to begin to interpret Pope Francis's concept of the culture of encounter from the perspective of the theory of international relations because the culture of encounter deals with a problem we are all faced with – how do we see the world? How do we see, explain, interpret, and engage with what is going on in events, activities, or social actions going on around us, which constitute the subject matter of the study of international relations (or from the perspective of theology how do we read the signs of the times)? Any answer to this question is *inevitably* part of a set of more basic questions – *what* is theory, specifically in the study of international relations, what is it supposed to do (explain, understand, or interpret *what* kinds of events, social actions, or activities taking place in the world?), for whom is theory *for* (what actors, or agents – states, governments, politicians, foreign policy-makers, scholars, and political commentators; or, is theory far too important to be left to them, and is theory really for *all* of us – as citizens, people of faith, people of good will, who seek to live faithfully and responsibly in a rapidly globalizing world?

Moreover, for *whom* does theory matter – the rich, the poor, those who are margins, the periphery of society, those who minister to the needs of others (in secular and religious NGOs, in religious orders), or does theory matter for those in (allegedly) peripheral countries (like Argentina, and many developing

countries)? Who *benefits* from different concepts of theory (the rich, the powerful, or the poor, and those on the margins, the periphery)? What are the *consequences* in the world of different concepts of theory, and consequences for *whom* (the great powers, all states, the rich, the poor, or all of us)? Probing questions like these help all of us to realise that theory matters, and it matters – since seeing the world differently is a way of already beginning to change it.[4]

The question about how we see the world is something that deeply concerned Thomas Merton, one of the most well-known, and influential Cistercian (Trappist) monks in the twentieth century. We know from Daniel Horan, OFM, Merton had a Franciscan heart.[5] What is so important about Merton is the way he struggled with how spirituality, spiritual insights, and the spiritual life was inevitably and necessarily related to how we see the world, and desire to live faithfully and responsibly in it. What is so striking is that this seemed for him to require – and, this is another part of the argument of this chapter, what can be called a radical "Franciscan" holistic and integrative understanding of how theology, spirituality, and action are related to how we see the world. Moreover, this holistic and integrative approach was evident in the life story of St. Francis, and it is evident in Bergoglio's, and now Pope Francis's, concept of the culture of encounter, with its implications for various global issues and different regions of the world.

Merton, – perhaps, more intuitively, than analytically, already recognized in the early days of the Cold War, what we call the events, activities, social actions, which constitute international relations, were socially constructed, and this means, – as he also recognized, all of us are socially, reflexively, and contingently a part of making the world the way it is, and why it is not in some other way. Moreover, his early insights anticipated, and were reinforced in the 1980s by the way critical theory (i.e. the Frankfurt School) and social constructivism came into the theory of international relations.

Perhaps, a surprising place to begin is with Merton's book, *The Ascent to Truth: the theology and spirituality of St. John of the Cross* (1951). This book does not seem to have stood the test of time, it has received a mixed

4. Thomas, S. M. (2005). *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the transformation of International Relations,* Foreword by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. New York: Palgrave, 250.

5. Horan, D. H. (2014). *The Franciscan Heart of Thomas Merton: A New Look at the Spiritual Inspiration of His Life, Thought, and Writing.* Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press.

reception.[6] However, the *Ascent to Truth* was written at a time scholars now call the early period of "rigid bipolarity" between the superpowers during the Cold War. This rigidity was characterised by a zero-sum, a winner-loser, view of the world, which contributed to significant tensions in international relations (recall the Korean War had also recently started), when *any* event in the world, or change in technology (recall with Sputnik, the Soviets were the first country to put a satellite in space in 1957), was perceived as something that could upset the global balance of power between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and increase the possibility of war between them. This is important to keep in mind since any google search on the "new Cold War with Russia" brings up enumerable entries going back a decade or more. What is so crucial about this book – a book on spirituality, is the way Merton, right at the beginning, sets out why he believed *spirituality*, or spiritual insights, were important for understanding *international relations*, what was really going on in the world; and, the study of international relations, or at least a good *knowledge of international affairs,* was important for *spirituality,* i.e. the desire to know God, love God, serve God in the world, and live faithfully and responsibly in it.

In the beginning of *The Ascent to Truth* – a book on the theology and spirituality of St. John of the Cross, Merton sets out the basic principles why this is the case, using the great international events of his day – the rise of the nuclear age or atomic age (i.e. the rivalry in *nuclear* weapons between the superpowers), and the Cold War, the East-West rivalry (i.e. the *political* rivalry between the superpowers in Europe and around the world).

> We who live in what we ourselves have called the Atomic Age, have acquired a peculiar facility for *standing back* and reflecting on our own history as if we were a phenomenon that took place five thousand years ago. *We like to talk about our time as if we had no part in it*. We view it as *objectively* as if it *existed outside ourselves*, in a glass case [like in a museum]. If you are looking for the Atomic Age, look inside yourself: because you are it. And so, alas, am I (emphasis added).[7]

Merton might have said in our time, "If you are looking for the war on terror look inside yourself…," "If you are looking for the Anthropocene Age

6. Mott, M. (1984). *The Seven Mountains of Thomas Merton*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, Co., 237-239, 265, 399.

7. Merton, T. (1951). *The Ascent to Truth: the theology and spirituality of St. John of the Cross*. London: Burns & Oates, 5.

or the climate emergency, look inside yourself," "If you are looking for the refugee crisis…," or "If you are looking for the rise of populism and political extremism…," etc. (see section 3). Most of us would rather not look at the world in this way – it links in very uncomfortable ways global politics and daily living – the global politics of living locally, and the local politics of living globally (this is why theory in international relations is for all of us, and is far too important to be left to scholars, politicians, commentators, and foreign policy makers). However, what is perhaps most distinctively "Franciscan" – poverty and joy, the evocative title of an introductory study of Franciscan spirituality by William J. Short, comes to mind, is to not look at the world in fear (nuclear fear, population fear, and now, climate fear), and to be fearfully motivated, but to look at the world, and be motivated for action – by faith, hope, and love, the theological virtues (for God, for others, for all creatures, and – we are now learning, for all of creation, since ultimately it is God's world, and we are meant to be good, faithful, and responsible stewards).

There are two basic ways all of us see foreign affairs or international events, which provide the basic background to the study of international relations. Firstly, do we have a social scientific view of the subject matter of international relations – i.e. states, and non-state actors, and their relations with each other, as being simply "out there" in the world, separate from ourselves, our lives, and our lifestyles, to which we seek to find objective, value-free causes (efficient causation) – to wars, civil wars, refugees, migrants to Europe, ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and Islamic fundamentalism, the rise of populism and religious nationalism, youth protests across the globe, etc.) and, we then add… our policy proposals, and… our ethics *to the end* of this overall analysis (Catholic social teaching if you are a good Catholic, "Islamic ethics" if you are a good Muslim, or Kantian ethics if you are a good liberal).

Secondly, or… do we think, and this was Merton's *spiritual intuition*, this is not really a very accurate description of how we see the world, nor does it give an accurate explanation of what is taking place in the "events" in the world that are the building blocks for the study of international relations. The reason is that we live – and, this is the argument of social constructivists in international relations, in a social world, and not only a natural world or a material world – we live in a world of ideas, beliefs, values – and, yes, even emotions, and not only a world of power, the national interest, and materialism (the military and economic power of political realists, or the globalization and economic interdependence of political liberals). Moreover, these

international events are not something we observe, objectively, as happening "outside ourselves", i.e. "out there" in the world, – we are *reflexively* a part of these events, "we are part of it", Merton says, we are part of what makes the world the way it is; and, therefore, the kind of the theory we use to see the world needs to reflect this fundamental *ontological* reality of the social world of international relations.[8]

What does this mean for how we see the world – what we do, and do not see? All kinds of things, all kinds of social activities happen in the world, but not all of them are events. What are called "events", are *always* socially, politically, and religiously – or even, also economically, constructed (historically these have often not been separate categories), and they are really *narratively* constructed – by some actors, with some interest, and for some purpose to indicate the event's meaning and significance for their time. This was true in the past – regarding events in the ancient world, the Middle Ages, it is true of all ages, and it is also true in the present age – regarding events in contemporary international relations (i.e. there is a link to be made *theoretically* from of St. Francis, St. Clare, and the early Franciscans, and how their world of politics and international relations was socially constructed, and to ourselves and how our world of politics and international relations is socially constructed).

Crucially, it is now possible to understand, what Merton was already criticising intuitively, rather than formally in the early 1950s – the positivist (i.e. allegedly objective, value-free), mainstream, social science perspective on how to study international relations. This is why his analogy, "We view [the world] as *objectively* as if it existed *outside* ourselves, in a glass case [like in a museum]", was so prescient regarding the fundamental problem of how we see the world (especially, for scholars of international relations, but relevant to all of us). He recognized we are all *reflexively* a part of making the world is the way it is (although most of us in the West, and those industrializing developing countries have more impact on the world than any peasant farmer in the developing world).

This background on the social construction of reality makes it possible to see some of the reasons Merton's early analogy criticizing the conventional,

8. Onuf, N. (1989). *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations* (reissued London: Routledge, 2012). University of South Carolina Press, 1989; Kratochwil, F. (2011). *The Puzzles of Politics: Inquiries into the genesis and transformation of international relations*. London: Routledge.

social scientific way of looking at the world was so prescient regarding later arguments by critical theorists, and social constructivist scholars in international relations. Firstly, Merton realized that events in international relations – including the big events of his time, the Cold War, and the Nuclear Age or Atomic Age, were socially constructed by human beings – i.e. by *all of us*, and he realised this in the dangerous, early years of rigid bipolarity of the Cold War. He already realised this, in other words, at time when the *temptation* was strongest, to see the world – not as one world, but (almost "naturally") physically divided up (since 1946 with the "iron curtain" and growing East-West axis of world division), and politically and ideologically divided into black-white or evil-good categories. Moreover, the existing social scientific theory and methods, developed during the heyday of quantitative methods with the rise of computers, systems theory, etc., reinforced this dichotomy between seeing the world in a divisive and divided way, i.e. as if the world was simply "out there", objectively separate from us, as if we had "no part in it" (Merton), no part in making the world this way (iron curtain, the East-West axis, and the nuclear age), and not *contingently* in some other way – through diplomacy, dialogue, communication, peacemaking, and conflict resolution.[9]

Secondly, Merton's analogy shows an early intuition of the "sociality" of international relations (i.e. international relations for a type of what the early English School calls "international society", with ideas, rules, laws, norms to promote international order, rather than a type of mechanistic "international system" and its concern for "international stability"), and its "reflexivity", in the sense that all of us are part of making international relations the way they are.[10] In other words, there is no (one) "reality" of international relations "out there" in the world waiting to be observed and discovered separate from our encounter, engagement, and participation in the world of international relations. Different contexts, argue social constructivists, can produce different results or outcomes. This social constructivist argument is explicitly in contrast to the positivist, mainstream, study of international relations, which assumed states are the *same* across time, space, and contexts – since they face the same

9. The argument here alludes to the possible usefulness of Duns Scotus on agency, choice, and contingency, and its relationship to peacemaking, conflict resolution, and the theory of international relations. Jean-Nicolas Bitter, Senior Advisor on Religion, Politics, and Conflict in the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs used Scotus for his PhD dissertation at the University of Lausanne (2003). *Les Dieux Embusqués: Une approche pragmatique de la dimension religieuse des conflits*. Genève-Paris: Librairie.

10. Mayall, J. (ed.) (1982). *The Community of States*. London: Allen & Unwin.

type of "security dilemma in the past",[11] and in the present, in contemporary international relations. This is how the early theory and methods helped to reinforce the East-West axis of division in international relations. For political realists this is simply the "tragedy of great power politics", it is the timeless, and universal truths of political realism in international relations.[12]

However, social constructivist medieval historians, and social constructivist scholars of international relations have emphasized *not* the similarity of states or types of political communities (the timeless and perennial truths of political realism), but that social life, and the "sociality" of different types of political communities (states, city-states, kingdoms, etc.) – have *always* been socially constructed (positivism in history is not any better than positivism in contemporary international relations). Human beings have always lived in a world that is socially, politically, culturally – and, economically constructed. The medieval world was a socially constructed world – the world of St. Francis, and Sultan al-Kamil, the world is a social world in our age, and in *any* age – in the past, and in the present age.

Thirdly, Merton's analogy – and, indeed, many of his writings relevant to international affairs, can be read as an intuitive recognition of the human social, spiritual, and political consequences – again, very early in the Cold War, for what emerged as the "agency-structure problem" in international relations, which especially gained relevance in relation to the cruise missile crisis in Europe, and the rise of social movement activism in the 1980s. This is the debate, firstly, on the "agency" of human beings and their organizations

11. The problem of "international anarchy" is meant to be a descriptive condition in positivist international relations theory – what the world "out there" is like (Merton), and is defined as the problem of creating or constructing "international order" in the *absence* of an overarching government (unlike in domestic politics). The "security dilemma" is (allegedly) the inevitable empirical, observable result of each state's efforts to enhance their military capabilities, inadvertently makes *all* other states insecure in international relations. One aspect of the constructivist challenge is that "anarchy is what states make of it" (Alexander Wendt), i.e. state actions (and reactions) depends on their identities, and social interactions, and *not* only the absence of an overarching government, and this is why the world is a "world of our making" (Onuf). Onuf, N. (1989). *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and International Relations.* Columbia: University of South Carolina Press (reissued London: Routledge, 2012); Kratochwil, F. (2011). *The Puzzles of Politics: Inquiries into the genesis and transformation of international relations*. London: Routledge. Therefore, this points to the possible usefulness of Scotus on the role of agency, choice, and contingency in theories of identity and social interaction in international relations. Realist/neorealist scholars who read an *inevitable*, negative, and conflictual view of the security dilemma back into the Middle Ages have been strongly criticized by constructivist scholars. Hall, R. B. – Kratochwil, F. V. (1993). "Medieval tales: neorealist 'science' and the abuse of history". *International Organization* 47/3, 479-491.

12. Mearsheimer, J. (2001). *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics.* New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

and social movements, i.e. states and a variety of non-state actors and social movements,[13] as purposive actors, agents who have capacity, or capability through social interaction to produce social change, and transform their states, societies, and the relations between them in the international system; and, secondly, the debate on "structure", i.e. the fact that it is the dominant actors, agents, and their ideas, doctrines, and discourses, which determine the overall power structure that conditions, determines the way social interactions take place between states in the international system, and this can limit or constrain the ability of actors, agents to work for social and political change or transform anything – states, societies, or even the general conditions of international relations.

Social constructivism is not rooted in ethics, idealism, or utopianism, but the actual analysis of events, activities, and social actions in international relations, and what makes the international order one way, and not another way, is the result of the processes of social interaction. This means states themselves should be seen, interpreted, or understood as part of a social process (social ontology rather than individualist ontology), even if states are not totally free to choose their policies and circumstances.[14] It is through their interaction with other states that new options, possibilities, and new choices are possible in the international system, and this can lead to new historically, culturally, and politically 'realities' in international relations (e.g. changing values, norms, and ethics leading to the abolition of slavery, women's right to vote, the abolition of colonialism and imperialism, etc.).

13. E.g. development NGOs, advocacy NGOs (anti-slavery, decolonization and independence/national liberation, human rights, women's rights/gender equality, environment, anti-racism, anti-apartheid, the US Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign, European Nuclear Disarmament, etc. The "religious turn" in the study of international relations has pointed to the often key role of religious actors in each of these areas of social action.

14. The idea of social ontology, rather than an individualist ontology – concepts in (Western or European) social theory, is easily explained by indigenous knowledge – the Xhosa proverb Desmond Tutu often quotes, "people become people through other people", and so in international relations, states become the kind of states they are (identity) through social interaction (social ontology) with other states (positively or negatively). However, states learn what to desire, and how to act through the desires and actions of other states (what René Girard calls positive or negative mimesis). Ngomane, N. M. (2019). *Everyday Umbuntu: Living better together, the African way*, Foreword by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. New York: Bantam Press; Scott, M. T. (2014). "Culture, Religion, and Violence: René Girard's Mimetic Theory", *Millennium* 43/1, 308-327.

2. What is Theory and Why It Matters. critical theory, social constructivism and Pope Francis's culture of encounter

In order to see why critical theory and social constructivism are relevant to contemporary international relations it is necessary to see why they began to develop – on the *margins* of the discipline of international relations in the 1980s, and more fully after the end of the Cold War in the 1990s. Moreover, the reasons for this have a surprising relevance for how to interpret, or understand the concept of the "culture of encounter" articulated by Pope Francis, since Jorge Mario Bergoglio developed these ideas at the same time, and for many similar reasons – a pope from the "ends of the earth",[15] who could see, feel, and even smell the consequences of being on the *periphery* of international relations and international political economy.[16]

Critical theory scholars in the study of international relations ask a set of inter-related questions about how we see the world of international relations, and seek to explain, understand, or interpret what is going on in it. These questions began to be framed in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the aftermath of the Cold War.

> The real world begins here… What we think about these events and possibilities, and what we think we can *do* about them, depends in a fundamental sense on *how* we think about them [e.g. the war in Bosnia and genocide in Rwanda, and other international events]. In short, our thinking about the 'real' world, and hence our *practices*, is directly related to our *theories*, so as people interested in and concerned about the real world, we must be interested in and concerned about theory: What are the *legacies* of *past* theories? *Whose facts* have been most important in shaping our ideas? *Whose voices* are overlooked [i.e. the concept of ontology, actors, agents, which constitute the nature of international relations]? Can we know and how can we know it [i.e. the concept of epistemology]? Where is theory going? Who are *we* [i.e. the concept of identity]? *The*

15. It is worth remembering what Pope Francis said from the balcony of St. Peter's basilica was – no doubt quite consciously, similar to what Karol Wojtyla said when he became Pope John Paul II, and said he became pope "from a far country" (i.e. from Poland in the heart of the Soviet empire).

16. This alludes to Pope Francis's memorable metaphor, a good pastor, like a good shepherd, knows the smell of his sheep. It is clear this is the way Bergoglio "performed the gospel life" during his time in Argentina. Ivereigh, A. (2015). *The Great Reformer: Francis and the Making of a Radical Pope*. London: Allen & Unwin, 210-252; Cunningham, Lawrence, S. (2004). *Francis of Assisi: Performing the Gospel Life*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.

real world is constituted by the dominant answers to these and other theoretical questions (emphasis added).[17]

Critical theorists ask what dominant ideas, discourses, and social practices have dominated international relations – in the present, during the Cold War, and in the post-Cold War world, but as this section indicates, it also asks these questions historically – regarding the past (the ancient Near East, i.e. biblical times, and the Middle Ages – what have been the dominant discourses in these times?).[18] Why did critical theory and social constructivism emerge in the theory of international relations in the 1980s? The reason is that Cold War, the Vietnam War, the fear of nuclear war, and the cruise missile crisis in Europe led to a growing recognition of the limits to the *idea* of an objective or positivist social scientific understanding of international relations (going back to Merton's analogy and section 1). It was argued there was *something profoundly wrong* – morally, and analytically, with the way these theories, paradigms, perspectives – the *dominant narratives* of the superpowers, were *implicated* themselves in the production of the existing structures of international power in the international system, i.e. the creation of the existing rivalry between the superpowers now threatening the world. These ideas – critical theory, and social constructivism, contributed to a way of engaging, resolving, the "agency-structure problem" by analysing international relations in new ways – a way of restoring agency, and a more accurate reflection of what was taking place in the world, and what as agents, actors, individuals, and human beings they could do about it. This was reflected in the activism of civil society groups and new social movements – first in opposing cruise missiles in Europe in the 1980s, and then in overcoming communism in the 1990s (section 3 argues this was also what the Rio de la Plata school of theology to which Bergoglio engaged with before he became pope was trying to do with its theology of the people, and non-Marxist liberation theology, which influenced

17. Smith, S., & Booth, K., & Zalewski, M. (eds.). (1996). *International theory: positivism & beyond.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1-10.

18. Brueggemann, W. (1997). *Old Testament Theology: Testimony, Dispute,* Advocacy. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg/Fortress. He criticises the positivism of earlier generations Old Testament scholars. This book is publicised as 'the first postmodern' Old Testament theology, and Brueggemann even uses this term, but from an international relations theory perspective, it is closer to critical theory and social constructivism than postmodernism (see footnote 19). He also cites a variety of American scholars of international relations – Fukuyama, Paul M. Kennedy (who is actually British), Henry Kissinger, McGeorge Bundy, and Robert S. McNamara.

the episcopal conferences of Latin America (CELAM). This is why theory matters – for interpreting international relations in the past – and, interpreting contemporary international relations.

Critical theorists develop the following critique of mainstream, positivist, social scientific theory in the study of international relations as they articulate an alternative approach to theory. Firstly, they refer to social scientific theory as "problem-solving theory" – sees the world, international events, (allegedly) objectively, existing outside ourselves, which is also why Merton's analogy is so powerful, looking at the world if we were looking at an object objectively through a glass case in a museum. Merton is already intuitively criticising – what later critical theorists call "problem-solving theory". Theory in international relations – as problem-solving theory seeks to explain (allegedly objectively, in a value-free way), the workings of the existing international system. It uses the existing frameworks of diplomatic or political institutions to solve, or at least manage more effectively, foreign policy problems in the interests of the great powers (the USA and Russia), or emerging great powers in the existing international order (e.g. China, India). The problem is that mainstream theorists of international relations – those who are realists/neo-realists (who emphasize power politics), or liberals/neo-liberals (who emphasize international law, international organisations, and international economics), are *both* committed to the positivist, social scientific method (at least as the approach which dominates, or has dominated the mainstream study of international relations in the United States). Scholars calls this the "neo-neo synthesis" since both types of theory (neorealism and neoliberalism), regardless of their analytical and political differences are embedded with similar set of assumptions regarding what is theory, and what is science, and what states are like – so, both the dominant theories, paradigms, or perspectives of relations see the world, as if it is "out there" (i.e. empirical observation), exactly as Merton powerful analogy described it – *we have produced the world we are all looking at*, as if we are unrelated to what we are seeing, as if we are looking at the world through the glass case in the museum. This is why the chapter began by asking how do we see the world, and it is now clear the two basic options are rooted problematically in the neo-neo synthesis between realism and liberalism (section 1).

Secondly, critical theorists see theory in international relations – as also "theory as negative critique", or what can be argued, theory as prophetic critique in international relations. Section 3 shows why this may be a crucial way

of interpreting Pope Francis's culture of encounter. For critical theorists this view of theory probes why and how the world came to be as it is – a world divided into national states, how did the state come to monopolize our vision of loyalty, identity, and meaning – or in our time, how did this change, and people have adopted – ethnicity, the nation, or religion, i.e. religious nationalism as religious identification with the nation or the state as a (narrower) sense of loyalty, identity, and meaning? Critical theorists ask questions about what is theory, but they can also ask concrete questions – how did the international system, as a system of states, or a type of international society come into existence, spread around the world, as an accumulation of social and diplomatic practices, and should it remain this way, or are there other ways of organising the relations between states and political communities?

However, theory as negative critique might also be called prophetic critique, the perspective of the biblical prophets, what Walter Brueggemann has called "the prophetic imagination". The prophetic imagination – wrestles with the agency-structure problem, to see the world in new ways, not with idealism or romanticism, but how it "really" operates as a social world that includes all of us (beyond positivist social theory). It seeks to evoke and nurture a greater awareness of the way the dominant culture constructs the social world, its power relations, and its *dominant, authoritative conception of reality, and knowledge of what is going on in the world* (so theory as negative critique, or as the prophetic imagination goes back to section 1). It asks the basic question of epistemology – what is knowledge, how do we know, what we know, and when do we know, when we know it? In other words, this same question Merton grappled with is the one critical and social constructivist scholars of international relations grapple with.[19]

Brueggemann sets out a distinctive critical and social constructivist interpretation of the biblical prophets as a more radical way of seeing, interpreting, and understanding what is going on in the world than (i) prophesy as predicting the future (evangelical conservatives), or (ii) prophecy as proclaiming social justice (secular or religious liberals). The prophetic imagination is a more radical way of seeing the world than is offered by either of these two

19. Brueggemann acknowledges his understanding of the prophetic imagination is informed by Berger, P., & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Doubleday. Brueggemann, W. ([2]2001). *The Prophetic Imagination*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1-19, 130.

views of biblical prophecy. Perhaps, many critical theorists and social constructivists can agree with it, at least up to a point. The prophetic imagination criticises the way theory – as problem-solving theory, is used by great powers, political leaders, political elites, and foreign policy makers to shape society's dominant discourse on politics and international relations (disseminated further by scholars, journalists, and political commentators in the news media and in popular culture). Brueggemann wonderfully calls this the "language of managed reality", to express how the dominant culture, and dominant great powers support the existing domestic and international order, and its existing narratives, interpretations, and legitimations.

However, Robert Cox, a leading critical theorist in international relations, argues the purpose of theory is "not just to explain the world [i.e. problem-solving theory, with its social scientific approach to theory] but to change it".[20] Brueggemann argues, being prophetic – in the past, in the *socially constructed world* of the ancient Near East, and in the present, in *our socially constructed world* of international relations, is to recognize "the interplay of social forces that are in conflict over the correct characterization of social reality", and he powerfully points to the way such a dominant culture constructs a "narcoticized insensibility to human reality".[21] This is why section 1 began by asking how do we see the world, and it is why Pope Francis's culture of encounter fits with the concept of theory as prophetic critique – as he began his pontificate his first journey outside Rome – i.e. the Franciscan way "he performed the gospel life",[22] was to go the Italian island of Lampedusa to call the world's attention to the plight of migrants and refugees, and denounce globalized indifference (section 3).[23]

The prophets, Brueggemann argues, offer the rhetoric, which helps to socially construct, to socially constitute, a counter-narrative, an alternative interpretation of reality, contrary to the way the dominant culture interprets reality

20. Cox, R.W. (2007). "The Point is Not Just to Explain the World but to Change It." In Reus-Smit C. & Snidal, D. (eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 84-93.

21. Brueggemann, W. ([2]2001). *The Prophetic Imagination*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, xx.

22. Cunningham, L.S. (2004). *Francis of Assisi: Performing the Gospel Life*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.

23. Brueggemann, W. ([2]2001). *The Prophetic Imagination*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, x; Cox, R. W. (1981). "Social forces, States, and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory". *Millennium* 10/2, 126-155; Ivereigh, A. (2015). *The Great Reformer: Francis and the Making of a Radical Pope*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1-3, 378.

– "the hegemonic power of royal consciousness", in the ancient Near East (i.e. the events portrayed in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament); and, more recently, during the Cold War, the rival dominant discourses and hegemonic consciousness of the superpowers – which contributed to the rise of critical theory in the heady, optimistic, early post-Cold War period of "American unipolarity", with the U.S. export of its dominant discourse, the one-model-fits-all conception of liberal democracy, capitalism, and globalization (called the "Washington Consensus"). The results of this model on the poor, the marginalized, and those on the periphery contributed to Jorge Bergoglio, as Archbishop of Buenos Aires, to begin to develop the concept of "the culture of encounter" over the next few years as an *alternative discourse*, an alternative narrative, an alternative account of reality to the U.S.'s dominant discourse of the end of history, and the triumph of liberal democracy, capitalism, and globalization (section 3).

Critical theorists also consider theory in international relations – as "theory as everyday social practice" in international relations. For critical theorists the concept of theory as every-day social practice bringing together ethically and *analytically* the "everyday politics of global living". One of the central tasks of critical theory is to be reflective about our everyday social practices – all of us live out a theory of international relations everyday by the way we live our lives, in the way we "act", the choices we make, what we buy, what we consume, what we eat, how we travel, i.e. every day we all live out "the local politics of world politics". Francis of Assisi, of course, acted more intuitively, he was not a theorist, nor a strategist (like St. Ignatius of Loyola), but as the son of a great merchant in Assisi, he accompanied his father on trade fairs to France, and in the surrounding communes. What characterized these medieval times was not globalization, but it was the rise of cities, urbanization, an increasingly integrated medieval market economy and profit economy in Europe (with the rise of money, something hated by St. Francis). This was the early rise of capitalism, as something more than a new type of economic system of organisation, but also the early rise of the *culture* of capitalism (i.e. critical theory's critique of capitalism), with its accompanying poverty and inequality –and, as a response, the rise of voluntary poverty as a type of religious ideal contrary to the new values and culture of profit and commerce, often by rejecting society altogether (in which Francis of Assisi was only the best known and influential example).

3. Towards the "Culture of Encounter"

The culture of encounter emerged in relation to the problem this chapter started with – how do we see the world, and interpret what is going on in it, especially the world of international relations? How can we do this, in a holistic and integrative way (theology, spirituality, and social action), which leads to a deeper understanding of what it means to live faithfully and responsibly in the world? This section argues the culture of encounter was deeply rooted in the theology, spirituality, and pastoral practice of Bergoglio, and the circle of Catholic priests, theologians, and philosophers he was associated with, as a distinctively Catholic alternative, counter-cultural, discourse in Argentina and Latin America. It can be identified as a type of negative, even prophetic, critique of (certain types) of capitalism and globalization, the *culture* of capitalism, and the way they were implemented in international relations since the end of the Cold War, and the collapse of the Soviet Union (this is arguably one of the reasons the Church, and Pope Francis have emphasized the evangelization of culture).[24] The end of the Cold War signalled – or, *seemed* to signal at the time (the immediate post-1989 period), not only the end of communism, but also the end of socialism as a possible way of organising the economy.

However, given the grand failure of the communist project by the 1980s, and the grand failure of the liberal project since the 1990s – not only the failure of the spread of democracy (especially in the Middle East), and its consolidation (in central Europe, formerly Eastern Europe), but also the failure of liberal protection wars or wars of humanitarian intervention, which end up killing more people than they are supposed to protect,[25] the financial crisis of 2008, and in the West – and, everywhere, for ordinary people, especially *young* people (a special concern of Pope Francis). The impact of these events can be seen on their lives and livelihoods with a rise of poverty, inequality, and unemployment, a key characteristic of many young people around the world.

How did Jorge Mario Bergoglio see the world before he became pope, and how was he trained in those virtues, practices, and spiritual, intellectual, and practical formation, which enabled him to see the world in a specific way?

24. Ivereigh, A. (2015). *The Great Reformer: Francis and the Making of a Radical Pope*. London: Allen & Unwin, 184-186.

25. Kivimäki, T. (2019). *The Failure to Protect: The Path to and Consequences of Humanitarian Intervention*. London: Edward Elgar.

This section briefly provides a new kind of optic, or orientation to these questions, rather than any overall answer to them, using "the level of analysis", one of the most widely used frameworks in the theory of international relations.[26]

3.1. *Level of Analysis of the International System*

The level of analysis of the international system sets out the main characteristics of any type of international system in the past, including the Middle Ages as a "mixed actor" type of international system, and the characteristics of the present international system.[27]

The most important thing to say – going back to Thomas Merton, is that the concept of the culture of encounter, in the first instance, emerged during the Cold War, the nuclear age, the East-West axis of world division, as the main characteristics of the international system. All the countries in Latin America, including Argentina, faced special problems given their close proximity to the United States, and its "hegemonic presumption" in the region ("so far from God, but so close to the United States"), and its close proximity to Cuba (a "state of socialist orientation" in America's backyard, according to official Soviet foreign policy discourse). The political, military, and ideological rivalry *between* the superpowers intersected with the problems *within* states in the region, and *between* them – wars, civil wars, guerrilla insurgencies, populism, liberalism, nationalism, democracy, dictatorships, and poverty, inequality, and development.

The overall problem for developing countries during the Cold War was the failure since the 1960s of the theory of modernization, and its implicit spreading of the consumer society, i.e. the culture of capitalism, as the framework of U.S. foreign policy to promote a specific *meaning* of democracy and

26. David Singer, J. (1961). "The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations". *World Politics* 14/1, 77-92.

27. The concept of a medieval "mixed actor" type of international system means an international system consisting of states (i.e. empires, kingdoms, national states, etc.) and a variety of non-state actors in historic state-systems (e.g. duchies, principalities, free cities, and prince-bishops). There is a debate since the 1970s in the English School of international relations over a "new medievalism", i.e. if the international system is moving back to the future – towards a neo-medieval, mixed actor, type of contemporary international system. Bull, H. (1977). *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics.* London: Macmillan, 254-255, 264-276, 291-294; Friedrichs, J. (2001). "The Meaning of New Medievalism". *European Journal of International Relations* 7/4, 475-502; Rapley, J. (2006). "The New Middle Ages". *Foreign Affairs.* New York, Council on Foreign Relations 85/3, 95-103.

development. The U.S. moved away from its "democratic ideal", and came to embrace "bureaucratic-authoritarian" regimes in Latin America (and elsewhere) because of the fear of the attractiveness of communism. This contributed to the emergence on the continent of dependency theory, liberation theology, and guerrilla insurgencies (often supported by Cuba and Soviet Union).

The concept of the culture of encounter, in the second instance, developed further in Buenos Aires, in Argentina, and Latin America in response to *the end* of the Cold War in the 1990s, and the epochal changes at that time in international relations. The heady, optimistic, early post-Cold War era was called by its most triumphalist supporters the U.S.'s "unipolar moment" to remake the world (post-1989).[28] This was characterized by a *dominant discourse* shared by the U.S. – and, to some extent, its European or Western allies (capitalism, liberal democracy, and globalization).

In a post-September 11 world, the same thing seems to have happened all over again. This time in the Middle East, with the erosion of the democratic deal, as local kings and princes use the U.S. attractiveness of Islamism (for others), and its fear of Islamism and terrorism, to crush political dissent, opposition, and prevent civil society and democracy. However, Pope Francis, with the background of Argentina, and Latin America, where the culture of encounter was forged on the anvil of this region's problems, has pushed back *against* this narrative, following the footsteps of St. Francis (his counter-cultural critique of Christendom, in the way he performed the gospel life, and encounter with the Sultan of Egypt during the Fifth Crusade), and he is now extending the culture of encounter to the Middle East, with the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* (signed in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, with Ahmed el-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar in Egypt, February 2019). Moreover, in ways to promote the concept and its objectives (values, norms) of human fraternity, and their institutionalization in international society, a committee was set-up in August 2019 to help achieve them, with members from all the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), and is chaired by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. In December 2019, through the committee, Pope Francis and Grand Imam

28. Krauthammer, C. (1990-1991). "The Unipolar Moment". *Foreign Affairs* 70/1, 23-33: https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1991-02-01/unipolar-moment (accessed: 2019/11/29); Krauthammer, C. (2002). "Unipolar Moment Revisited". *The National Interest* 1, 2002: https://nationalinterest.org/article/the-unipolar-moment-revisited-391 (accessed: 2019/11/29).

Sheikh Ahmed have proposed February 4 be declared a *UN World Day of Fraternity* (the anniversary of the signing of the document), and they have asked the UN to join them in organizing a World Summit on Human Fraternity in the new year.

3.2. *State and Society Level of Analysis*

The concept of the culture of encounter in the first instance developed at the state and society levels of analysis, and reflected specific Argentine issues – historically, most importantly, is the relation to the state – "Peronism", as a type of Argentine populism, and it's often (troubled) relationship to a specific, Argentine, type of religious nationalism, which was also a specific type of Catholic nationalism. These ideas, or really vision of the Church, Latin America, and the world, were articulated by a group of Catholic Latin American theologians, philosophers, and intellectuals – the Rio de la Plata school – engaging a specific understanding of theology, spirituality, and pastoral practice, as part of a specific understanding of the Church, Latin America, and the world (and institutionalized in the documents of the various CELAM conferences). Bergoglio was closely associated with these ideas, and members of this school. This Catholic version of religious nationalism, was – and continues to be, *inclusive* since it looked to the people,[29] rather than to the state, or to a specific social class, and is *regional* (or even transnational) since it looks beyond Argentina to Latin America (and so it forms what might be called a type of political theology of Latin American regional integration). This is quite different from the recent rise of *exclusive* forms of religious nationalism (e.g. in India Modi and the Hindu nationalists, in Turkey Erdoğan, and the AKP, in Israel Netanyahu**,** and Likud Party, and in the U.S. Trump and conservative evangelicals (there are other type of American evangelicals). Therefore, the *origins* of the culture of encounter are situated in the problems in Argentina, and Latin America at the state and society level of analysis, going back to the 1960s, and beyond, especially to Argentina's political and economic crises in the 1970s,1980s, and 1990s, i.e. the period of Bergoglio's spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation, grappling with specific problems in Argentina,

29. *Pueblo* in Spanish convey something more than "people" in English, and in the context of this chapter refers to Bergoglio's concept of *santo pueblo fiel de Dios,* God's holy faithful people.

and Latin America (keeping in mind the wider structural dimensions of the level of analysis of the international system).

The culture of encounter, in the second instance, now emerged even powerfully in the post-Cold War period, rooted in the ideas of the Rio de la Plata school, institutionalized in the documents of the CELAM conferences, and the history of Argentina, and Latin America, as a holistic, integrative, and now *prophetic* response to this new situation with the end of the Cold War, the nuclear rivalry, and with the collapse of the Soviet Union – also, seemingly, the end of socialism or communism as a viable economic model. This was why it was called "the unipolar moment" by many U.S. scholars and commentators with a triumphalist disposition. Moreover, from the perspective of international relations, the culture of encounter developed after what the Rio de la Plata school considered to be both 'the failures of both the North American model of economic growth *and* Cuban-style socialism' (post-1989, but already evident before this time), and "they were convinced that the stage now belonged to the People of God",[30] "God's holy and faithful people," a key concept of the "theology of the people" in the Rio de la Plata school. All these matters need to be properly understood or else Pope Francis's ideas on capitalism, Marxism, liberalism, Cuba, and the United States are distorted and misunderstood – which is what has happened in the battles of the "culture-wars" between (mainly North American, English-speaking, Catholic liberals and conservatives.

In other words, significantly, the culture of encounter articulated, developed, a specific type of a regional response (i.e. a Latin American response) to the "agency – vs. – structure problem" facing Latin America's role in the international system. It was specific Catholic, nationalist, regional, and transnational, but also a response of the Catholic Church in Latin America (institutionally represented by CELAM). However, as Bergoglio, as Pope Francis, has been applying these ideas to confront with the problems in the rest of the world since the beginning of his pontificate.

30. Ivereigh, 234.

3.3. *Individual Level of Analysis*

The culture of encounter, from the perspective of the individual level of analysis, indicates how Bergoglio developed a holistic and integrative vision of the way "pastoral, mystical, and intellectual experiences come together" in the way he came to see the world (Merton). There were, of course, a number of key influences on Bergoglio's theology, spirituality, and pastoral practice. The key Catholic philosophers who helped shape Bergoglio's spiritual and intellectual formation, and especially in relation to the culture of encounter, and international relations, i.e. the ideas of the Rio de la Plata school, were the Uruguayan philosopher Alberto Methol Ferré (1929-2009), who through his widely read articles, books, and the journals he edited – which were also widely read by Bergoglio, was "arguably one of the most significant and original Latin American Catholic intellectuals of the late twentieth century".[31] He had a significant impact on the documents of various CELAM conferences (so there is a direct link between the ideas of the Second Vatican Council, the Rio de la Plata school, and their institutionalization in the documents of the CELAM conferences, which formed their Catholic vision for Argentina, Latin America, the world, and the future of the Catholic Church in the world.

Methol articulated a vision of an "ecclesial geopolitics" (his word) dominated by the Church and Latin America, two poles, united, and distinct at the same time, and argued Latin Americans "cannot be engaged in one without also being engaged in other" – why, because "the people" is the starting point for both of them.[32] It is the concept of "the people", as "God's holy faithful people", which is part of the "theology of the people" in the Rio de la Plata school, which makes these ideas so significant for the culture of encounter – first articulated for Argentina and Latin America, and now with Pope Francis, for the world. The concept of "God's holy faithful people", from the perspective of the agency-structure debate in international relations theory, and the international relations of Latin America, indicate the way the Rio de la Plata school's concept of ecclesial geopolitics articulated an alternative narrative, an alternative way of interpreting events in Latin America, the Church, regarding socialism, communism, capitalism, and globalization – i.e. the theology of the people provided a way to "out-narrate" the dominant U.S. narrative (the

31. Ivereigh, 234; Borghesi, 143.
32. Borghesi, 143-144.

"Washington consensus"), and its' way of interpreting international relations and international political economy. Moreover, what is also significant, from the perspective of "multiple modernities", a postmodern, and post-secular sensitivities, is how these ideas also relate to more deeply engaged, religious, or faith-based understanding of civil society and democracy (in an age of spreading populism and nationalism in the West and to the rest of the world).

What were the key ideas of the Rio de la Plata school in relation to the development of the culture of encounter? What is emphasized here is that what was being articulated was a specific type of "Catholic praxis", a Catholic vision of global politics and economics – not separate from, but as an integrative part of a holistic, and integrative approach to theology, spirituality, and pastoral practice for what it means to live faithfully and responsibility in the world. Therefore, this is the connection between the ideas surrounding the culture of encounter to ecumenical dialogue (among Christians), inter-religious dialogue (Jews and Muslims), and to the desires, fears, and aspirations of all people of good will. This is why Methol pointed to St. Francis, and Borghesi to Pope Francis, for what needs to be demonstrated now is the "attractiveness" of Christianity for the twenty-first century.

Firstly, they considered the Latin American Church as key to *la patria grande*, i.e. the Church as a catalyst for a common Latin American destiny, a new continental consciousness, and envisioned it would take its place in the modern world, and become an important influence on it (which is what is happening, and Pope Benedict XVI, in contrast to Ratzinger in the 1980s, now is in *agreement* with this influence of the Latin American Church on the future of the global Catholic Church). Moreover, this vision, a Catholic nationalist vision, inspired by the Church in Latin America (CELAM being its regional institutional expression), had a specific vision of regional integration and international relations (what might be called a political theology of regional integration), and this vision was part of larger vision – an alternative way of interpreting the overall future of global politics and global economics. In other words, this group of Catholic, Latin American, theologians and philosophers had their *own* vision and interpretation of what would be the future key contours of the twenty-first century at the level of analysis of the international system.

Secondly, one of their key characteristics at the level of analysis of the international system would be a global future marked by continental states. In other words, this political theology of regional integration intersected with

its vision of CELAM, and the increasing importance of the Church in Latin American to the future of the global Catholic Church. However, how EU-Latin America relations, and regional organizations of North, Central, and South America fit, or might fit, into this Catholic nationalist vision, or political theology of regional integration is beyond the scope of this paper.

Thirdly, a core part of this vision by the Rio de la Plata school – and, with its emphasis on a specific understanding of "the people" (in contrast to liberalism),[33] is about restoring "agency" to the poor, *santo pueblo fiel de Dios*, "God's holy faithful people",[34] articulated in the *teología del pueblo*, the theology of the people,[35] constructed as a non-Marxist interpretation of liberation theology. Liberation theology emerged in at least two different versions after the second Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM) in Medellín, Columbia (1968). Both were committed to liberation theology, and the option for the poor, but they had different roots. Pope Francis's culture of encounter is distorted, and misunderstood without recognizing these differences. The first version, which is what comes to most people's minds,[36] is mainly associated with Marxism, and was prevalent in Central America and the Andean countries. It is based on the notion of a "people's church" made up of Christian base communities (CBCs), at odds – or, often at odds (so it would seem), with the "institutional" Catholic Church, and was "nourished by post-Enlightenment liberalism and Marxism" (which Latin American theologians brought back from their studies in Europe).[37]

The second version, less well unknown, at least outside Latin America, and in the English-speaking world, is represented by the Rio de la Plata school, had "a more intense critique of the identification of Enlightenment and modernity" than did Marxist-oriented versions of liberation theology – which critiqued the Church, but did not offer a critique of modernity, or what Alasdair MacIntyre has called "the Enlightenment Project".[38] These theologians also offered a critique of modernity and the Enlightenment Project, one which also included a critique of *both* Marxism and capitalism.[39] However, this second

33. Schama.
34. Ivereigh, 62-63.
35. Ivereigh, 185-186.
36. Borghesi, 162.
37. Ivereigh, 184-185.
38. Thomas.
39. What is often ignored, and is also not part of debates over the Church and liberation theology is the way Ratzinger/Benedict accepts Adorno and Horkheimer (1944). *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, i.e.

version was as interested in *culture* as it was economics, and "took up the question of Latin American culture and rediscovered the roots of popular religiosity", and was nourished "by national, popular, and Catholic traditions".[40] It represented, as at the Pueblo CELAM conference (1979), "the encounter of popular religion and the modern world that is so crucial for the Church in Latin America".[41] This was the version that influenced Bergoglio and his circle of associates. It called for "justice, deplored oppression and exploitation, and stood up for the rights of workers", but rejected Marxism as "alien not only to Christianity but also to the spirit of our people".[42] This means it did not "frame *el pueblo*", the people, in sociological or Marxist categories, as the version of liberation theology influenced by Marxist ideas (and, although Ivereigh does not say this, in terms of the individual as the unit of analysis, and the rationality and autonomy of the individual). Rather it "saw the people as active agents of their own history", and startlingly asserted, "the activity of the Church should not only be oriented towards the people but also primarily derive *from* the people".[43]

In other words, this second version of liberation theology was for a Church "with a clear option for the poor", but understood as a radical identification with ordinary people, who *already* in Bergoglio's very early articulations right after the Cold War, were also about a way of seeing, and interpreting what was going on in the world (like Merton's early analysis at the beginning of the Cold War). These people were *already* the "subjects" of their own history, rather than passive "objects" of someone else's history (the European great powers in history of colonialism and imperialism, and the superpowers during the Cold War). God's holy faithful people were not a passive "class", which others (elites) had to awaken, or enlighten them (conscientization and class consciousness), so this class could engage in a social struggle with other classes (i.e. Marxism and Gramsci's Marxism).

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the founding text of critical theory, and their point of departure and diagnosis of modernity (i.e. Francis Bacon, England's most important Renaissance philosopher) in *Spe Savi*, his encyclical letter on Christian hope (2007, 16-17, 25), but offers an alternative way "Christian hope" can engage with these issues and problems.

40. Borghesi, 62. Pope Francis's emphasis on the evangelization of culture goes back Pope Paul VI, but is also is rooted in the way papal documents, the Second Vatican Council, and the CELAM conferences dealt with culture, evangelism, and Christianity

41. Borghesi, 63.

42. Ivereigh, 95

43. Ivereigh, 95-96.

In other words, these ideas from the Rio de la Plate school came together as a combination of popular religiosity, the evangelization of culture, and the *teología del pueblo*.[44] The new "agents", even amidst the existing structures, are – and, always have been, what Bergoglio, and the Rio de la Plata school came to call, God's holy faithful people, the poor of God. In other words, from the *teología del pueblo* provides, or can begin to provide, a new basis for agency from the perspective of the agency-structure debate in the theory of international relations. Perhaps, the argument is similar here to the social and political location of the evangelical awakening in the 13th century – as a precursor to the rise of evangelical poverty, the Franciscans, as a response to the early rise of capitalism, the market economy (i.e. this is a medieval example of the agency-structure problem in the medieval "mixed-actor" type of international system. Pope Francis's culture of encounter is a similar type of holistic and integrative response – theology, spirituality, pastoral practice, and social action, performing, demonstrating the gospel life – as a way to restore agency – over structure, and with an alternative discourse, which will now be examined, one which challenges the dominant discourse of the Western great powers in the age of globalization.

Fourthly, the Rio de la Plata school was also influenced by Augusto Del Noce (1910-1989), one of the most important Italian philosophers and political thinkers of the post-war period (who also had a was profound influence on Methol). It is with their ideas the school was able to develop a wide-ranging critique of "atheistic humanism" evident not only in Marxism, but also in capitalism and liberalism.[45] Bergoglio was not only strongly influenced by Henri de Lubac's analysis of the Church and "spiritual worldliness", but also the analysis of "atheistic humanism" by De Lubac and Del Noce.[46] It is because of this early analysis of capitalism, liberalism, and globalization what Pope Francis has said about these things is distorted and misconstrued, and lead to false accusations he is a Marxist or socialist, without understanding how the Rio de la Plata school so strongly influenced his views on ecclesial geopolitics, political ideologies, and international relations.

This is clear from the analysis of Rio de la Plata school on the Church, modernity, political ideologies, and globalization. This analysis, which can

44. Ivereigh, 185-186.
45. Ivereigh, 142.
46. Borghesi, 163-176.

be located at the level of analysis of the international system, is perhaps surprisingly linked to three leading American scholars of international relations – Francis Fukuyama, Samuel Huntington, and Zbigniew Brzezinski. It is only Brzezinski, for Del Noce, who contrary to Fukuyama and Huntington, *already* in the early, heady, optimistic, post-Cold War period of U.S. unipolarity, warned against the possible failure of the liberal project – the predicament we are now in.[47] Liberals and conservatives (at least in the English-speaking world) are lost, the end of history – well, has not ended, but it has come back with a vengeance. The *telos* of the liberal project, rooted in (linear) doctrine of progress, has come apart, and they do not know what to do. It came back with a vengeance in the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s, and it has now come back with a vengeance in the rise of a variety of types of secular and religious forms of populism, nationalism, and extremism.[48]

These influential American scholars developed key analyses of the end of the Cold War, and the future of international relations – Francis Fukuyama's thesis on "the end of history" (1989, 1992), Samuel P. Huntington's thesis on the "clash of civilizations" (1993, 1996), and Zbigniew Brzezinski's thesis on the "permissive cornucopia", i.e. the moral and economic crisis of the West (1993).[49] Broadly, Borghesi accurately reflects what is constituted as the scholarly mainstream in the United States, as part of his analysis of how Bergoglio was influenced by Methol, Del Noce, and the Rio de la Plata school. In fact, John Mearsheimer's *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (2001), on the timeless, and perennial truths of power politics and political realism, was far more influential in the early post-Cold war era, than Brzezinski's, *Out of Control: Global Turmoil on the Eve of the 21st Century* (1993), which was ridiculed at the time. This book set out Brzezinski's thesis on the moral crisis of the West and capitalism and consumerism, which went against the grain of the heady, triumphal, American optimism of the time – the collapse of the

47. (2017). "The End of the End of History". *Hedgehog Review*: *Critical Reflections on Contemporary Culture* 19/3.

48. Perhaps the return of the concept of "political religion", developed as an explanation for these ideologies in the 1930s and 1940s may come back into prominence.

49. Brzezinski, Z. (1993). *Out of Control: Global Turmoil on the Eve of the 21st Century*. Brzezinski was Professor of International Relations at Columbia University, and was Catholic, and a Polish-born/Polish-American who was President Jimmy Carter's national security advisor (1977-1981).

Soviet Union, the end of communism, the defeat of Iraq in the first Gulf War (1990-91), and the start of a "new world order" (President George H. Bush).[50]

The Rio de la Plata school's analysis – and Bergoglio's, regarding capitalism, globalization, and international relations in Argentina, Latin America in the 1990s, and, now as Pope Francis – is strikingly similar to Brzezinski's early warning (1993) to the West against its triumphalism in the aftermath of end of the Cold War. This is not surprising since his views were mediated by Methol Ferré and the Rio de la Plata school (Del Noce died in December 1989). What made Brzezinski's analysis so prescient for them is that it anticipated the failure of the liberal project since the 1990s, and especially after the financial crisis of 2008, and the consequences of the rise of poverty, inequality, populism, nationalism, and religious nationalism. Brzezinski, far from glorying in the triumphalism of the collapse of the Soviet Union and communism (even though he was a strong anti-communist), argued this brought neither economic stability nor social democracy to the former Soviet Union, nor central (Eastern) Europe, or to the rest of the world. The end of communism or totalitarianism (what he calls the "coercive Utopia"), has not led to democratic consolidation, but to a time of "fragmentation" – disunity in Europe, dangerous eruptions in Islamic republics, and in the U.S. and in the West, the evils of a "permissive cornucopia of infinite desires", and appetites – material, sensual, and sexual, now spreading to the new central European democracies, with unrestrained hedonism, self-gratification, and self-indulgence. This has led to the collapse of Western moral and spiritual values, a spiritual desolation reminiscent of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's critique of the West (in the late 1970s), and later John-Paul II, critique of capitalism and consumerism in democratic Poland and the West (late 1990s). Brzezinski's prescient argument, greed has blinded the eyes of the rich minority to the needs of the poor and suffering in many parts of the world, is now remarkably reminiscent of Pope Francis's early attack on the globalization of indifference to the needs of poor when he visited Lampedusa when his pontificate began.

This is a brief background to the concepts underlying Pope Francis's contention we are now living – and, for some time, have been living, in a global economic and moral crisis, and a time of world fragmentation. What Bergoglio observed in Buenos Aires, in Argentina, and in Latin America, and

50. Vilas, C. M. (1994). "Latin America in the `New World Order': Prospects for Democracy". *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 8/2, 257-282.

what he articulated as Archbishop of Buenos Aires (and it was Benedict XVI who made him archbishop), was that globalization leads to what he called a "culture of fragmentation" and "culture of non-integration in the world". This seems to be saying something stronger – than conventional criticisms of globalization, deeply rooted in his daily pastoral practice, for it is saying globalization leads to a *culture* of fragmentation and a *culture* of non-integration, a deeply embedded vision, something that is almost second nature, a vision of people and things as disposable when they are no longer needed.[51] What Pope Francis says is now necessary – is beyond the perspective of what constitutes the mainstream study of international relations. He says, what is necessary is that 'we must go out of ourselves,' and this is one of his key phrases to understand what the culture of encounter is, what it is about, and how we should act in the world, i.e. what section 2 identified in critical theory – as theory as everyday social practice in international relations. What Bergoglio called the "two transcendences" was how we should "go beyond ourselves" – firstly, in our *encounter* with the God (concept of spirituality as prayer, meditation, and contemplation set out in section1); and, secondly, through our *encounter* with our neighbour in service, starting with those most in need, on the margins, the periphery of society.[52]

4. Conclusion

It has been a tradition since the sixth century for a new pope to choose a papal name, one which honours a saint or a previous pope (or both). Jorge

51. Fares dates the earliest articulations of Pope Francis's concept of the culture of encounter to the time when he was archbishop of Buenos Aires to quite specific events: (i) a lecture, "The Need for a Political Anthropology: A Pastoral Problem" (1989), (ii) significantly, the *Te Deum* (short for *Te deum laudamus,* "Thee, O God, we praise", a Latin Christian hymn, which goes back to the fourth century), and is celebrated as a national religious service every year on May 25, 1999, which is Argentina's national holiday, and it commemorates the revolution of May 25, 1810 that began the process creating the Argentine state, and (iii) a lecture a few months later, "Education within a Culture of Encounter" (September 1, 1999). He called for a culture of encounter an antidote to nostalgia and pessimism. In other words, very early on he recognized, as Benedict XVI before him, the contradictory uniting and fragmenting potential of globalization. On Benedict XVI's analysis of the ambivalence of globalization, see his encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate: on Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth* (June 2009). Fares, D. (2015). *The Heart of Pope Francis*, Herder and Herder Books, 41. See also Clark, I. (1997): *Globalization and Fragmentation: International Relations in the Twentieth Century.* Cambridge.

52. Fares, D. (2015). *The Heart of Pope Francis*. Herder and Herder Books, 16-17.

Mario Bergoglio was the first pope who dared to choose the name "Francis" – he said to honour the memory of Francis of Assisi, the saint who was especially concerned for the poor. St. Francis also cast aside his lavish lifestyle, and by the way he performed the gospel life, posed a challenge to what Bergoglio already has called the "luxury, pride, vanity of the civil and ecclesiastical powers of the time". His biographers indicate (unlike St. Francis) this simple life is how he has always lived regardless of his public stature or station in life. In his signature concept, "the culture of encounter", which is deeply embedded in the transformative life story of Francis of Assisi. This story includes a variety of types of encounter, the roots of Pope Francis's culture of encounter, the basic elements of a radical, counter-cultural, way St. Francis performed the gospel life – encounter, conversion, knowledge, and transformation. This constitutes a specific "way of seeing the world" – a continuity between St. Francis and Pope Francis – a holistic and integrative way of bringing together theology, spirituality, and action in the world, which has led to the development of the culture of encounter, first in relation to the impact of globalization on the poor, the marginalized, and those on the periphery of society in Argentina and Latin America. Now, it also is the way Pope Francis has performed the gospel life, as he has drawn attention to how key global issues affect similar people in every society around the world. He has also started to show how some of the basic principles of the culture of encounter can be extended in the Middle East in interreligious dialogue, with Ahmed el-Tayeb, the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmed el-Tayeb, and their co-signing of the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*.

4

THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE HOLY SEE AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF BISHOPS. GENERAL CONTEXT AND EXPECTATIONS

Juan Ignacio Arrieta Ochoa de Chinchetru

On September 22, 2018 an "interim agreement" was signed in Beijing between the Holy See and the People's Republic of China for appointing bishops. The Diplomatic and religious significance of this gesture without precedent paves the way for the reconstruction of relations between the two Parties and the consolidation of the Catholic Church in the Middle Kingdom.

1. Provisions and uncertainties of a period not far away

This is a first concrete result achieved after long years of slow negotiations[1] that during the Pontificate of Francis have shown signs of hopeful progress.

The first of these publicly known signals came on the occasion of the Pope's trip to Korea in August 2014. The airplane of the Pope was authorized, for the first time, to fly over Chinese territory and, as is the protocol on these trips, when entering country air space the Pope sent a telegram to President Xi Jinping in these terms: "upon entering the Chinese airspace, I extend the best

1. For the most recent history of these relationships, see the various works contained in the volume Giovagnoli, A.-Giuniper E. (a cura di) (2019). *L'Accordo tra Holy See and Cina. I cattolici cinesi tra passato e futuro*, with Prefazione Card. Pietro Parolin. Vatican City 2019. See also Parolin, P. (2017). "Il `ponte' creato da Celso Costantini tra the Holy See and the Cina". *Ephemerides Iuris Canonici* 57, 5-18.

wishes to your Excellency and all your citizens and invoke divine blessings for the good and well-being of the nation".[2]

On the return flight, the Pope told reporters the intensity with which he had lived, along with the pilots, those first minutes in which he flew over the Chinese sky: "Then I returned to my post," he continued, "and I began to pray for that great and noble Chinese people, a wise people".

And when on that same occasion he was specifically asked if he wanted to visit China, he replied without delay:

> What if I wanted to go to China? Sure, tomorrow! Yes. We respect the Chinese people. The Church asks only freedom to carry out its mission, to do its work: it does not set any other condition. We must not forget that fundamental document for the Chinese problem that was the Letter sent to the Chinese by Pope Benedict XVI. That letter is still current: reread it. The Holy See is always open to contacts, always, because it feels true esteem for the Chinese people.[3]

The Pope referred to the letter of 30 June 2007 which Benedict XVI wrote to the bishops, priests, consecrated persons and lay faithful in the People's Republic of China which sought, above all, to promote unity among the two Catholic communities that over time had been formed in the country:[4] the so-called "patriotic" community, which had accepted the conditions set by the authorities to fit into the official structure of the "United Front" Party, and the so-called "clandestine" community, which had not accepted those rules.

The objective of Benedict XVI's letter was therefore not political, but spiritual. He did not try to accuse the authorities, but to give an answer, taking into account the specific situation of the Country, to the questions that Chinese Catholics asked about how to behave in a Christian manner in the face of the demands of the environment.

Demonstrating a deep spiritual affection for all Catholics in China and a cordial esteem for the entire Chinese people, the Pope declared abolished the faculties that had been given in the past to the "clandestine" Church, considering that the emergency situation of Catholics in the country had been

2. http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2014/08/14/0571/01247.html (accessed: 2019/05/14).

3. http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2014/08/19/0585/01294.html (accessed: 2019/05/14).

4. http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/it/letters/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20070527_china.html (accessed: 2019/05/14).

substantially behind and now, and in turn, the priority is the effective union of the two Catholic communities that had distanced themselves.

Regarding the authorities, Benedict XVI declared himself

> fully available and open to a serene and constructive dialogue… to find a solution to the various problems related to the Catholic community, and thus reach the desired normalization of relations between the Holy See and the government of the People's Republic of China, in the certainty that Catholics, with the free profession of their faith and a generous testimony of their life, contribute, as good citizens, to the good of the Chinese people.[5]

Pope Benedict's initiative in 2007 opened a period of dialogue and encouraging auspices, but then they did not have the expected fruit. Between 2010 and 2011, perhaps because of mutual misunderstandings, episcopal ordinations were restarted in China without a pontifical mandate, a practice initiated in April 1958 that had been forming a Catholic hierarchy outside Rome and parallel to the bishops who remained faithful (clandestine). The truth is that, over the following years, many of the bishops who had been unlawfully ordained then requested and received communion with the Holy See.

The existence of a hierarchy of bishops affects the civil authority, which gave rise, in addition, to its own legal system in ecclesiastical matters particular to China. In all these years, the United Front – Party entity that integrates and directs the five religious confessions constitutionally recognized in China, including the Catholic one – has produced a whole legislation on religious matters that must observe the Catholic hierarchy admitted to "registration" (that is, the set of bishops, presbyters, etc., inscribed in an official "register" that authorizes them to act as such). Thus, that legislation, in addition to state civil norms in religious matters (on property administration, registration of religious entities, etc.), is also composed of "canonical" norms (on the organization of dioceses, parishes, on appointments). These are, norms on strictly ecclesial matters, formally produced by the "Episcopal Conference", created by the government (not recognized by Rome), which congregates a certain number of "registered" bishops. There is, therefore, what we might call

5. http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/it/letters/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20070527_china-dichiaraz.html (accessed: 2019/05/14).

a peculiar "canonical" order, parallel in part to that of the universal Church: a reality that must necessarily be taken into account.[6]

Before the new consecrations without papal mandate, the Holy See was forced to declare illegitimate the episcopal ordinations that took place on the 4th [7] and July 16th, 2011.[8] However, in the absence of specific information – mainly due to the precariousness of communications – the effective degree of freedom with which each of the consecrated bishops involved had acted could not be assessed. Therefore, it was problematic to make a formal statement on the excommunication *latae sententiae* (automatic) provided in can. 1382 of the Code of Canon Law on purpose for those who "confers someone the episcopal consecration without papal mandate, as well as [for] the one who receives the consecration from him".[9] The new consecrated bishops, on the other hand, had previously been warned of the consequences that these acts could have, so that it was reasonable to take an act of responsibility attached to their free acceptance.

In this regard, the Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts also had to declare, interpreting can. 1382 of the Code of Canon Law. The Pontifical Council established that the crime of illegitimate episcopal consecration is committed by all co-consecrators of the new bishop –it is traditional that three or more bishops intervene in a new episcopal ordination– adding that the responsibility of each of them and consequently, the effectiveness of the automatic penalty *latae sententiae* depended on the personal freedom with which they had intended the act.[10]

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6. This fucking see: Bappenheim, S. T. (2018). "Ordinamento cinese in religious matters: Cenni di somiglianza al Tedesco system. *Ephemerides Iuris Canonici*, in press.

7. http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2011/07/04/0421/01055.html (accessed: 2019/05/14).

8. http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2011/07/16/0438/01096.html (accessed: 2019/05/14).

9. "Da varie fonti di informazione the Holy See was the Corrente che alcuni dei Vescovi, contattati dalle Autorità Civili, avevano manifestato volontà propria di non partecipare ad un'ordinazione illegittima, mettendo in anche atto di Resistenza form: nonostante cio, i Presuli sarebbero stati obbligati to prendervi part". (Statement of the Holy See on July 16, 2011, *ibid*.).

10. Cf. Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts, Declaration of June 6, 2011, in *Communicationes* 43, 30-33.

2. The diplomacy of culture

This crisis was closed, as has been said, on the occasion of the Pope's trip to South Korea, as he flew over the Chinese sky with the message of warm wishes to President Xi.

Subsequently, bilateral contacts have continued in various ways. In an important interview he granted to the Agency "Reuters" on June 20, 2018, when asked by the journalist about the Vatican's relations with China, the Pope said they were already in a good spot and that they were following three different paths.

First, the Pope said, are the official relations, conducted by the Second Section of the Vatican Secretary of State, with scheduled periodic conversations and meetings with delegations of the Chinese government, held in Rome or Beijing.

Second, there were human relationships, exchanges of courtesy and good understanding messages or meetings between people. The Pope described them as peripheral human channels that should not be discarded, because they expressed the goodwill of both the Holy See and the Chinese government: they served to improve the respective knowledge and strengthen the trust of one another.

Thirdly, the Pope mentioned that the main channel of approach to China was for him, the cultural route, which has later been called the "diplomacy of culture". The Pope recalled then how in recent years the academic and cultural contacts between the Vatican and China had increased and that there were advanced projects in this area.

To name a few, it is worth mentioning, for example, meetings held at the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, and other Roman ecclesiastical Universities, with delegations or exponents of Chinese culture or artistic world, or conferences held by a member of the Curia in Beijing, presenting the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church, at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, or the international relations of the Holy See at MINZU University, also in Beijing. Much more political and media relevance had, in this same context, the visit of the President of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences to China in February 2018.[11] Many other similar initiatives could also be noted here.

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11. Cf. Ai Jun, Bishop truth about China's states religious freedom, *Global Times,* February 8, 2018; Redazione, Bishop Sanchez Sorondo. The realizzatrice Migliore della Cina dottrina sociale della Chiesa, *AsiaNews*, 7 febbraio 2018.

In fact, from some time ago, it was becoming clear that the path of artistic and cultural exchange was the way to prepare for the normalization of relations between the two Parties. It was, for example, evident in the course of visits to Rome by Chinese personnel outside official circles – such as Dr. Zhu Jiancheng, Secretary General of the China Culture Investment Fund, or artist Yan Zhang – who had already intervened long ago in China's approach to Middle Eastern countries through this type of "culture diplomacy". On the occasion of one of these meetings, the China Culture Investment Fund presented to the Holy Father, on behalf of the Chinese people, two important works of art by Master Zhang, bound for the Vatican Museums. This present –he told himself then–[12] was the response to the message sent by the Pope in 2014 to President Xi when he flew over Chinese sky on his one-way trip to South Korea.

In the framework of contacts of this type, for example, the form that may be considered perhaps the main concrete expression of this "diplomacy of culture" took shape. On November 21, 2017, the official announcement of an exchange of art exhibitions between the Vatican and China took place in the *Sala Stampa* of the Holy See, with exhibitions that were to take place simultaneously in the Vatican Museums and the Forbidden City from Beijing. The interventions of the guests of the Celestial Empire, which can be read in the official statement,[13] are unequivocal about the instrumental nature of these two exhibitions as a way to achieve more prominent results. In addition, as planned, a week later an analogous presentation to the Chinese press of the exhibition project took place at the Official Government Information Center. What was not, however, expected is that the only daughter of President Xi Jimping, and a nephew of the President himself, of recognized political solvency, would participate significantly in this press conference in Beijing. Finally, the opening of the exhibition in the capital city took place on May 28, 2019, amid a general assessment of the high significance of the event.[14]

12. Expressly said Secretary General of the China Culture Investment Fund, on the intervention of November 21, 2017, as shown in the link next note and translate as follows: "On 31 May this year, we donated to Pope two great works of master Zhang Yan on behalf of the Chinese people. This is the response to the greeting addressed by Pope 2014 to the Secretary General Xi and the Chinese people".

13. http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2017/11/21/0814/01758.html. (accessed: 2019/5/14). Cf. Winfield, N. (2017/11/21). "Vatican, China stall in exchange art amid hard diplomacy". *The Washington Post*.

14. Cf. http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1152206.shtml (accessed: 2019/05/14); A. Giovagnoli, A. (2019/06/03). "Tra Holy See and Cina è l'ora della cultura della diplomazia". *Avvenire*.

This has not been, however, neither the first nor the only cultural expression of relations between the People's Republic of China and the Holy See. The Holy See has been invited by the Chinese government to participate with its own Stand at the International Horticultural Exhibition opened in Beijing on April 28, 2019.[15] The initiative is also part of the path of culture that is moving towards the normalization of relations, as the participation of two Chinese bishops along with the Secretary of State.[16] A few weeks later, an important Congress was organized by the "Confucius Center" of the Catholic University of the *Sacro Cuore* of Milan, on the occasion of the centenary of the encyclical *Maximun illud.*[17]

All this is part of the global picture of human and cultural relations in which the Provisional Agreement signed in Beijing for the appointment of Bishops was registered on September 12, 2018.

3. Accept the risk of trading

The opposition of opinions that, outside and within the Church, called for any initiative that led to some kind of agreement with the Chinese authorities is known. The contrast was nothing more than the expression of the set of hopes and uncertainties, of risks and fears with which, in good law, it was perceived by one and the other a step of this magnitude. The debate intensified considerably since the beginning of 2018 when, with a certain probability of success, the envoys of the Holy See tried to prepare the conditions that made an agreement viable. From the news that arose at that time, it could be concluded that it was necessary to compose certain personal situations within the Chinese hierarchy, in order to be able to enter into the minimum boundary established by the authorities of the Country. This information indicated that certain legitimate bishops were being asked for their availability to modify the

15. http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2019/04/16/0320/00645.htl; http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1148017.shtml (accessed: 2019/05/14).

16. Particular importance was in this context the interview granted by the Secretary of State for Global Times, published on May 12, 2019, where Cardinal Parolin illustrated the progress in relations between the Holy See and the People's Republic Cina: http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1149623.shtml (2019/6/3).

17. Cfr. Valente G. (2019/05/13). "Due vescovi alla cinesi Cattolica di Milano, insieme a Parolin". *Vatican Insider*: https://www.lastampa.it/2019/05/13/vaticaninsider/due-vescovi-cinesi-alla-cattolica-di-milano-insieme-a-parolin-meUcOrf0kb5hKk94LFaymK/pagina.html (accessed: 2019/5/14).

position that the Holy See had previously conferred to them and relegated to a lower level.[18]

Some voices of high prelates were heard warning about the negative consequences that any agreement with the current government regime in China could have, while the Holy See expressed the need to reach an agreement as an imperative of an ecclesial nature[19] and despite the contradictory news that came from some places about the application of provisions that conditioned personal and collective religious freedom.[20]

However, not all the information that was put into circulation was disinterested. Some misrepresented specific approaches or facts, such as the case of Bishop Zhuang, Shantou, 87, described in some Western media as prelate of the clandestine community – to which, in fact, he had never acceded – that had been forced to give up his position to an official candidate.[21] Others took the distances of the interpretations that were made, such as the "clandestine" bishop Giuseppe Wei, requesting the Catholics of Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, critics of the agreement that was being forged, not to hinder and refrain from speaking on behalf of Catholics in China, who followed the ongoing contacts with confidence and fidelity to the Holy See.[22]

In the middle of June 2018, when few months were left to conclude the agreement, a unique exchange of signals took place between both Parties through the press. As indicated above, on June 20, an interview with the Pope by Philip Pullella was published on the Reuters Agency site, which, along with other issues, dealt with the issue of relations with China and the three ways for which they were making progress: the official one, that of personal relations and cultural examples.

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18. Cf. Lin, J. B. (2018/1/22). "Il Vaticano domanda ai vescovi legittimi di da farsi part per lasciare spazio a quelli illegittimi". *Asian News*; Ruohan, Z. X.-L. (2018/01/25). "Vatican Demands Chinese underground church bishops step down: report". *Global Times*.

19. Cf. Redazione (2018/02/08). "Retired Vatican cardinal hits back at over Deal with China". *Associated Press*; Lesegretain, C. (2018/02/01). "Le Vatican Reaffirm sa volonté d'accord avec la Chine". *La Croix*; Giovagnoli, A. (2018/02/01). "A chiara anche unità di Strada per la Chiesa cinese". *Avvernire*; Chambraud P. (2018/02/01) "L'ouverture du Tensions south Vatican vis-à-vis de la Chine". *Le Monde*; Meynard, T. M. (2018/02/03). "Vie per l'aggiornamento della Chiesa cattolica cinese". *Civiltà Cattolica*; Cristiansen, D. (2018/02/12). "Why the Vatican's potential Deal with China is a good thing". America.

20. Cf. Martorell, J. (2018/02/03). "China even more closely the siege on religions". *Efe*.

21. Cf. Valente, G. (2018/02/08). "Vera storia di vescovo Zhuang fedele al Papa e `patriorico'". *Vatican Insider*.

22. Cf. Valente, G. (2018/02/26). "Cina, vescovo il `underground'. Seguiamo il potato ci fidiamo the Signore". *Vatican Insider*.

But, in addition, the Pope was explicit about the personal attitude with which he himself faced the problem, about his conviction that they were necessary steps and his discrepancy regarding some opinions expressed also within the Church. Directly asked about the disagreement expressed on the subject by a specific dignitary, the Pope expressed understanding by the suspicion that such warnings reflected, and added immediately by deciding with all the strength of the office he occupies at the head of the Church: "the dialogue is a risk, but I prefer the risk to the sure defeat of not dialoguing".[23]

These words of the Pope were transcribed and glossed immediately in a documented article appeared in *Global Times* on July 11 signed by Zhang Yu.[24] As the experts immediately observed, it was not the routine comment of an expert; in the case of the "informal" newspaper of the Beijing government and taking into account the content it was about, it sounded more like an "editorial" designed to mark a position of greater authority.[25]

This article took up the Pope's considerations on divergent opinions and the need to risk and, after echoing the internal resistance to the Church emphasizing the role of American politicians, reported the opinion of Professor Yang Fenggang (Purdue University's Center on Religion and Chinese Society) that correctly identified the reason that moved the Church to seek an agreement with the Chinese authorities: the reconciliation between the two Catholic communities ("patriotic" and "clandestine") that had been formed in China since the constitution of the People's Republic (1949) and the Patriotic Association (1957). But, in addition, the journalist then added another opinion of the same professor that no one had ever formulated before, and that neither can it be thought that he casually slipped into the *Global Times* article. It was

23. The full text in Italian answer to the next question: "Come eat risponde alle preoccupazioni quelle Cardinale Zen? Reply. Il Cardinale Zen insegnava teologia nei seminari patriotici. Penso che è un po 'spaventato. Anche l'età influisce forse un po'. È un uomo buono. And I venuto to parlare with me, l'Ricevuto ho, ma è un po 'spaventato. Il dialogue è un rischio, ma che il preferisco non rischio the sicura sconfitta di non dialogare. Per quanto riguarda i tempi, qualcuno che sono tempi cinesi says. Io dico che sono i tempi di Dio, Vanti, tranquilli" (riprodotto da *Il seismograph*, June 20, 2018). See also: Seppia, C. (2018/07/11). "Il Papa your Cile, immigrazione, climate and dialogue with Cina". *Vatican News*.

24. Cf. Yu, Z. (2018/07/11). "Conservatives in Catholic Church close ranks to stall Dialogue with China, but won't succeed: analysts". *Global Times.*

25. Cf. Giovagnoli, A. (2018/07/13). "Il Global Times its a possible visit in Cina. Pensieri dalla China: il più di Papa Nixon". *Avvenire.*

claimed that an eventual visit of the Pope to China would have a meaning and an impact greater than that of President Nixon's visit to China in 1972.[26]

The Chinese effort to achieve this visit was evident and had been expressed in various contexts during the previous (and following) months, and the article in *Global Times* presented that as objective as the culmination of a whole crescendo of reciprocal greetings, invitations and exchange of gifts from Pope Francis and President Xi Jimping in recent years, which the journalist himself mentioned.

4. The agreement on the appointment of bishops and other measures of the Holy See

Finally, as he had been announced from the Chinese official press days before[27] on September 22, 2018, the Holy See issued the signing of the agreement, while announcing two other important decisions.

First, an "Official Communiqué" reported the Provisional Agreement on the appointment of Bishops that had been signed that same day in Beijing by the under-Secretary of the Section of the Secretary of State for Relations with States and of the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, acting as heads of the respective delegations.[28] The Communiqué further affirms that the agreement was the result of a gradual and reciprocal rapprochement of the Parties and also a long journey of weighted negotiations. In addition, a periodic assessment of its implementation is planned, which creates the conditions for a broader bilateral collaboration in the context of a fruitful institutional dialogue that positively contributes to the life of the Catholic Church in China, to good of the Chinese people and for peace in the world.

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26. "Thinking about Global affairs, Vatican-Cina relations could be the single most important relations in the word today. If Pope Francis could visit China, ITS significance and impacts could be bigger than Richard Nixon's President visit to China in 1972. It will be an earth-shaking and word-changing development".

27. Cf. Ruohan, L. (2018/09/18). "Vatican to send delegation to China before possible bishop's deal". *Global Times*; Strong, M. (2018/09/18). "Hong Kong warms cardinal Vatican Reches of split if agreement With China". *Global Times*; Ning, Y. (2018/09/19). "China-Vatican rapprochement good for Catholics". *Global Times*.

28. Official statement in *L'Ossservatore Romano,* 2018/09/23, 4; *Communicationes* 50, 2018, 401.

The brief Communiqué and the reference to the development of bilateral relations added nothing to the content of the Agreement as such,[29] so, at least in the short term, it will have to be deduced from the concrete behaviors and the reactions that arise in both Parties.[30]

The second important announcement of September 22 was the decision to admit to full communion all the bishops who, until then, had been irregularly ordered by indication of the governing authorities: this was, clearly, another "condition" of the same Agreement. For this purpose, the Holy See published an "Information Note on the Catholic Church in China",[31] affirming that "in order to sustain the proclamation of the Gospel in China, the Holy Father Francis has decided to readmit in the full ecclesial communion the `official' Bishops ordained without a pontifical mandate". Then followed the nominal relationship of seven bishops, plus that of an eighth prelate who died a year and a half ago, "who, before dying, had expressed the desire to be reconciled with the Holy See".

That "Information Note" also manifested the Pope's sponsorship that this reconciliation of the bishops consents to overcome the wounds of the past, and allows the Chinese Catholic community to live in a more fraternal collaboration as a witness to the love and forgiveness of Christ.

Finally, the third announcement, contextually released with the previous two by the Vatican Press Room on September 22, was the erection of the diocese of Chengde[32] as a suffragan of Beijing, located in the civil district of the "Chengde City" in Hebei Province, modifying the confines of the dioceses

29. Bishop Quinglu Meng, vice president of the so-called Episcopal Conference of China revealed on March 3, 2019 that the provisional accord has two years of existence, the end of which could be extended or renewed, and added that the procedure laid down conceded Pope within one month to confirm or not the nominee. According to information then published by *Appledaily* on March 6, Cardinal Fernando Filoni both as mons. Fang Xingyao confirmed that the agreement had two years of operation (https://hk.news.appledaily.com/local/daily/article/20190306/20627095).

30. Three days later, on the flight back from Tallinn, the Pope revealed to journalists who had been the protagonists of these agreements patients: "La squadra vaticana ha lavorato tanto, vorrei fare alcuni nomi: monsignor Claudio Maria Celli, con pazienza ha dialogato per anni, per anni. Poi Gianfranco Rota Graziosi, un umile curiale di 72 anni che voleva farsi prete per andare in parrocchia ed è rimasto in Curia per aiutare in questo processo. E poi il Segretario di Stato (Pietro Parolin, ndr), che è un uomo molto devoto, ma ha una speciale devozione alla lente: tutti i documenti li studia: punto, virgola, accenni. Questo mi dà una sicurezza molto grande. Questa squadra con queste qualità è andata avanti"; Tornelli, A. (2018/09/25). "Io sono responsibile dell'accordo con la Cina. Ci sarà dialogo sui candidati, ma i vescovi li nomina il Papa". *Vatican Insider*.

31. See *L'Ossservatore Romano*, September 23, 2018, 5; *Communicationes* 50, 2018, 401-402.

32. See *L'Ossservatore Romano*, September 23, 2018, 5; *Communicationes* 50, 2018, 402.

of Jehol/Jinzhou and Chifeng. Also, in this case everything suggests another "condition" established by the Chinese government, which also allowed "to recognize" as head of that headquarters to mons. Joseph Guo, general secretary of the Chinese "Episcopal Conference", and for three terms a member of the National People's Congress (the Chinese Parliament), who had been appointed in 2010 Bishop of Chengde.[33]

In fact, mons. Guo would be one of the two bishops from the People's Republic of China who would participate a few days later, in Rome, as delegates of the Chinese Bishops in holding the regular meeting of the Synod of Bishops on Youth.[34] This has been, perhaps, the first notorious consequence of the signing of the Agreements.

The publication of this news was accompanied on September 22 by statements of the Secretary of State in which he pointed out punctually what the objectives were pursued by the Holy See.[35]

> The objective of the Holy See –he said– is a pastoral objective that is to help local Churches to enjoy conditions of greater freedom, autonomy and organization, so that they can devote themselves to the mission of proclaiming the Gospel and the integral development of the human person and society. For the first time, after so many decades, all bishops in China are in communion with the Bishop of Rome. There is a need for unity… and the agreement is put in this perspective: it is an instrument that we hope can help in this process, with the collaboration of all…, to live an authentic spirit of reconciliation between brothers, with concrete gestures that help overcome misunderstandings of the past.

All the indications of the Holy See have pointed, with extreme clarity, in the same direction. The Agreement tries, first and foremost, to help solve an ecclesial problem of unity of two communities that had been consolidating in China: a type of disunity that damages the Church in its deepest spiritual structure, understandable as the reasons for some and others, also validated by

33. This is not the time to develop the issue, but it should be noted that since the middle of last century, the Chinese authorities have changed for various reasons diocesan districts of the Church, so today in many cases do not match collecting the Pontifical Annuario and recognizes the Church. On this point, see: Arrieta, J. I. (2009). "L'organizzazione ecclesiastica in Cina: lacune, problemi e prospettive". *Ius Ecclesiae* 21, 525-548.

34. Cf. Valente, G. (2018/09/26). "Vescovi chinesi potranno prendere part to prossimo dei Vescovi Synod". *Vatican Insider*.

35. Cf. *L'Ossservatore Romano*, September 23, 2018, 5; *Communicationes* 50, 2018, 403.

so many signs of loyalty to the faith and long suffering of those who suffered with patience.[36]

"The complex reality of China and the fact that there does not appear to be a uniform praxis with regard to the application of the regulations for religious affairs", determine successively the publication of the Holy See, on the 28 of June 2019, states most concretely *Pastoral guidelines of the Holy See concerning the civil registration of clergy in China*, regarding the "approach to be adopted in relation to the obligation of presenting an application for civil registration".[37]

5. Prospects for the development of the Interim Agreement

It is not necessary to collect here the comments of the opposite sign that followed the signing of this provisional Agreement, which reproduced the positions expressed before the signature. Not being in the public domain the content of the Agreements there was no new data to comment. However, it has been made known that the agreement respects the inviolable right of the Pope to accept candidates presented for the episcopacy. Most likely, the selection and communication procedures that followed for this will be peculiar and it is quite likely that, at least in the form, initially follow as soon as the Chinese norms referred to above are established. In more general terms, the assessment of what has happened in the following months seems satisfactory, aware of having inaugurated working and communication methods that are functioning.[38]

I will limit myself only to some brief notes on these Agreements and on their possible evolution in the near future, by way of conclusion.

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36. See Summarizing the work of Giovagnoli, A. (2019). "L'accordo tra the Holy See and the Repubblica Popolare gird: annotazioni Giuridiche". *Ephemererides Iuris Canonici*, in press.

37. See: Holy See, "Pastoral guidelines of the Holy See concerning the civil registration of clergy in China": http://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2019/06/28/0554/01160.html (accessed: 2019/5/14).

38. In this regard, see the interview given by Cardinal Secretary of State to *Global Times* on May 12, 2019, which draws an important overview of the positive progress of these relations and its international significance, not only for China and for the Church in that country: http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1149623.shtml (accessed: 2019/05/14).

5.1. *Unprecedented event*

In the first place, it is difficult to deny the character of historical and unprecedented event that the Provisional Agreement between the People's Republic of China and the Holy See has meant for the appointment of bishops. For the first time, explicitly, the governing authorities recognize the right of the Roman Pontiff to say the last word on the appointment of a bishop in China; that is to say, on the appointment of a subject –let's not forget– that, from the Chinese point of view, in a way, is considered as an "official position".

To recognize that no bishop can be appointed outside the Pope is also to implicitly admit that this type of intervention by the Pope does not interfere with the constitutional limit that prevents any interference that may limit the independence of the People's Republic of China. First of all, because the Holy See does not respond to a State scheme that may put at risk at least the independence and autonomy of any Country. But, in addition, such recognition responds to the intimate structure of the Church and the "immanent" character of the universal dimension (with its principal expressions, of the Pope and of the College of Bishops) and of the particular dimension in which the Church is presented in each place under the guidance of the respective bishop (*LG* 23).

Certainly, this assessment requires understanding the spiritual nature of the Church. However, admitting the pontifical intervention is, as I say, approaching the understanding of the universal dimension of the Church and the non-exclusively local character of the appointment of these Chinese bishops, who, being in communion, become members of the Episcopal College, in whom the supreme power in the Church resides collegially (can. 336 CIC).[39]

5.2. *Transition period*

Secondly, the signing of the Agreement opens a period of laborious implementation of the agreed contents, which will not be free of contradictions and conflicts, not because of lack of cohesion of the ruling class, at different

39. "The Provisional Agreement of 22 September 2018, recognising the particular role of the Successor of Peter, logically leads the Holy See to understand and interpret the `independence' of the Catholic Church in China not in an absolute sense, namely as separation from the Pope and the Universal Church, but rather relative to the political sphere, as happens everywhere in the world in the relations between the Universal Church and the particular Churches". Cf. *Pastoral guidelines of the Holy See*…

levels and places of great a Country as is China, but also because the application of the Agreement as such may lead to divergent interpretations and initiatives.

It is a period, then, in need of serenity and understanding, in the face of inevitable short-term episodes, to keep the direction of travel clear. Decades of lack of contact and distrust cannot be overcome in a few weeks. The Chinese authorities continue to require clergy and religious to register as such to be able to "legitimately" exercise (according to civil law) their ministry, which, depending on the places, may entail different consequences and risks (also for faith), according to the line adopted by the local authorities. In this sense the Holy See, and in the first place Pope Francis with his Message to the Chinese Catholics of October 2018[40] try to encourage the Catholic faithful to keep hope and serenity alive, behaving with the responsibility that the specific circumstances require.

5.3. *Personal solutions*

On the other hand, and it would be a third point, there is news that the Vatican activity continues in its efforts to accommodate in the best possible way the personal situations of the episcopacy caused, mainly, by the admission to communion of the seven new bishops that have been indicated. Everything seems to indicate that these were also conditions of the Chinese side during the negotiation process. This implies, in some cases, generous personal sacrifices of bishops who have always been in communion with Rome[41]. From these steps, the Holy See published news on February 3, 2019, explaining the pastoral assignment that the Pope had conferred on each of the seven bishops received in communion on the previous September 22.[42]

40. Francisco (2018/10/19). "Pope Francis Message to Chinese Catholics and the universal Church, of the 26th October 2018". *L'Osservatore Romano*, 4-5.

41. To cite just one, the mons. Guo Xijin, bishop of Mindong, who gave place to the newly legitimated mons. Vincenzo Khan Silu: http://www.asianews.it/notizie-it/Mindong:-mons.-Guo-Xijin,-vescovo-sotterraneo,-lascia-il-posto-a-mons.-Zhan-Silu,-ex-scomunicato-45738.html (accessed: 2019/5/14).

42. Segreteria di Stato (2019/02/03). "Informazione sulla Chiesa Cattolica in Cina". *Osservatore Romano*, 2.

5.4. *Confrontation with the regulatory system*

Fourth, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that, as already noted, the Chinese ecclesial system has been producing its own rules and procedures of action that, at least at first, will have to be made compatible. There is, among them for example, a Regulation on the appointment of Bishops of 2012, which provides for the selection and appointment of candidates by the Episcopal Conference, and the subsequent registration by the governing authorities.

Even if the Agreement now signed unquestionably provides for the free intervention of the Pope in the appointments, it is likely that this principle can be combined with the respect of formalities established in the regulations in force in the Country. It seems that it has happened recently in the elective processes followed in two different dioceses (Jining and Hanzhong) with respect to a single candidate.[43]

5.5. *Possible approaches*

On the other hand, the requirement to preserve the country's own identity and the legitimate autonomy in cultural expressions and pastoral government are also presented to the Church. In that context there is talk of "sinization" of the Catholic Church in China, and also of "democratization": two aspects that, as proven by twenty centuries of history and the most recent development of Catholic theology, can also be compatible to some extent with the demands of communion that the faith of the Church requires.

Having accepted the intervention of the Pope in the appointment of the Bishops, the independence and autonomy that is requested for the local Churches cannot raise particular theological problems, because the Church does not present itself as a "federation" but as a "communion" of Churches, in which the diocesan Pastor – that is, the Bishop – does not represent the Bishop of Rome, as the dogmatic constitution *Lumen gentium* left well defined, but by Christ himself. The local Churches are autonomous, and except in matters of "unity" that belong to the common heritage of all the Church, the diocesan

43. Cf. Valente, G. (2019/04/18). "Cina, to Mindong anche il vescovo ausiliare Guo concelebrates Messa crismale. *Vatican Insider*.

Bishop has all the power of government to govern the diocese, without further dependence on the Pope and the College of Bishops which is expressed precisely in the act of communion of the members in the Episcopal College.

The request for "sinization", provided that it does not imply emptying the Catholic faith, is not a problem for the Church, since it has been trying for twenty centuries to do just that on the Five continents: to adapt the expressions of faith to the cultural context of every place. Assume the social demands of love for the Fatherland – remember the instruction of the Holy See on the legality of the rites to the ancestors in Japan for lacking specific religious sense-,[44] the respect for the laws and the rulers of society has been Catholic preaching learned from Jesus and his Apostles. In Countries such as the United States of America, for example, it is common for the Churches to display the flag of the country next to the Vatican flag (something, the latter, more difficult to understand, given the purely instrumental nature of the Vatican State regarding the Church of Rome). And for staying in Spain, so many will also remember that before the liturgical reform after the Second Vatican Council, when Mass was said in Latin, mention was made on two occasions of the Head of State: one in which it is currently the Prayer of the Faithful, and another in the Eucharistic Prayer where, after mentioning the Pope and the Bishop of the place, he returned to ask for General Franco: they were two liturgical requirements, it can be affirmed, of the Concordat then in force between the Holy See and Spain.

Finally, the request for greater "democratization" implicitly made to the Catholic Church in the "White Paper" of the "State Council Information" presented in April 2018, also within the requirements of faith, has also margins of welcome in the law and in the life of the Church. The "White Paper" demonstrates, however, the need to explain better and put into practice, on the Catholic side, what they are but baptismal demands of co-responsibility and participation in the life of the Church. The need to promote the exercise of the rights of the faithful recognized by the canon law and the duty of cooperation in the various offices and councils that the law provides, in line with the "synodal" spirit that the Pope is printing on the Church and which has had one of its greatest exponents in the last reform of the Synod of Bishops of 2018. A

44. Cf. Sacra Congregazione Propaganda Fide (1939/05/26). "Instrucion Pluries instanterque". *AAS* 28, 406-409. Cfr. In general, Metzler, J. (2000). "La Congregazione de Propaganda Fide e lo sviluppo delle Missioni cattoliche (ss. XVIII to XX)". *Yearbook of Church History* 9, 145-154.

certain idea of "democratization", compatible with the hierarchical structure that Christ gave to his Church when establishing the Sacred Order, belongs, and is included in that "synodal" style that has its root in the common condition of the baptized of all the faithful and, an important legal manifestation, in the relevant force that the Church possesses the "simple" advisory opinion to whom it has the responsibility to decide.

5.6. *Adaptability and canonical discipline*

This idea about the very peculiar canonical value of the "consultative vote" leads to another more general one about canon law, with which I would like to conclude these brief notes. Over twenty centuries, the law of the Church has been adapted to very heterogeneous circumstances, in very different countries and cultures, while maintaining strict fidelity to the common core that constitutes the faith of the Church. Over time, canon law has been forming its institutions characterized precisely by its high rate of elasticity and adaptability to the demands of each place. Suffice it to think that, at the present time, two Codes of Canon Law, one Latin and one Eastern, coexist, and that the latter is then developed through "twenty-three" Eastern *Sui iuris* Churches, each with its own particular right.

From this, it can be concluded that the ability of the right of the Church to also find a response to the specific demands that may arise in the People's Republic of China when harmonizing ecclesial institutions with the cultural demands of the place, without prevention of departure, accepting them as a characteristic element of a society in which the Church must also be embodied by mandate of its Divine Founder.

5
INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF PEACE

Abraham Skorka

Both the New Testament and the Qur'an consider the Hebrew Bible as a testimony of God's revelation to humanity. In its stories and ethical norms lies the worldview of Judaism and a great part of the cosmic vision of Christianity and Islam. It is the common source shared by the Abrahamic religions; therefore, let us begin by analyzing the importance of dialogue in the Hebrew Bible.

Although in the first two chapters of Genesis the Creator is described as verbally addressing the varieties of newly-fashioned creatures (including human beings), ordering their respective places in nature, in the third chapter something unprecedented and unique occurs: a *dialogue* between the Creator and human beings. It is not the voice of God commanding one of his creatures, but talking to the man and the woman once they have eaten the forbidden fruit. It is the first time that a creature, who has challenged the order imposed by God, responds to the Almighty.

Dialogue characterizes the whole Hebrew Bible,[1] is the means that allows human beings to reach their highest stature. Through dialogue humans can relate themselves to their Creator, and the Creator to them. The text of Deuteronomy[2] describes one of the punishments with which God will punish the

1. This concept was developed by many thinkers, for instance, Martin Buber. Meir Weiss wrote a master essay on the issue for an introduction to Buber's book *Darko Shel Mikra*, Bialik Institute, Jerusalem, 5757-1977 (Hebrew).

2. Deuteronomy 31:18.

misguided people of Israel, the people chosen to be participants in dialogue with the divine[3]. It declares that God will hide the divine face from them; the people will lose their partner of dialogue par excellence[4], as we read: "And I will surely hide My face on that day for all the evil which they shall have done".

Elsewhere, the prophet Ezekiel[5] consoles the discouraged people in their Babylonian Diaspora by saying that God will not withdraw from them ever again.[6] In Isaiah[7] the same concept is expressed by the prophet, saying that God will remove the heavenly gaze from the transgressing people even when they cry out for the divine presence. God abandons the dialogue with the people when the people commit the sin of abandoning the dialogue with their neighbor.

The story of the first crime committed in human history, when Cain kills his brother Abel, contains a very significant element. The Hebrew of Genesis[8] literally reads, "Cain said to his brother Abel… and when they were in the field, Cain set upon his brother Abel and killed him". What did Cain say? The text does not reveal his words, but goes on to tell of the first fratricide. Rashi, the eleventh-century exegete, says that there are many hypotheses raised by the Rabbinic Sages about this, but the simplest and most compelling explanation is that Cain started an argument that led to violence. The lack of dialogue led to the crime.

The second story we find in the Bible about the lack of dialogue and its consequences refers not to individuals but to a whole society. It is the well-known story of the Tower of Babel.

Just before the tale of the Tower of Babel, Genesis tells us that the founder of Babylon was Nimrod (10: 8-10), the son of Cush, and that he "was a mighty man… a great hunter before God". According to the rabbinic tradition[9] and also the first-century writer Josephus, it was Nimrod who urged the construction of the tower. Rashi opined that Nimrod's reputation as a hunter refers to his capability to pursue and ensnare people's hearts, and the tra-

3. Isaiah 43:10, 12; 44:8.
4. Jeremiah 33:5.
5. Ezekiel 39:29.
6. Similar concept is expressed by Isaiah in 54:8.
7. Isaiah 1:15.
8. Genesis 4:8.
9. Hullin 89a, Pesahim 94b, 'Erubin 53a, 'Avodah Zarah 53b.

ditional rabbinical interpretation of the expression "before God"[10] is that it means "against God".[11]

In other words, the rabbinic tradition understood that Nimrod imposed his will on his people to build a tower that would reach the heavens and thus defile God. Babel was governed by a tyrant.

Why did God prevent them from building the tower? Certainly, it wasn't because God feared human beings and their abilities at constructing skyscrapers! What was disgusting in God's eyes was the vanity evident in their zeal for this project, the arrogance of their leader, and the forceful and captivating speech with which he coerced them. Rabbi 'Ovadia Seforno explains that the sin of the people of Babylonia was to try to impose one leader, one religion, and one language over the whole of humanity; this would never allow the development of a person such as Abraham, who would question the beliefs of his contemporaries. Multifaceted language and the many languages in all their varieties, the rabbis thought, are a requirement for the maturation of human spirituality.

In the nineteenth century, Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin, in his biblical commentary *Ha'amek Davar,*[12] explains that having one language was not the sin of the people of Babylonia. Their sin was to oppress any person who thought in a different way. His explanation is based on the concepts developed in the Midrash:[13]

> No one from the generation of the Flood survived because they were steeped in robbery… but those who loved each other remained, as it is written: "and all the earth had one language". Therefore, a remnant of them was left. Rabbi (Yehudah HaNasi) says: Great is peace, for even if Israel were to practice idolatry but maintained peace among themselves, it is as if the Holy One, blessed be He, should say: "I have no dominion over them because there is peace among them … but when they argued [then they will be accused and punished]. […] From this you learn how great is peace and the avoidance of contention.

In his interpretation, Rabbi Berlin posited that intolerance had prevailed in Babylonia. Any people who thought in a different way than the prescribed norms were persecuted. The sages of the Midrash similarly understood how

10. Genesis 10:9.
11. Targum Yonatan, Rashi, etc. *ad locum.*
12. https://www.sefaria.org/Haamek_Davar_on_Genesis.11.9?lang=bi.
13. Bereshit Rabbah 38:6.

ancient Babylonian society functioned. They imagined that Nimrod had persecuted Abraham and tried to kill him for having different thoughts than society dictated.[14]

In addition, Rabbi Yehuda used a wordplay to explain Abraham's designation in Genesis 14:13 as *ha-Ivri* ("the Hebrew"). Yehuda said that Abraham stood alone on one side (*'ever*) and the whole of humanity stood on the other.[15] Abraham was the one who was different in that society.

It is important to stress Rabbi Yehudah's saying about the greatness of peace: that God would not interfere even with idol worship if peace is pursued. But such a reality is impossible. Idolatry, as seen in Nazism, Fascism, or Stalinism, is incompatible with peace. Rabbi Yehuda's saying is an ὀξύμωρον (oxymoron), a contradiction intended to stress the importance of peace.

The speech of demagogues like Nimrod is not false or true. It operates in an artificial reality of their own creation. Hitler believed in the supremacy of the Aryan race and in the noxiousness of the Jews. These were axiomatic "truths" for him, truths that were not debatable. In Nazi Germany there was only one speech, any variant was considered heretical and its adherents severely punished. At such points authoritarian regimes come to resemble religious creeds conceived in fanatical extremes, and thus become despotic.

Tyrannical declarations are framed in black-and-white binary terms that divide the societies being addressed. The only options that despots can imagine for their people are to be either for or against them. They do not accept the possibility that there could be people who dispute their hold on power because they hold an alternative, possibly better, vision. Indeed, an alternative vision cannot even be conceived. In such circumstances, public civic discourse becomes highly polarized and uncompromising.

The punishment that God imposed on the inhabitants of Babylon, rather than a penalty, was a rectification of a fault in their society. God confused the languages of the peoples, one could no longer understand the other. Nimrod lost the most powerful weapon he had to maintain his power: unitary language.

In the book of Zephaniah[16] the prophet envisions a future in which God will pour a new language into the peoples, a clear, pure language. The sages

14. Midrash Rabbah 38:13.
15. Midrash Rabbah 41:13.
16. Zephaniah 3: 9.

of the Midrash[17] relate this verse to the division of languages in Babel. At the time of the redemption of humanity people will understand each other, a language of purity will relate all people to everyone. The multifaceted language of dialogue will characterize a time of redemption.

Dialogue should be understood as an attitude rather than only an exchange of words. It refers to the empathy that two people give each other when interacting. Words are mere instruments to manifest this attitude. Silences and gestures are an essential part of the dialogical attitude. Words, silences and gestures can build up life when used in a positive way, building bridges among people or can cause death and destruction when used to divided or exclude people.

In the tractate 'Arakhin[18] of the Babylonian Talmud, we read the teaching of Rabbi Hama ben Rabbi Hanina about the meaning of Proverbs 18:21: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue". He explains that it means that just as you can kill with the hand so you can also kill with your tongue. Jeremiah[19] said: "Their tongue is a deadly arrow".

On the other hand, it is also possible to heal spiritual wounds through words and to transform an enemy into a friend.

It is possible to learn from God's behaviour about the importance of the correct use of words and gestures in building relationships. Through words God created the world, as it is written:[20] "By the word of God heavens made and their entire host by the breath of His mouth" and:[21] "For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood firm".

God has, according to the description of the Creation in Genesis or the harmony of Nature depicted in Psalms 104, a relationship with all creatures, but with human beings the relationship is special. The only creatures that were created uniquely were Adam and Eve (cf. Genesis 1:27; 5:2). They were the only ones with whom God entered into dialogue.

After the eating of the forbidden fruit and after Cain killed his brother Abel, God did not abandon them to their solitude. He asked Adam: Where are you? And asked Cain: Where is Abel your brother? A reality in which the

17. Tanhuma, Parshat Noah, Siman 19.
18. 'Arakhin 15 b.
19. Jeremiah 9:8.
20. Psalms 33:6.
21. Psalms 33:9.

dialogue between Heaven and Earth is disrupted is inconceivable in the eyes of God.

The aim of real dialogue is to know the other and to be known by the other. The demonization of the other requires ignorance and prejudice. The verb "to know" is used in the Bible on many occasions as a synonym of love, and refers to the highest expression of love i.e. the love between husband and wife.[22] In Hosea 2: 21-22 it refers to the love of God.[23]

The dialogue with God can only be made through a dialogical attitude towards the people who are all around us. Ever since the generation of Hosea, Micah, Amos and Isaiah, the Bible has emphasized that only in a reality built on the values of social justice, mutual respect, mercy and solidarity can God reveal Himself to human beings. All the fanatics, all those who pretend to pay homage to God by killing others, are acting against the biblical God, and if they are invoking God's Name, they are blaspheming and distorting God's revealed message.

When a dialogue of words cannot be established, then bullets and bombs take its place. The only means that was conferred upon human beings to manifest through their actions the spark of the Creator inside them is through dialogue.

The fragmentation we are seeing around us today, locally as well internationally, is a symptom of the loneliness that characterizes social life in many places. The dissolution of the family, the insane pursuit of material goods and power, the sensation of having almighty power are all alienating individuals from the spiritual dimensions of their reality. *Kabbalah* and esoteric or mystical things become fads for the acquisition of power, rather than ways to come to know God.

1. The Jewish-Christian dialogue

When humankind came to its senses after the Second World War, it realized the magnitude of the destruction it had wreaked. It recognized that human beings could become monsters when the norms of civilization break down. Answers were urgently demanded in order to find a meaning for human

22. Genesis 4:17, 25; 1 Samuel 1:19, etc.
23. See also: Jeremiah 9:23.

existence. The singularity of the Jewish sufferings perpetrated by Nazis and enabled by the indifference of many people was a major issue in the agenda of all those who rescued sparks of spirituality in the midst of the horrible darkness of death and madness. The uniqueness of the *Shoah* was described by Pope Francis in the following terms:

> The *Shoah* is genocide, like the others from the twentieth century, but it has a distinctive feature. I would not like to say that this is of primary relevance and the others secondary, but there is a distinctive feature, an idolatrous construction against the Jewish people. The pure race, the superior beings, they are idols for the foundation upon which Nazism was built. It is not only a geopolitical problem; it is also a cultural-religious issue. Each Jew that they killed was a slap in the face to the living God in the name of idols. A short time ago, I read –and it was difficult because it gave me nausea– a book with a foreword by Primo Levi that is called *Commandant of Auschwitz*, by Rudolf Höss, a coordinator of these extermination camps who wrote his memoirs while in prison. The coldness with which this man describes what happened there demonstrates the diabolical nature of the matter. The Devil presented himself in idols that tranquilized the human conscience.[24]

Élisabeth Roudinesco has expressed the uniqueness of the *Shoah* in a similar way:

> As we know, the Nazis did not seek simply to destroy the Jews residing within a particular set of borders. They wanted to eliminate *all* the Jews, irrespective of *any* geographical limit and *any* real presence of the victims. What the "Final Solution" aimed at was not merely the destruction of the very origins of the Jew, genealogically defined –ancestors, grandparents, parents, children, children yet to be born, Jews already dead and buried– but also the destruction of the generic Jew, outside any territory, with his or her territory, culture, and religion: a vertical extermination starting with the first parent, a horizontal extermination started with the scattered people (the diaspora). And in the Jewish *genos* now the paradigm of the evil race, was included everything that was not the Aryan *genos*. In this way, the Nazis aimed to replace the Chosen People by fabricating, in the Aryan myth, a perverted figure of the doctrine of chosenness: "Nazism", wrote Pierre Vidal-Naquet in 1987, is a *perversa imitatio*, a perverse imitation of the

24. Pope Francis (Bergoglio, J. M.)-Skorka, A. (2013). *On Heaven and Earth*. USA: Random House, 178; English version of: Bergoglio, J. M.-Skorka, A. (2010). *Sobre el Cielo y la Tierra*. Argentina: Sudamericana S. A., Random House Mondadori.

> *image* of the Jewish people. What was needed was to break with Abraham, and thus with Jesus, and seek another lineage for oneself among the "Aryans". [25]

Later on, she affirms:

> The caesura, which makes of Auschwitz a unique event, is linked to the fact that the extermination of the Jews served no other aim than that of satisfying a perverse, pathological, indeed paranoid hatred of the Jew insofar as he was excluded from the human world.

The *Shoah* was perpetrated in Europe, the core of Christian culture. This fact generated a crisis of conscience for the many people who treasured the authentic spirituality of Christianity. They tried before the *Shoah* to create a relationship between Jews and Christians.

Several Christian thinkers like Jacques Maritain, who desperately warned the European countries before the outbreak of the Second World War about the dramatically dangerous situation of the Jews living in their midst[26], or the members of the *Opus sacerdotale Amici Israel,*[27] among others, deeply understood the need for change in in the relationship between Jews and Christians. Their efforts couldn't counteract the prevailing hatred. It was too late.

The *Shoah* is among the lowest points of barbarism in human history and denotes the bankruptcy of European-Christian culture. Humanity at large needed (and continues to need) to respond adequately to a terrible challenge: to remember the *Shoah* by building a reality in which another *Shoah* could never again happen in human history.

Immediately after the war, people like Jules Isaac, Maritain, and all those who assisted and supported the Seelisberg Conference,[28] understood deeply the urgent necessity of a turning point in Jewish-Catholic relations. Isaac went on to meet on June 13, 1960 with Pope John XXIII, asking him to include the issue of Jewish-Catholic relations as a topic for the Second Vatican Council to con-

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25. Roudinesco, É. (2013). *Revisiting the Jewish Question.* USA: Polity Press, 96-97; English version of: Roudinesco, É. (2009). *Retour sur la question juive*. Paris: Albin Michel.

26. Les Juifs parmi les nations: conférence faite par M. Jacques Maritain sous les auspices des "Groupes Chrétienté" au Théâtre des Ambassadeurs, le samedi 5 février 1938**.** Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf (29, boulevard de La Tour-Maubourg), 1938. (31 août.) The conference was translated into Spanish by Ediciones Sur in Buenos Aires, and published as a booklet on July 4th 1938.

27. Wolf, H. (2010). *Pope and Devil: The Vatican's Archives and the Third Reich*. Translated by Kenneth Kronenberg. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

28. Rutishauser, C. (2007). "The 1947 Seelisberg Conference: The Foundation of the Jewish-Christian Dialogue, Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations". *Issue* 2, 34-53.

sider. (John had announced the convening of a worldwide council on January 25, 1959.) John XXIII, who during the Second World War had saved thousands of Jews from the Nazis' murderous hands,[29] was deeply moved by Isaac's message, and not long afterward appointed Cardinal Bea to prepare a statement for the formation of a new way forward in Jewish-Catholic relations.[30]

From the ashes of the Holocaust, as a brand plucked from fire, the dialogical dimension was rescued. The Council document *Nostra aetate* was the cornerstone on which developed a dialogue that, through the deeds of the last three popes, increased to levels never attained before in the history of Judaism and Christianity.

Many priests throughout the world, including in Latin-America, identified with and were inspired by the spirit of the documents of the Council. Since then, the interfaith dialogue whose buds had already appeared before the Second Vatican Council, developed significantly and bore important fruits.[31] The Popes who succeeded John XXIII increasingly intensified the Catholic Church's commitment to a genuine dialogue that would turn the estrangement that separated Christians and Jews into a genuine friendship.

Since *Nostra aetate* much has been done in the interfaith dialogue, especially between Jews and Catholics and the other Christian denominations. This declaration stimulated the writings of a series of other relevant documents from the Catholic Church[32] and several very important responses from Jews.[33]

Looking around today, after more than half a century since the approval of *Nostra aetate*, I ask myself about the next step that must be done in the interfaith dialogue at large. Two ideas come to my mind. First, theological

29. Humanitarian actions of Monsignor Angelo Roncalli. The International Raoul Wallenburg Foundation. Raoulwallenberg.net. (Retrieved: 2014/04/28).

30. Connelly, J. (2012). *From Enemy to Brothers*. USA: Harvard University Press, 240-241.

31. Skorka, A. (2014). "El Diálogo Judeo-Católico a Cincuenta Años de *Nostra aetate*. Una perspectiva Latinoamericana". *El Olivo*, vol. 38, n. 79-80, 33-44; Stofenmacher, A.-Skorka, A. (ed.). (2016). *El Concilio Vaticano II y los Judíos*. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Seminario Rabínico Latinoamericano 'M. T. Meyer'.

32. Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration Nostra aetate, n. 4 (1974); Notes on the Correct Way to Present Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church (1985); Fundamental Agreement between the Holy See and the State of Israel (1993); We remember: A Reflection on the *Shoah* (1998); The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible (2001); The Gifts and the Calling of God are Irrevocable (2015).

33. Dabru Emet (2000); To Do the Will of Our Father in Heaven: Toward a Partnership between Jews and Christians (2015); Between Jerusalem and Rome (2017).

dialogue with all its implications must be pursued. Second, the dialogue must address the urgent issues that humanity now faces.

The theological dialogue is relevant for Jews and more immediately for Christians who are trying –after *Nostra Aetate*– to rebuild a theology in which both Jews and Christians live in covenant with God and Jews as well as Christians have important missions in the repairing of the world and the paving of a way of redemption.[34]

The theme of dialogue appears constantly in relevant Vatican documents since the Second Vatican Council. In the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*, Pope Francis devotes an entire section (IV, 238-258) to the different aspects of the theme of dialogue. "Social dialogue as a contribution to peace", "Dialogue between faith, reason and science", "Ecumenical dialogue", "Relations with Judaism" (247-249), "Interreligious dialogue and Social dialogue in a context of religious freedom".

A special chapter in Francis' text is devoted to relations with Judaism. The key word in this chapter is "relations", stressing that the dialogue with the Jewish people has for Catholics a special dimension. The same concept appears in the document: "The Gifts and the Calling of God Are Irrevocable (Rom 11:29): A reflection on theological questions pertaining to Catholic-Jewish relations on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of *Nostra aetate* (n. 4)", prepared by the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews (December 10th 2015). Its signatories (Cardinal Kurt Koch, President, Most Reverend Brian Farrell, Vice-President, and Reverend Norbert Hofmann, Secretary) affirm:

> 15. Dialogue between Jews and Christians then can only be termed "interreligious dialogue" by analogy, that is, dialogue between two intrinsically separate and different religions. It is not the case that two fundamentally diverse religions confront one another after having developed independently of one another or without mutual influence. The soil that nurtured both Jews and Christians is the Judaism of Jesus' time, which not only brought forth Christianity but also, after the destruction of the temple in the year 70, post-biblical rabbinical Judaism which then had to do without the sacrificial cult and, in its further development, had to depend exclusively on prayer and the interpretation of both written and oral divine revelation. Thus, Jews and Christians have the same mother and can be seen, as it were, as two siblings who –as is the normal course of events for siblings– have developed in different directions.

34. Cunningham, P. A.-Sievers, J.-Boys, M. C.-Henrix, H. H. & Svartvik, J. (2011) (ed.). *Christ Jesus and the Jewish People Today*. Roma: Gregorian and Biblical Press.

Christians know that the reconfiguring of their theology requires ongoing dialogue with Jews, if only because Jesus and the earliest apostles and the fundamental roots of Christianity were all Jewish.

In a different way, Jews experienced over the centuries mostly conflictual relations with Christians. Nonetheless, there were Jews who recognized they shared many spiritual values in common with Christians. Israel Jacob Yuval describes chapters of this dramatic and inimical story in his essay: *Two Nations in Your Womb*. University of California Press (2008), which is only one example among many of Jewish studies on the topic of relations with Christians that have multiplied during the twentieth century.[35]

2. The dialogue with the Muslim World

The further step that must be undertaken by Jews and Christians in their dialogical path is to interact with representatives of the Muslim world, creating a multiple dialogue among the Abrahamic religions.

The world has impressively shrunk in the last decades, and different waves of migration have taken place during that time. Cosmopolitanism characterizes many places in the West, but at the same time xenophobic provincialism is expressed by new movements and parties with discriminatory ideologies.

In 1993, Samuel Phillips Huntington published in *Foreign Affairs* his famous article: "The Clash of Civilizations?". He posed in his very clarifying essay one the most dramatic questions facing the world. It has to be remarked that whether or not one agrees with his theses, the core of his article reflects a reality that characterizes our time. The question asked by Huntington is extremely pointed and no one can be certain that a negative answer to it is correct.

When we speak about interfaith dialogue nowadays, taking into account the importance of religious factors in current conflicts, as Huntington urged in his article and his subsequent book, it is clear that we are referring to an absolutely crucial element in the achievement of peace. As described by Gilles Kepel in *La revanche de Dieu*, Le Seuil, Paris, 1991, the Abrahamic religions experienced a resurgence of fanatic positions since the half of the seventies of the last century.

35. Stahl, N. (2012). *Other and Brother: Jesus in the 20th-Century Jewish Literary Landscape*. USA: Oxford University Press.

The Islamic world, in all its different subdivisions, has to have a very important role in the dialogue.

Genesis 25:9 portrays Isaac and Ishmael coming together to bury their father, Abraham. According to the biblical text they did not live together; they were different kinds of persons who suffered painful conflicts early in their lives, and one settled apart from the other. But in the sorrowful moment of the death of their father their recognized their brotherhood. They came together to bury their father Abraham.

The same occurred in an even more dramatic way with Jacob and Esau. After terrible clashes between them, even after their reconciliation they could not live together. No dialogues are mentioned in the Bible between them after they made their peace, and no other details have been given in the text. Only for the burial of Isaac, did Jacob and Esau meet again.[36]

When a conflict arose between the shepherds of Abraham and those of Lot, separation was also the solution our ancestors found in order to avoid clashes and fights.[37] But separation is no longer a solution for the resolution of the conflicts today. There is no more room as it was in the past, neither geographical nor cultural space. The interaction of peoples from different nations, cultures, civilizations, religions and values happens to a degree that has never been seen before. Very rapidly, the world is starting to resemble a small town.

The dramatic changes that took place within humanity in the last century demand courageous responses from the leaders of all religions. Scientific and technological advancements, population shifts, sexual revolutions, etc. require answers based upon the reinterpretation of sacred texts. Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk, one who devoted his life to know the truth of existence, used to teach that "everything in the world can be imitated, except truth, for truth that is imitated is no longer truth". The teachings of the past can only illuminate part of the present problems, the intellect and spirituality of the leaders must add the rest of the necessary light. Interreligious dialogue plays an urgent role in the inner renewal of beliefs and faiths.

Huntington's question is still challenging us today. Are we stepping into a world of conflict or will the different civilizations be able to develop the capacity to restrict destructive human passions and so reduce violence?

36. Genesis 35: 29.
37. Genesis 13: 7-12.

Religious leaders have enormous responsibility in the building of such guideposts. This is not and could not be the task of one single religion. It is the task of all of them. And the great tool that God has put into human hands in this undertaking is the capability to dialogue, to connect us with our neighbor, with each other, and with God.

This capability was used lately by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar University in El Cairo, Ahmed Al-Tayyeb, who is the highest academic authority of the Sunnis. They organized two Global Peace conferences, the first in Cairo on April 27-28, 2017 and the second in Abu Dhabi on February 2-3, 2019. I was invited to both gatherings. At the recent conference in Abu Dhabi, Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Ahmad Al-Tayyeb signed a "Declaration on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together". The text is a strong call for sanity and peace in our present reality of hate and fanaticism. Among other things, it says:

> [W]e resolutely declare that religions must never incite war, hateful attitudes, hostility and extremism, nor must they incite violence or the shedding of blood. These tragic realities are the consequence of a deviation from religious teachings. They result from a political manipulation of religions and from interpretations made by religious groups who, in the course of history, have taken advantage of the power of religious sentiment in the hearts of men and women in order to make them act in a way that has nothing to do with the truth of religion. This is done for the purpose of achieving objectives that are political, economic, worldly and short-sighted. We thus call upon all concerned to stop using religions to incite hatred, violence, extremism and blind fanaticism, and to refrain from using the name of God to justify acts of murder, exile, terrorism and oppression. We ask this on the basis of our common belief in God who did not create men and women to be killed or to fight one another, nor to be tortured or humiliated in their lives and circumstances. God, the Almighty, has no need to be defended by anyone and does not want His name to be used to terrorize people.[38]

Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb is the head of the Sunni branch of Islam; 90% of the world's Muslims belong to this denomination. There is little need for much explanation of the importance of this document. That religion cannot be used as a tool for violence and hate is one of the central points of the statement. Now it depends on the respective commitments by the signatories of the document to transform its spirit into reality. It is clear that the mere existence

38. https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2019/02/04/190204f.html

of this declaration will not *per se* suddenly bring about a world of peace, but it will serve for the future as a benchmark to show the way ahead and the goal to achieve.

The biblical conception of human history could be seen as God's intention of creating a humanity in which each individual sees in his neighbor a brother and sister. The uniqueness of the creation of human beings in the Hebrew Bible reflects, according to the Talmudic Sages, the uniqueness of each individual and the brotherhood of all humanity since all humans have parents in common.[39]

God created human beings with the power to choose between good and bad. Humanity bad choices have divided families and peoples, produced wars and conflicts, hate and destruction. The great challenge for humanity is to choose the good, the way that leads to the fullness of life, as Moses urged the people of Israel in his last discourse to them.[40]

Isaiah[41] and Micah[42] foresaw a time in which all people will put aside the use of guns, war and violence. These possible behaviors will be erased from human reality altogether and each people will worship according to their respective beliefs the One God who has sanctified human life. On that day, said Zechariah,[43] God will be one and God's Name one, spirituality will reign over coarse materialism and egocentrism and each person will honour creation and its Creator.

Then it will come to pass the words of Zephaniah[44] (3:9): "For then I will make the peoples pure of speech, so that they all invoke the Lord by name and serve God with one accord". It is the language that human beings have to learn through sincere dialogue with God and neighbor, thus following the way that the Creator offered to humanity to walk since the very moment of its creation. It is the language of dialogue that begun when God asked Adam the eternal question that continues asking us: Where are you? (Genesis 3:9).[45]

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39. Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5.
40. Deuteronomy 30:19.
41. Isaiah 2:1-4.
42. Micah 4:1-5.
43. Zechariah14:9.
44. Zephaniah 3:9 .
45. https://www.lahak.org/templates/lahak/article_cdo/aid/2993635:
שיחת יום ה' פ' וישב, י"ט כסלו ה'תשח"י

6

CULTURE OF ENCOUNTER: THE PATH OF INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

Mohammed Abu-Nimer

1. INTRODUCTION

"When I met someone from the other side, I discovered how little I knew about their faith, nation, and culture".

I have heard this exact statement or a variation from hundreds of courageous participants in dialogue encounters. For a person to admit to this level of ignorance of the other, he or she must have experienced a powerful encounter, one so powerful that it made him/her re-examine deep seated assumptions and misperceptions of the other side and of his/herself.

The encounter is a platform that allows participants to look at themselves through the other. A dialogical encounter is contrary to what many people think or describe, it is not meeting the other. It is meeting oneself and confronting his/her own negative images and biases of the other.

In the encounter we need the other to show us what we think and feel. The other becomes the mirror in which we examine our own feelings and ask risky questions that otherwise we will not ask if we are not forced to meet the other in a trusting environment.

When an Israeli participant dialogically meets a Palestinian refugee who lives few miles away from his hometown, he/she is forced to respond to the question: why did I not know about their plight? Similarly, the Palestinian

participant will have to answer the forbidden question: why did I not know about their fears and needs?

A dialogical encounter contains certain dynamics that facilitate a painful process of self-discovery which has been prohibited or blocked (intentionally or unintentionally) by social agencies. The blocking of such a process is certainly done intentionally by most socialization agencies. Society with all its agencies have conspired against its members to prohibit and prevent everyone, especially children from dialogically meeting the other. Thus, the skills of posing self-critical questions regarding the other (enemy, different religion or cultures) are often lacking. In fact, it can be highly dangerous to publicly speak about the perspective of the other faith groups or their truth, especially when there is an ongoing conflict with such groups. Being accused of betrayal or treason is just one of the potential consequences that a daring person can face from his/her own community (or even family). For example, if an Azeri citizen speaks about the Armenian perspective on the Nagorno-Karabakh War and subsequent clashes, it can cost him/her his own career if not citizenship.

But what do we mean by a culture of encounter and a dialogical encounter? What is the role of religious agencies in facilitating a culture of encounter? What are the challenges that obstruct genuine dialogical encounters?

2. Faith and dialogical encounters

Most, if not all, religions claim certain exclusive truths. The membership in each faith has requirements, duties, and privileges. The degree of critical self-examination varies between and even within members of the same faith group. Theological interpretations have been constructed in a way that allow for the possibility of dialogical encounters with other faiths. However, such hermeneutics is neither necessarily mainstreamed nor dominant in most faith groups. On the contrary, those who believe and promote interfaith and/or intra-faith dialogue often find themselves in the margins of their own faith group. They face many challenges from within.[1]

The engagement in a dialogical encounter process requires that the follower accept certain assumptions, of which some might contradict his/her own faith group's theological interpretations. The conditions for an effective

1. See Gerrard, M.-Abu-Nimer, M. (2018). *Making Peace with Faith*.

dialogical encounter include six key elements briefly discussed in the following section.

First, it is critical to have *trust in other faith group members*. Trust is necessary to build a relationship based on honesty and transparency. In conflict areas, especially in contexts in which religious identities have been manipulated by the various sides to justify violence in the name of protecting one's own faith groups, it becomes highly challenging to take the risk of trusting members of the other faith. In a context like Israeli Palestinian conflict, misperceptions and stereotypes are deeply ingrained in the collective mind and psyche of the three Abrahamic groups. Thus, during the early stage of the first encounter, participants often admit to the following negative images:

> "Muslims cannot be trusted, they always side with each other in situations of violence; that is what their faith tells them. Don't you know about their brotherhood pact?". "Jews will always stick together no matter what you do with them". "Christians only buy from each other. They cannot be trusted". Such statements are not exclusive to this region; for example, in Sri Lanka, Buddhist, Muslim, Hinds, and Christian participants exchange such views when they met for the first time.

The second dialogical encounter principle is rooted in the notion that we are all here in the encounter for the *purpose of learning* about each other. Within most faith groups, learning about other religions is done through one's own clergy and religious agencies. In fact, there is whole systems or structures within faith groups that have evolved to specialize in teaching children and adults about the other faith groups and their religions. In Islam, for example, Da'awa (spreading the word of Allah), which consists of comparing Islamic teaching to the teachings of other faith groups, is very central in persuading the individual to adopt the path of Islam. Similarly, in the Evangelical missionary tradition has a practice that compares the protestant teachings to Catholic teachings, or other faiths like Judaism, Buddhism etc.[2] Even faith groups that do not adopt conversion as part of their belief systems, the religious institutions provide their followers with answers to the question of who other faith groups are and why "ours" is better or the best path.

2. See article by Omar Rashid and Dudley in: Augsburger, D.-Abu-Nimer, M. (2006). *Muslim-Christian Conversations for Peace.* Fuller Theological Seminary and Salam Institute.

Thus, adopting the principle of being able to learn from others about one's own faith or others' faith(s) is a highly challenging practice. The dialogical encounter participant finds himself/herself facing the following dilemmas: how do I deal with the information that was given to me about the other faith groups by my religious authorities? Who is right and who is wrong when the information is contradictory? Who has deceived me?

Once the principle of learning through the encounter is adopted by the religious participant, the pressure of defending one's own story as was told by the rabbi, imam, priest or Buddhist monk is relieved. The participants begin exploring the possibilities of new sources of information about their own faiths and other faith groups.

The third dialogue principle is that the *dialogical encounter has to take place through proper communication channels* and a venue that allows the religious and cultural meanings and codes to be interpreted accurately. This means that Muslim participants have to fully listen and be able to articulate clearly their own perceptions of their Islamic spiritual and religious identity. In most cases, participants arrive to the encounter with a default communication system that is based on inter– and intra-religious defensive and offensive strategies of interaction.

In the encounter when a Christian participant describe his perception of Islam and Muslims, in many occasions the Muslim participants immediately assume the role of traditional teacher who needs to "set the record straight" and make sure that the other speaker knows the "correct version of Islam". This dynamic repeats itself when the Muslim describe Christianity or Judaism. Due to the negative historical collective memory and current interreligious conflict dynamics, the need to defend is deeply installed in the followers' mind. Thus, open communication is rarely deployed or utilized in the encounter. Facilitators are certainly needed, at least in the initial encounters to ensure that the old and default negative communication patterns are broken and at least partially replaced with newly and jointly agreed upon communication methods.

The new form of interreligious listening allows the Jewish participant to verify if the message stated by the Muslim indeed meant what she/he understood. This verification process takes place through the encounter by posing questions such as: when you said… did you mean to this…? Or this is what I understood from your message… is this what you meant to say?

Although such statements or open questions seem simple yet, they are very effective tools to prevent the person from blindly using his/her own religious framework to understand and communicate with the other.

Symmetry is another principle that ensures the effectiveness of the dialogical encounter. In outside reality, individuals or members of a faith group are rarely in a symmetric relationship with each other. The fact that they belong to different ethnic or national groups have placed them in asymmetrical power relations. For example, Sri Lankan Muslim clergy, as member of minority in a Buddhist dominant majority state, will always feel under represented and less influential than their counterpart, the Buddhist clergy. Similarly, a member of the Christian clergy in the Egyptian context will experience same feeling of asymmetrical relations when he/she is in the presence of member of the Muslim clergy from al Azhar who belongs to the dominant Muslim majority. Such asymmetrical relations are reflected in daily social and cultural encounters. However, the dialogical encounter is based on the assumption that all members of the group are equal and have the same rights for expression and action. No priority is given to member of the dominant faith group in society, on the contrary often facilitators compensate for the external asymmetrical relations by empowering the faith minority groups throughout the encounter. For example, one such way of empowerment would be providing the minority faith group with their own independent and safe space to practice their own rituals and develop their own separate path for engagement with the dominant faith group.

Symmetry is crucial for the dialogical encounter to affect issues of justice and grievances. Faith groups will not feel comfortable if the encounter design reproduces the outside reality within the encounter and gives privileges to the dominant faith groups. For example, in the Philippines during an interfaith encounter between Christians and Muslims, the location and venue of the meeting was often decided or determined by the Christian groups and their agencies who organized the encounter. The site in many cases was a Church or related property. A number of Muslim participants expressed frustration and demanded to change the venue or to at least have a meeting within Muslim territories. The language of the encounter is another manifestation of the asymmetric relationship, when Arabic speaking participants in an Arab-European encounter were told that they could not speak their own language and no was translation available, English was utilized as a common language for

the encounter. Providing such participants with the opportunity and space to feel equal to their counterparts is essential in nurturing the dignity and respect in the dialogical encounter. Unfortunately, many European-Muslim encounters suffer from this limitation since the European culture of communication and interaction is dominant and is frequently considered the "proper" way to conduct the encounter. Conversely participants from Muslim societies are expected to adjust and abide by the rules of the dominant majority.

Obviously, the dialogical encounter cannot fully escape the interreligious asymmetric relations in the outside reality. As stated by Abu-Nimer and Lazarus in capturing the asymmetric relations in the Israeli Palestinian Conflict and its implication on the encounter:

> The "toll" of the conflict is not equally distributed among the participants, nor is it only psychological. Israelis and Palestinians live in a reality of asymmetric power relations, in which most Israelis are born with access to rights, resources, and opportunities that are denied or severely curtailed for most Palestinians. Many Palestinian participants struggle during encounters with what they experience as over-psychologizing the relationship, or blurring the differences between Israeli life in a society enforcing an occupation and Palestinian life tinder occupation. Psychosocial approaches encourage participants to articulate and recognize their separate and unequal social realities. Such recognition is an essential step for participants on both sides to understand each other's distinct, but equally real and equally human, fears and needs, the different ways in which both groups perpetuate the dynamics of conflict, and the different ways in which people on each side pay "the price of no peace" (Abu-Nimer and Lazarus: 2007).[3]

However, the organizers of the encounter can be intentional in shifting the dynamics and constructing an environment that allows the minority faith groups to feel more empowered and the dominant majority to experience a dynamic of genuine equality.

When the participant from the dominant faith group experiences and accepts the possibility for equal and symmetrical relations, their theological framework changes in a way to allow them to hold on to the newly constructed view of the other. One such example occurred when Sunni Muslim participants from a dominant faith group in a second dialogical encounter in

3. See Abu-Nimer, M.-Ned. L. (2007). The Peacebuilder's Paradox and the Dynamics of Dialogue: Psychosocial Approaches to Israeli/Palestinian Peacebuilding. In: Kuriansky, J. (ed.). *Beyond Bullets and Bombs: Grassroots Peacebuilding between Palestinians and Israelis*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Pakistan began articulating Qura'nic and hadith sayings to support their newly constructed view of the Shia and other minority groups who attended a dialogical encounter.

Organizers of interfaith encounters have the opportunity to construct and design their dialogical encounters with great deal of symmetrical conditions within each encounter's design and process. A decision to do so will affect their choices regarding the type of participants they select, venue and location of the encounter, the language to be utilized, food to be served, games to be played, projects to be initiated, etc. The fact that many religious institutions avoid such symmetry in encounters often reflects the level of commitment to genuine dialogical encounters versus symbolic or ritualistic encounters that replicate the dominant subordinate interreligious dynamics existing in reality.

The fourth principle for dialogical encounters is related to the ability of the participants to take risk through the interreligious dialogue. Taking risk is an important step for each participant in the dialogical encounter. If the participant does not take any risk in the interaction with other faith groups he/she is not able to learn beyond his/her comfort zone. Educational and learning theories have already empirically established the principle that the zone of learning expands when the learner dares to ask questions and takes risk in pursuing new information from other sources.

Thus, for a Muslim participant to learn more about Christianity in a dialogical encounter he /she needs to dare to ask about the theological grounding of the Holy trinity and being able to compare and contrast with the his/her own Islamic theological interpretations. Similarly, the Christian needs to ask daring questions about the notion of Jihad in Islam and be able to listen to the Muslim participants in articulating the spiritual and religious meaning of Jihad in his/her own faith. In dialogical encounters taking risks is not only related to raising challenging theological questions or critically examining your own faith interpretation and narrative, but it can extend to posing questions about the religious identity and its boundaries as it is manifested in reality. For example, a Christian European participant in a dialogical encounter with Muslim and Jewish Europeans can explore ways in which the European Christian institutions culture have benefited his/her life in comparison to other religious minorities in European context. Exploring these privileges related to religious identity can be risky for such participants. The realization that as a Christian in a European context you do not have to worry about the legitimacy or accessibility to your rituals might lead to new awareness or need for action.

In many encounters that do not encourage risk taking through the process of the dialogue. Participants' tend to remain in their comfort zone and recycle the same information and knowledge or awareness that they have had prior to the encounter. A genuine dialogical encounter will not only be focused on ritualistic presentation of the faith groups, but goes beyond that. It allows participants to pose questions that otherwise are not possible to raise in day-to-day life or interreligious interaction.

A fifth principle for dialogical encounter is the ability to engage with the other and with one's own faith group members and discuss difficult theological and non-theological issues. In many encounters, participants and organizers intentionally or unintentionally avoid dealing with difficult issues because of their fear to experience discomfort and pain. Also, others argue that it is better to focus on the commonalities and avoid differences. In dialogue avoiding the difficult issues reduces the possibilities of building a deep and sustained trustful relationship. If such approach is adopted and participants remain on the surface or in the polite stages of interaction, their relationship will also be temporary or will not build enough resilience to withstand the political or security crisis. In fact, many dialogue groups have collapsed once violence escalated within or between their groups due to the lack of trust and lack of commitment.

Tackling the hard issues means that the dialoguers in the interreligious encounters have allowed themselves to venture into the disputed areas that in the past had generated and will continue to generate distrust and suspicion between the members faith groups. For example, in Muslim and European dialogue groups issues such as historical crusade campaigns, colonialism, Palestinian issues, and Islamophobia are examples of challenging themes that have to be addressed in order to reach a level of trust and sense of honesty in the discussion. On a theological level, issues such as: a) recognition of the Holy Trinity as a fundamental difference between Islam, Judaism, and Christianity; b) recognition of Islam as a faith or religion by the Christian and Jewish religious institutions; c) the concept of jihad in Islam; d) sexual orientations in all religions; e) gender roles; etc., are issues that need to be raised and explored. When the encounter deliberately avoids these controversial issues and focuses on the interreligious commonalities such as peace, forgiveness, justice, prayers, fasting, or charity, etc., the dialogue space become less risky, less vulnerable, and more comfortable for its members to maintain their negative perceptions of the others too.

Obviously delving into the difficult issues needs to be done in a gradual and professional way. In addition, it needs to be built on the phase of exploring interpersonal and intercultural commonalities. However, the process should not stop there with these commonalities. Critical thinking and critical self-reflection emerge from the dialogical encounter that confronts the differences and controversial issues. In fact, the respect for diversity deepens when members of different faith groups realize that there are inherent contradictions and differences that the dialogue cannot bridge and those ought to be accepted and respected as part of the relationship.

Taking such an approach to the culture of dialogical encounters may produce a stronger belief in religious diversity and pluralism.

Dialogical encounters are also based on the principle of action. The interreligious encounter is limited in its effect or success when it remains on the abstract level and participants are not able to commit to any sort of joint or unilateral action. Such process or dynamic is often cited as a limitation of many interreligious dialogue or encounters, "these are talking shop encounters" is a statement repeated by many critics.

To walk the talk is an expectation that is often shared by participants in the initial interreligious dialogue encounter. Members of the different faith groups join the encounter because they are frustrated from their reality and the type of relationship their community has with the other faith groups. Thus, they want to change. However, they soon realize that the members differ in their capacity, willingness, and awareness of what they can do and what needs to done. Thus, the interreligious encounter becomes a platform for exploring what can be done together and separately to respond to the challenges facing the faith groups.

A common paradox within interreligious encounters is the dynamics or interplay between members of the minority faith groups. They often join an encounter in order to change the dominant political, social, and cultural structures, which impose certain limitations on their religious rights and aspirations. On the other hand, members of the dominant faith group often join an encounter to learn about other faith; discover commonalities; and in many cases partially relief themselves from the burden of guilt of being labelled as members of the dominant (oppressive or privileged) group.[4] This tension be-

4. See Hurtado on Intergroup dialogue…; See Abu-Nimer. (1999) Encounter between Arabs and Jews in Israel.

tween Muslims and Christians in the European context is reflected by the demand of the Muslim minority groups asking and advocating for the encounter outcome to be policy oriented, namely to change European states' regulations regarding the production of halal meat; circumcision; religious education; etc. Conversely at the starting point of the encounter, dominant faith majority members (Christians or secular participants) do not necessarily see this as a problem or obstacle that urgently needs to be changed.

Regardless of the nature of the action that has been agreed upon by the members within the encounter, it is essential that such action be jointly designed and implemented by the various faith groups. The joint action produced by the interreligious encounter is the glue that binds the interfaith group together and advances the chances to create sustained dialogue.

There are many conditions that determine or shape the nature of the joint action which the interreligious encounter group produces, some of these include: power symmetry dynamics between the faith groups; the duration of the encounter (short or long term engagement); the availability of a professional third party facilitator for the encounter; the degree of threat and obstacle generated by the context of the encounter (low level of violence versus high level of religiously motivated violence); engagement or non-engagement of the policy makers in the process.

Unfortunately, the scope of this chapter does not allow further exploration of these conditions and possible ways to reduce their negative effect on interreligious encounters. Nevertheless, as an organizer of interreligious encounters, it is important to be aware that such internal and external conditions can shape the level of success of the encounter and alter the motivation and wider impact of the dialogue experience.

The above six principles of interreligious encounters are obviously applicable to other forms of encounters, too. Also, this is not an exhaustive list of principles that can enhance interreligious encounters, however they are central in shaping the process, design, and outcome of the dialogue.

Having explored the principles for interreligious dialogical encounters, we can move now to the remaining questions of this chapter that focus on the limitations of interreligious dialogue from an institutional perspective.

3. Obstacles in institutionalizing interreligious dialogical encounters

As stated above, research and practice of dialogue and encounters have identified many principles and conditions for effective encounters. There is no shortage in theoretical frameworks or guidelines to articulate the process and dynamics of a positive encounter.[5] Despite this reality, the field of Interreligious Dialogue (IRD) is still in its infancy as professional field. There are internal and external factors that affect the development of this field as an effective form of interreligious interaction. The following are few of the central factors:[6]

3.1. *Religious agencies lack institutional commitment to interreligious encounters*

There is no doubt that in the past two decades, there has been a significant increase in the interest and willingness of policy makers and religious actors and agencies to engage in dialogue.[7] Nevertheless these engagements remain either on the symbolic level of or serve as "lip service" to appease policy makers who are pursuing the engagement of religious agencies to counter violent extremism.

In most conflict areas, especially in the southern hemisphere, government and security agencies have included the engagement with religious authorities as part of their strategies to counter terrorism and violent extremism. Thus, religious agencies have to respond to the pressure of the governed agencies to show that they are moderate or open enough to accommodate a certain level of religious diversity. Thus, muftis and patriarchs are invited by

5. See David Bohm (1996) On Dialogue; David Schoem and Sylivia Hurtado. (2001) Intergroup Dialogue: Deliberative Democracy in School College, Community ad Workplace; Christopher H. (2015) Grundmann Interreligious Dialogue; David R. Smock. (2001) Interfaith Dialogue and Peacebuilding; Mohammed Abu-Nimer. (2012) Dialogue, Conflict Resolition and Change: Arab-Jewish Encounters in Israel.

6. Examples and evidence to support the analysis presented in the following section is based on the author's engagement with KAICIID's interreligious encounter programs between 2013-2019, in four main regions: Central African Republic (CAR), Nigeria, Myanmar, and the Arab region. Also, other examples are derived from series of interfaith training conducted within the Interreligious Fellowship program which have trained over 250 fellows from the five major faith groups (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism).

7. See David Little (2007) Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution; Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Michelle Gerrad (2018) Making Peace with Faith; etc.

government agencies and intergovernmental organizations to participate in and even initiate programs with a focus on dialogue, tolerance and religious freedom.[8] Despite this fast growth in the number of meetings and projects for religious freedom, interreligious dialogue, and religious pluralism and diversity, the formal and traditional religious authorities and their institutions have not made a clear institutional shift in their structure to ensure that IRD and the culture of religious encounter is an integral part of their theological and operational structures. Indeed, there are designated individuals in the Islamic, Jewish, and Christian religious institutions however these individuals and their centres or departments rarely have the necessary human or financial resources to further the significance of interreligious encounters institutionally. For example, compare how much such institutions spend on missionary work or internal theological education versus how much is being spent on interreligious encounters.

Most religious institutions have compartmentalized their IRD work or have designated one individual whose mission is to persuade the various religious associations in his faith group to adopt IRD as a priority or plan of action. Regardless of whether IRD is confined into a small unit in the religious authority structure or designated to one person, it remains marginalized in comparison to the priorities of religious institutions as whole. Thus, when such individuals are removed or simply die of old age, it takes a long period of time to select another person or to resume the IRD engagement in these institutions. Sustained institutional IRD is still missing in most religious authority structures.

3.2. *Theological obstruction of dialogical encounters*

In most religious institutions the production of new knowledge and new leadership is done through their system of theological seminaries and other higher education systems. A brief examination of at least 40 Christian and Muslim religious seminaries' curricula and syllabi indicated very few of them

8. Recently US government convened its second annual Ministerial meeting focusing on religious freedom and religious pluralism with over 100 government represented and approximately 1000 civil society and FBOs groups. In addition, most European Union countries have appointed a special envoy for religious freedom. These specialized ambassadors for religious freedom are spreading the message that dialogue encounter is also an effective tool to expand the space for religious freedom.

have included IRD or the art of interreligious encounter in their formal system. Thousands of Christian and Muslim religious scholars have graduated from seminaries and Sharia colleges without receiving any education about the need for interreligious dialogue. The concept of the interreligious dialogical encounter is strange to them. In fact, many of such graduates have been socialized to debate and defend the faith in every interaction they have with the other faith groups.[9] How can such graduates educate for religious pluralism and spread culture of dialogue if they themselves have did not receive the basic skills and training of dialogical encounters. Integrating the concept of IRD in these theological seminaries could be a major contributor to the spreading of culture dialogue in such context.

3.3. *Constructive Engagement of Policy makers*

In most parts of the world the majority of the religious institutions are under the political authority or are governed by laws and regulations. Such reality is an opportunity to expand the engagement of policy makers with religious authority to strengthen the field of IRD in such institutions. Government and policy makers can enhance the culture of encounter by intentionally supporting dialogue and religious diversity programs in formal education systems as well. In many parts of the world, especially in conflict areas the engagement of policy makers with religious institutions and actors is often negative and manipulative. Politicians engage religion to gain wider electoral support and policy makers appeal to religious authority to support certain policies and assist them in disseminating them to the grass roots and their communities. Such manipulation of religious leaders affects their credibility and capacity to preach positive and genuine messages in the society. Thus, it weakens their ability to call for an encounter with the other faith groups or their capacity to call for joint action with other faith groups to advance justice and equality.

9. Based on series of consultations conducted with Muslim and Christian theological seminaries in the Arab region between 2016-2019.

3.4. *Getting stuck in the CVE/PVE Loop*

In many instances where the engagement between religious agencies and policy makers is well-established, the context is limited to either countering violence extremism and/or preventing violent extremism. These approaches bring with them several challenges that extend beyond the issue of the potential loss of legitimacy for religious leaders and agencies within their own communities. They risk damaging the ability to build trust among certain groups within the encounter because of the potential reinforcement that both the CVE and PVE narratives have on Islamophobia and thus foster an approach of "defensive Islam" particularly for Muslim countries or institutions that develop programs and projects aimed to join policy makers and religious agencies. These approaches also remain locked in securitization, which makes it difficult to detach programs and projects from terrorism, fundamentally preventing the ability to develop a meaningful encounter.[10]

4. Conclusion

In human history, societies and people have struggled to construct social systems that facilitate peaceful encounters. Nevertheless, there have been always a voice and a trace of knowledge and experience that pointed human beings towards dialogue and peaceful encounters with the other. Such thread is also manifested in every faith group. Religions share common values of peace, mercy, love, and respect of human dignity. Unfortunately, the implementation and transmission of these values into sustainable structures to regulate people's lives have been extremely limited, especially in wider social systems. Most if not all children are deprived of the possibilities to live in dialogical cooperative systems; instead they are well trained in competitive culture.

A strong culture of dialogical encounter is an effective social and psychological immunization tool that any society or agency can use to equip its members with to prevent religious-based violence, to enhance its capacity to constructively resolve its conflicts peacefully. A society that has integrated culture of dialogical encounters within its system grants its members safe spaces to

10. See Abu-Nimer, M. (2017). Alternative Approaches to Transforming Violence Extremism: The Case of Islamic Peace and Interreligious Peacebuilding. In *the Berghof Handbook*.

explore creative ways to respect diversity and view such diversity as a source of strength as opposed to source of disunity and fragmentation.

This chapter articulated basic principles that can be integrated in the interreligious encounter to maximize its impact in transforming misperception and distrust in other faith into a more dialogical relationship. Overcoming the limitations and obstacles by adopting these principles in society are not only the responsibility of the religious institutions and their structures, but also of policy makers.

Obviously, there are good practices in the field of IRD that can be utilized as best practice models and effective templates to advance the culture of dialogical encounters. These experiences need to be celebrated and recognized by religious authorities and policy makers as well. Such a shift in the priorities of these institutions requires a deeper examination of their role in spreading and sustaining the current structures of violence that regulate the lives of most humans. Constructively shifting and transforming these structures of violence cannot be done without a well-developed framework for dialogical encounter.

7

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS TO THE CREATION OF A CULTURE OF PEACE

Alejandro Garofali Acosta

1. Instability factors of a convulsed world – While waiting for a new order

At the dawn of the third millennium, the international community faces multidimensional challenges, some of which pose real risks to the survival of man, like never before in history. Uncertain times for global peace, security and health initiatives and institutions that are overwhelmed by a long list of threats and weaknesses, including economic-financial instability, undermining of social cohesion, increasing inequality and marginalization, uncontrolled climate phenomena with progressive destruction of habitat and accelerated loss of biodiversity. A long chain of processes and global problems of urgent attention such as migration, vulnerability of entire populations and systematic violation of human rights, climatic variability and natural disasters, emergence of pests and diseases with potential for total extermination, added to the phenomenon of terrorism in their various manifestations, transnational crime, reedition of weapon proliferation career, neoprotectionism, cracking of old paradigms of regional integration, technological fragmentation among societies and many other problems resulting from the abusive management of the common house by man and the displacement of attention to the dignity of people, due to excessive materialism, objectification of human processes and great inequality in access to the benefits of modern civilization (Edward Newman: 2007).

In current times, man gives plenty of evidence of attitude of dominator, extreme consumer or mere exploiter of resources, unable to put a limit on his immediate interests. However, it is not too late to implement corrective measures, which must necessarily come from the very origin of the problem, from man and the organized international society at local, regional and global level to preserve creation, as inspired by Pope Francis (Francis: 2015).

The responses that have been tried in recent years by the world interstate system –the one developed after the last world war and still standing–, seem to be those of disaggregation of efforts and fragmentation. This threatens the possibility of coordinated action by everyone in face of the most pressing problems on the planet (without finally binding agreements on environmental, migration, disarmament, trade and coordination of financial and economic systems, and a long etcetera).

The existential column of humanity, world peace and security, are being held hostage to centrifugal processes and to the decomposition of the very foundations of the system of governance that the humankind adopted in late 40's, the United Nations (UN).

We have before us a scenario of geopolitical and geoeconomic insecurity in which the multilateral system and traditional alliance structures of the second half of the 20th century begin to blur in a context of political and economic confrontation between countries and blocks. Multilateralism is going through a very difficult hour, subjected to constant stress test proving its validity and relevance, resisting yielding to emerging unilateral visions and impositions of nationalist positions focused on mere domestic agendas and political polarization within many nations with its consequential spill over to the global arena (Ramesh Thakur, Edward Newman and John Triman: 2009, 160-178). It has the aspect of a crisis, of decomposition of the system, especially when thinking of major issues long tackled and negotiated for decades and with principles of agreement, that have been left aside, forcing a paralysis of multilateral diplomacy and creating uncertainty in the system (Luis Gallegos: 2019).

And more than ever, to subsidize these already structural shortcomings, the UN has been called to act, since its creation and in its constant evolution in 75 years, towards a universal institution with desired authority, legitimacy and competence to clean up what the States and other international actors have not been able to deliver (although these aspects of its identity are permanently debated, pending a comprehensive reform to enhance and correct shortcomings

and improve its capacities). Much or little, the UN is what the organized international community has been able to give itself as institutional mechanism for multilateral management. And in matters of peace and security, the responsibility continues to fall on the shoulders of its Security Council (SC). Although in the near future the SC will continue to carry its conception sin from post war era, there is an increasing feeling that someday it will see the dawn of a legitimacy based more on democratic principles than on sovereignty (Robert Keohane: 2006 and 2011, 99-109).

2. Attempted solutions by successive approaches. one of them, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

Without fatalistic intention or dramatic spirit, we can say that the world today is facing a turning point and it is against this background that we must rescue what is positive of multilateralism and the construction of regions articulated in it, to allow humanity to advance, renewing efforts and being able to reshape the world system in the decade that begins. The global, continental and regional commitment must be renewed as a sine qua non, inescapable, urgent condition, in order to achieve results that cope efficiently with current global problems. An example of these lines of commitment is given in the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Agenda 2030 to achieve them without leaving anyone behind. And also, for its part and until a new system can be designed and implemented, the commitment to continue supporting multilateral mechanisms dealing with peace and security problems (mostly but not limited to peacekeeping and development operations), and the various proposals and strategies for building peace both by the UN, its Member States and many other relevant international actors.

At the genesis of the current system, still in force, we find the San Francisco Charter of 1945, which grants the UN and in particular its Security Council, a fundamental role in the maintenance of international peace and security and contemplates the possibility of adoption of effective collective measures to prevent or avoid threats to peace and to suppress acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace that may in certain circumstances include the use of armed force.

From a legal point of view, the use by the UN through the SC of collective and coercive measures can even lead to the use of armed force. As a last resort,

in cases of humanitarian catastrophes when a State is unable or unwilling to protect its civilian population in these situations, this intervention finds its justification in the UN Charter itself. Article 24 confers on the SC the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security and its article 39 gives it the power to determine the existence of any threat to peace, its breach or act of aggression, as well as the possibility of adopting measures collective and coercive that even require the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security, taking into account art. 41 (measures that do not involve the use of force) and 42 (use of force to restore international peace and security). The SC in exercise of its functions must proceed in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of Chapter I of the UN Charter and has the aforementioned legal basis that enables it to adopt collective and coercive measures, including the use of force. The Charter grants it a certain degree of discretion in defining the need for its application, which has given not a few occasions of tensions – actions and inactions reproached/criticized alike (Philipp Panizza: 2011, 109-116).

The first example of the application of measures of article 41 by the CS was the case of racial discrimination in present-day Zimbabwe in 1966, with measures of embargo of arms and oil. Regarding the authorization of the use of military force (Sanctions Committees and other Committees, Security Council, UN: 2019), the first example was when the invasion of Iraq into Kuwait occurred in 1990, thanks to a change in the international political scene after the end of the Cold War, particularly in relations among the great powers, their new equation of forces and the emergence of other state and non-state actors.

In the mid-1990s, the genocides in Rwanda in 1994 and in Srebrenica in 1995, constituted real humanitarian catastrophes that claimed the lives of almost one million people of the Tutsi ethnic group and eight thousand of the Bosnian Muslim ethnic group, respectively. The urgent need to encourage respect for human rights and to put humanitarian issues on a priority level was highlighted. It is in this context that the international community begins to perceive the need to react to events of this nature. Indeed, since the 1990s, the humanitarian issue has acquired a dimension of its own and a major role in the field of peacekeeping and in the international sphere, coming to be called the "humanitarian era". In 1999, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, in his report to the UNGA's Millennium Summit (Kofi A. Annan: 2000, 48), dared to point out that humanitarian intervention is a delicate issue, fraught with political difficulties and without easy solutions. But surely there is no legal principle

– not even sovereignty – that can be invoked to protect perpetrators of crimes against humanity. In places where such crimes are committed and attempts to end them by peaceful means have been exhausted, the SC has a moral duty to act on behalf of the international community. Armed intervention must continue to be the last resort, but in the face of mass murder, it is an option that we must not reject.

Thus, the door was opened to a new concept, the Responsibility to Protect (and its prospective and promising evolution into international norm), which would go beyond the traditional limits of both the sovereignty of States and the principle of non-intervention and would also offer new projections to the discussion on exceptions that fit the prohibition of the use of force in international relations. Starting with the 2001 report of the International Commission on Intervention and Sovereignty of the UN States, the concept of R2P receives support in various international instruments and evolved into an incipient institutional framework to serve it from the UN system, with its own Office and Special Advisor to the Secretary General of UN.

The concept was unanimously incorporated in the Final Document of the 2005 World Summit of Heads of State that took place within the framework of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), Resolution 60/1 (UNGA, Sixtieth Session: 2005), while also capturing its 3 pillars. In its paragraphs 138 and 139 the three pillars of the concept are reflected. The first pillar affirms that "each State is responsible for protecting its population from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity". This responsibility includes the prevention of said crimes, including incitement to their commission, by taking appropriate and necessary measures. As a second pillar, it is maintained that "the international community should, as appropriate, encourage and help States to exercise that responsibility and help the UN to establish an early warning capacity". And as a third pillar, it is indicated that "the international community, through the UN, also has the responsibility of using diplomatic, humanitarian and other appropriate peaceful means, in accordance with Chapters VI (peaceful settlement of disputes) and VIII (regional agreements) of the Charter to help protect populations from the aforementioned crimes".

The Final Document indicates that the international community, through the UN, is ready to adopt collective measures, in a timely and decisive manner, through the SC, in accordance with the Charter, including its Chapter VII (action in case of threats to peace, breaches of the peace or acts of aggression, articles 39 to 51), in each specific case and in collaboration with the relevant

regional organizations when appropriate, if it is shown that the peaceful means are inadequate and that the national authorities do not manifestly protect to its population of those crimes.

Likewise, it points to the need for the UNGA, "to continue examining the responsibility to protect populations from these crimes, as well as their consequences, taking into account the principles of the Charter and international law". Since 2009 the SG presents reports to the UNGA), on mobilization of collective action on the R2P.

This has led to several interactive dialogues at the UNGA and has resulted in building trust in this concept of international guardianship. Summarizing the same, it is worth remembering that the coercive measures envisaged to activate the mechanism are limited to four massive atrocities (genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity) and should be given whenever the Security Council considers that the peaceful means are not or have not been adequate or it is evident that the State is unable or unwilling to fulfill its primary R2P its population. On the other hand, no mechanism of activation or automatic response of the UN is established, but the measures must be analyzed case by case by the SC. In accordance with the provisions of the UN Charter, for these actions to be established, a CS resolution is required to order or authorize said measures under the applicable article of the Charter (41 or 42). This can only be achieved after having determined the commission or danger of committing one or more of the four crimes cited, having addressed the lack of protection of the population and describing the non-protection of the State to its population as a "threat to peace worldwide" and also determine as necessary to apply sanctions to prevent or end such crimes. Apart from having evidence of the State's failure to comply with its duty to protect, the condition of recourse to force at the UN or the requirement of a last ratio is that the peaceful means of solution have previously been inadequate. Once the CS resolution has been adopted, it, pursuant to Article 25 of the Charter, becomes mandatory and binding.

As can be seen, the SC has a legal basis that enables it to adopt collective and coercive measures, which include the use of force and grants it a certain degree of discretion in defining the need for its application.

The issue of applying the principle of R2P as the basis for a timely and decisive response continues to be the subject of debate, especially on the mechanisms and procedures through which to make it operational (Isabel García Martin: 2017, 173-193). There are also some further developments

such as the concept of Responsible Protection proposed on the basis of the R2P, to expand its application and supervision mechanisms to make it effective as a response from the organized international community, at the internal level of a State to crimes against its population. As Emilio Menéndez del Valle points out, these R2P and Responsible Protection initiatives are "an attempt to positively respond to the controversy caused by the illegal action of NATO in Libya in 2011 and in the face of the blockade suffered by the CS in that cause in relation to Syria", in addition to trying to test "proposals aimed at convincing the five greats of the Council to refrain from using the right of veto on issues related to the commission of heinous crimes" (Emilio Menéndez del Valle: 2016).

Specifically, the humanitarian catastrophe that occurred in the conflict in Syria is one of the most flagrant cases of limits to the action of the SC and the recourse to the principle of the R2P. Some states disagree on implementation based on the concept of sovereignty and its corollary the principle of non-intervention, others due to mistrust that the intervention conceals other interests. The main mistake is to focus the institute of R2P only on the possibility of resorting to force and not on prevention (Noële Crossley: 2016).

3. The need to move on. Realising RtoP as norm

Nothing seems a walk in the clouds when it comes to the process of giving birth to an international norm, particularly if it is in the field of peace and security, in the authorized and legitimate use of force by international community. Thus, the consolidation of the principle and implementation of the R2P is taking tortuous path to be accepted and applied as mandatory rule in the situations intended to solve or alleviate.

Taking immediate collective action when required in observance of the provisions so far started for R2P has cope with inefficiencies and recurring lack of will in the international community, mostly related to problems arising from the political structure of the UN Security Council, often leaving individual or coalitions of states to uphold their ethical responsibility, with or without UN Security Council authorization. The resource to R2P has also been abused by those who seek to justify their own doings on the basis of protecting human rights in the absence of international action reaction (Pınar Gözen Ercan: 2012). Such incidents of misuse of the R2P have been feeding

the detractors' arguments against its institutionalization, while jeopardizing its normative viability and elevating concerns and scepticism among many developing states on its possible deviated invocations and applications in concrete cases.

Today there may be no doubt that each State is primarily responsible for the protection of its civilians, as confirmed at the 2005 World Summit and the frequent reiterations from SC and UNGA on contemporary conflicts claiming reaction for States in the protection of its population. Similarly, there are no difficulties in recognizing that if a State is unable or unwilling to comply with that obligation, the international community (that is, the other States, in an organized way through UN), must act to prevent and help that State to protect its civilians. The main controversies arise in the third pillar of the R2P, regarding the need to act through the UN Security Council as well as in the impact of this emerging institute on state sovereignty. On the one hand, it is understood that the sovereignty of the State carries responsibilities and the State itself has the main R2P its population and, on the other hand, when the population is suffering serious damage as a result of a civil war or other situations, and that state does not want to or cannot stop or avoid said sufferings, the international R2P should take priority over the principle of non-intervention, giving reason for action to the international community, that is, of the other States through the SC. It is there that the moral duty of action of the CS gains its virtue, as advanced by Kofi Annan, promoter of the institute of R2P, requiring that the organized international community replace this deficiency of the State and exercise its responsibility, putting into practice the mechanisms of security provided in the UN Charter.

Relevant disagreements come from the second obligation: whether or not the international community is activated in case the State is unable or unwilling to fulfill the obligation to protect. Hence, all the efforts of the doctrine, of the UNGA, of the states that defend the institute, and of the SC itself to integrate it into its Resolutions are indispensable to overcome the "doubts" that may originate the disagreements and attempt to the final stance to consolidate the R2P.

On this stance is useful to refer to the frequency and relevance of the invocations and references to R2P at different UN organizational levels. The Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (GCR2P), an international non-governmental organization that conducts research and advocacy for the R2P, provides statistics showing that to the end of 2019, not less than 83 SC

Resolutions and Presidential Statements refer to R2P,[1] while 15 Resolutions from the UNGA have been informed by the R2P.[2]

Indeed, to follow up on evolution and latest state of situations relevant to R2P, the GCR2P issues periodical reports available for the international community, to appreciate the transcendence of enhancing the role of R2P and to help in the consistent implementation of the principle (GCR2P Monitor).[3]

The different actors, civil society, states and UN itself, have been mobilizing as international community to promote the evolution of R2P. It is to recall the inception of a specific entity to deal with R2P at the UN, organically: The Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, conceived by SG Ban Ki Moon in 2008. Since then the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect supports the work of two Special Advisers who report directly to the United Nations Secretary-General (the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, who raises awareness of the causes and dynamics of genocide, alerts relevant actors where there is a risk of genocide, and advocates and mobilizes for appropriate action; and the Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect, leads the conceptual, political, institutional and operational development of the Responsibility to Protect).[4]

On other hand, in realising the internalization of R2P as an international legal norm there are also difficulties in activating its second pillar, that of determining the need for action by the SC, conforming the need for intervention by the international community. For this to happen, it must be understood that R2P is an institution endowed with content, mechanisms and limits, which allows States and the International Community to put an end to atrocity situations.

In keeping the impulse for perfecting the R2P, the UNGA and the UN Secretary General have been involved in the promotion of open debate on the R2P, initiating with the debate in 2009 of UNGA and the adoption of a Resolution to continue consideration of the norm (UNGA RES/63/308), in 2010, following a special debate by then UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon. Until 2016 annual UNGA held Interactive Dialogues on diverse topics related to R2P

1. https://www.globalr2p.org/resources/un-security-council-resolutions-and-presidential-statements-referencing-r2p/ (last accessed: 2020/0210).

2. https://www.globalr2p.org/resources/un-general-assembly-resolutions-referencing-r2p-2/ (last accessed: 2020/02/10).

3. https://www.globalr2p.org/publications/r2p-monitor-issue-49-15-january-2020/ (last accessed: 2020/02/02).

4. https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/security-council.shtml (last accessed: 2019/11/04).

such as Early Warning, Assessment; the Role of Regional and Sub-regional Arrangements in Implementing the Responsibility to Protect; Timely and Decisive Response; State Responsibility and Prevention; International Assistance; Vital and Enduring Commitment in Implementing the R2P and finally in 2017 a debate on Mobilizing Collective Action: The Next Decade of the R2P.

One of the highlights of the approach to consolidation of R2P at UN has been the Report of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon "Implementing the Responsibility to Protect", issued in January 2009. It is the first comprehensive analysis document prepared by the UN Secretariat on the R2P, as a response to the commitment of the Secretary General to turn the concept into policy, an enforceable provision into reality. It proposes a terminological framework for understanding R2P and outlines measures and actors involved in implementing an approach in three proposed pillars: the First Pillar, stresses that States have the primary responsibility to protect their populations from the four crimes stated in the original 2005 conception of the R2P, the Second Pillar; addresses the commitment of the international community to provide assistance to States in building capacity to protect their populations from those crimes and to assisting those which are under stress before crises and conflicts break out; and the Third Pillar focuses on the responsibility of international community to take timely and decisive action to prevent and halt genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity when a State is manifestly failing to protect its populations. The Secretary General particularly enhances the importance of early warning and prevention.

4. The academic debate on R2P

The factual and academic controversy has not been settled and much attention has been paid to R2P, at times producing antagonistic literature, still without conclusive consensus on its nature neither its immediate future.

Some promoters support arguments of its plain consolidation as norm that can lead to changes in behavior of states and international community (Alex Bellamy: 2009; Gareth Evans: 2009 and James Pattison: 2010).

Other authors give R2P a more normative approach in its legal development from its initial concept to the role of emerging powers and balance of forces that motivate a demand driven formulation of R2P in UN debates and documents (Ramesh Thakur: 2016).

While there are others (Aidan Hehir: 2019), that indicate the legal, normative value of R2P is not so relevant, not disputing if R2P is a norm nor declaring that norms are insignificant, mostly pointing in a post-positivist constructivist approach on the fact that efficacy of the norm should not be directly related to the extent of its proliferation or its repeated normative invocation and that R2P, after its institutionalization as norm has gone through contestation and regressive reinterpretation. Furthermore, some other author points to the need of reformulating R2P (Pinar Gözen Ercan: 2016). She takes the concept beyond considering R2P a ground-breaking norm and giving relevance to the evolution of R2P to an international moral norm with significant implications for its implementation as for the expectations it creates in terms of impacting and driving state actions, thus the conception of R2P as a moral standard for appropriate state behavior.

The same author had also pointed out early that legal developments have given rise to claims that a positive duty to prevent genocide and mass atrocities is emerging (Pınar Gözen Ercan: 2012), and although R2P as a norm in evolution can be seen as a part of "de lege ferenda", the analysis of individual statements of Member States and the general evolution of the Rt2P norm within the UN framework may reveal that its phase of the norm life cycle it is not yet that of a fully established norm.

In a normative valuation of the principle of R2P, it is perceived that today the international community cannot afford neither allow itself to ignore flagrant violations of human rights by claiming a classic concept of Westphalian sovereignty. On the contrary, through the institute of the R2P, the notion of sovereignty as responsibility is reinforced, which responds to a change in the legal configuration of the principle of sovereign equality in relation to the traditional conception of sovereignty. Sovereignty has to be understood in the present as the power of States that not only contains rights that are inherent to it as a State, but which in turn involves duties, very relevant ones. Sovereignty implies not only the enjoyment of rights but also the exercise of responsibilities (Heber Arbuet-Vignali & Washington Baliero Silva: 2018). This results in the responsibility to act in situations that pose a real need for the protection of people. This aspect is seen in the practice of the States and in the position of the SC in its resolutions as well as that of other UN bodies ("sovereignty with responsibility").

Extracting some positive lines from the general debate, it can be stated that there may be no incompatibility between the revised concept of sovereignty as

a combination of the rights and obligations of States and the exercise by the international community through the Security Council and within the framework of the procedures established in the UN Charter of the principle of the R2P in those cases where the primary responsible, which is the state, does not observe its due compliance.

5. R2P AND RELATED ASPECTS IN DEFENSE AND PROTECTION OF THE MOST VULNERABLE

Thus, the functions related to the implementation of the R2P would be to prevent, to react and to rebuild within the framework of the fundamental obligations stated since 2005 in the UN system.

In that line, the prevention actions in observance of the R2P should not be interpreted as an interference in the internal affairs of States or its foreign policy aspects but should be understood as a guarantee of compliance with fundamental principles and norms of the international legal order. Its objective or purpose is not to violate the principles of State sovereignty and non-intervention, but rather that States and the international community adopt certain behaviors to avoid having to resort to more extreme actions in protection of civilians, that is, to intervention. Hence, prevention and early warning are the most important dimensions of the R2P. Its central core is and should be prevention and that is where the UN has to put the greatest efforts, improving and creating new prevention mechanisms under strict conditions of need, so that this does not generate controversies, nor does it affect the legal assets of States such as sovereignty, but benefit them. In this sense, the obligation to prevent conflicts or such situations is part of the R2P.

Moreover, the function of rebuilding, reconstruction and reconciliation – inserted in the R2P, should not pose major problems either, as they are exercised after the reaction function that is where the problem is, as we have discussed before. The aim is for the international community to help restore and consolidate peace and security and promote governance and sustainable development together with the local authorities of the State in question, with the purpose of gradually transferring such responsibility to that state.

Furthermore, as a matter of principle, a gradualness in the adoption of measures (less to more intrusive and coercive), must be taken into account, when producing interventions based on the principle of R2P.

Although the content and scope of the R2P seem quite clear in the current international legal order, gradually so do its doctrinal and conceptual definitions, as well as the operational profiles that configure it. It remains still to see in practice the degree of formal acceptance and support for its institutionalization by the States that make up the international community. The main controversies focus on the specific cases in which the R2P must be activated, the institutional system that would serve as its support, and the limits and conditions that must be respected, especially when the function of reacting is exercised, given that the notion of R2P follows an evolution consistent with the profound changes and transformations of international society after the birth of the UN Charter.

6. A better future, more peaceful and just – with and beyond R2P (and other P and R's)

After the previous considerations we may be able to extract some lines of recommended action to operationalize R2P and let it function for the ultimate goal it was conceived, fight and eradicate the four mass crimes and atrocities that still affects significant part of population. These ideas that have somehow been already referred to in different debates and several documents by the doctrine, academy and UN system considerations on R2P since its adoption in 2005.

Timely and proportionate response has more to do with prevention than reaction itself. As important also is to include in a holistic approach to R2P the aspects of reconstruction or rebuild after interventions of reaction to stop the four crimes contemplated under R2P. That is why we refer to the other P of prevention and the R's, of rebuild and repair. The R2P initiatives to be consistent with all aspects of UN commitments, including those of the Agenda 2030 and the modern conception of developmental peace, should necessarily include provisions in terms of early warning and prevention (either through mediation and preventive diplomacy or other mechanisms at hand). Thus, strengthening national and regional preventive capacities and deployment of strategies to confidence-building among States must be contemplated in these provisions. From the humanitarian side, it is more effective and allows for efficiencies in every way, even economically to act in prevention than in reaction and reconstruction, helping the latter to be hopefully avoidable. The

measures and considerations on R2P by the multilateral system should avoid through those means to have to activate the reaction phase.

In any stage of prevention and reaction based on the principle of R2P, as well as reconstruction and reconciliation after interventions, it is highly relevant the incumbency and competence of the International Criminal Court (ICC). It must also be taken into account in flagrant cases of war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide or ethnic cleansing. Ideally there could be in place more fluid mechanisms in requesting the UN Security Council itself to refer cases to the ICC when necessary, respecting the principles of non-intervention and legal equality of the States, but always in observance of the ethical and legal duty to protect the most basic human rights.

At the same time, it is still necessary to reach to consensus in the international community on how to objectively operationalize and materialize all those aspects of R2P whenever humanity requires concrete deployment, ensuring that humanitarian aid does not become an excuse for interventions for political, economic or other reasons.

The mandate to peacekeeping operations and all missions, humanitarian and cooperation programs under UN umbrella, should also integrate this holistic approach and include precepts of action in terms of prevention, early warning, reconstruction and post conflict reconciliation, and transfer of capacities to the concerned state.

As a possible future direction of the R2P, in time of global emergency, maybe world leaders may agree on reconvening as they did in 2005 in a World Summit for the completion of a pending task, the perfection the R2P. Inspired in its origins, they may be able to project the R2P to the level it has to be vested with to become a real mechanism for humanitarian global guard against mass crimes, institutionally fully conceived, enforceable, transcendental in means of implementation and above all, efficient while at the same time, respecting all international guaranties and precepts of the UN Chart.

To advance on the multilateralism direction and produce sound and solid mechanisms such as R2P, initially conceived to protect man from mass crimes, above all, good global leadership is needed. It is required the commitment of all international society, including drivers from all path of life, especially those morally already convinced of the need of world peace and justice, such as religious leaders and influencers who have already initiated the interfaith dialogue and have begun to confluence and strive for the realisation of the common denomination in life, values.

The obvious task ahead is monumental, not less than mobilizing the international public opinion and particularly the international political arena to motivate an open and realistic dialogue on the benefits of adopting an international moral norm around the concept of R2P, effective to prevent and react to any mass crime. A movement to transform the protection of vulnerable civilians into legal and moral obligation for all international actors.

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8
KAICIID AND INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

Álvaro Albacete

1. Introduction

In the past years, societies around the world have been exposed to major challenges as a result of factors such as economic instabilities, cross-border migration and volatile political conditions. These phenomena contributed to increased tensions between communities of different cultural identities, creating the need to address the challenges in an integrated manner. While religious and cultural dimensions have been part of many of these conflicts, culture, and more specifically religion, proved to have the power to effectively harness and enhance social cohesion and prevent the escalation of violence. However, the contribution of religion as a tool of rapprochement has been often marginalized, neglecting the impact that religious actors could have in supporting efforts of building peace and stability. This paper analyses the interplay between religious and policy actors through a unique initiative: the first intergovernmental organization mandated to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue to foster peace and understanding among communities of different faith denominations. By showcasing some of KAICIID's activities, the paper presents the relevance of interreligious dialogue both, on the grassroots as well as on the international level.

2. Background

With 84% of the 2010 world population defining itself as religious, the impact religious actors can have in their communities to foster social cohesion and peaceful coexistence remains exceptional. Recognizing the important role religion holds, the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) was founded in 2012 as a global advocate for interreligious and intercultural dialogue to foster mutual respect, sustainable peace and social cohesion. Uniquely among intergovernmental organizations, KAICIID is governed both, by the Council of Parties comprised of governmental representatives of its Member States, and by the Board of Directors, comprised of religious leaders from five different religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism). Through its unique structure, the Centre fosters cooperation between religious communities and policy makers, which can create new, more inclusive solutions. The diversity of the multi-religious governing Board provides active assurance that the work carried out by the Centre is inclusively beneficial for all denominations. With the support of its member governments, the Centre convenes influential stakeholders to collaborate and recognize their common goals and methods. Recognizing the power of dialogue in building peace, the Centre helps communities use dialogical methods to strengthen harmonious relations, closing the divide created when religious identities are manipulated to engender fear and hatred or justify exclusion.

Some of the methods adopted by the Centre include the creation of interreligious dialogue platforms, knowledge, and commitment that foster cooperation in conflict areas. By supporting international and national institutions in using interreligious dialogue to work for positive change, the Centre works to create and disseminate knowledge on interreligious dialogue to help achieve peace and reconciliation.

Since the establishment of the Centre, the international landscape has changed significantly, both with regards to the geographical spread of conflicts in which religion is manipulated to incite or justify violence, as well as with regards to the tools, such as social media, which are being used to spread hate messages. In this context agile yet structured action is required to address the emerging challenges to peace. In particular, track-two and cultural diplomacy have arisen as relevant additions to the, at times, hard-lined diplomatic efforts, which often only resulted in security-centered measures, disregarding the core values and principles of spirituality.

3. Why interreligious dialogue?

While the world has witnessed a global trend in the manipulation of religious identity to justify violence, it is important to note that religious actors have been historically, and still are, instrumental in countering messages of intolerance. During conflict, religious leaders can play a crucial role in evoking a common framework of beliefs and values to obtain support for non-violent approaches in conflict-resolution. Similarly, if they work with fellows from different religious denominations, calling for compassion and empathy, which stand at the core of all religions, they can increase individual and community resilience in the face of tensions. This basic approach of emphasizing a set of common positive values and morals that is shared by all religious or faith groups, constitute the foundation for many interreligious peacebuilding activities. Recovery can take generations, long after the dust of conflict settles. After the last intervening state and international aid organizations have withdrawn, it is often the religious leaders that are left holding the communities together.

On the other hand, practice frequently shows that religious actors have limited resources and frameworks of action that would enable them to contribute to a wider peace agenda. They lack platforms and/or fora through which they can communicate with other relevant actors (such as development and/or aid agencies, policy-makers, civil society) to have a wider impact with long-term sustainability. The nexus between religious leaders and policy makers, in this context, remains crucial for the involvements of groups, which are typically marginalized or left behind, into the social transformational process. Overcoming this gap of trust and suspicion between these two stakeholders (policy makers and religious agencies) is crucial step in paving the path to constructively address conflicts and challenges that have a religious dimension. Lack of coordination, duplication of efforts, and contradictory messages are only few of the consequences of this gaps, especially in context of violent conflict areas.

In order to contribute to the solution, KAICIID has utilized partnerships with intergovernmental organizations, such as the United Nations, as a beneficial method to increase the impact of its work in helping religious leaders prevent hate speech, incitement to violence and genocide – as well as with faith-based organizations and NGOs. The relevance of international partnerships that promote the positive contributions of religious leaders was recognized in the past years by international actors that shifted their focus towards

faith-based organizations and religious leaders, including them in cross-sectoral partnerships for peace. For example, within the framework of the United Nations' renewed focus on conflict prevention and mediation, the constructive participation of religious actors has been actively welcomed with the creation of the UN Interagency task force on Religion and Development.

Against this background, KAICIID has specialized in serving as an international dialogue facilitator and interreligious dialogue catalyzer, using dialogue methodologies to convey messages of peace. KAICIID's methodology is based on the assumption that neither religious actors nor policy-makers alone can effectively address the many conflicts and challenges in which religious identity is being manipulated to justify violence. In order to bridge the gap between these two sets of actors, KAICIID establishes, or supports the establishment of interreligious dialogue platforms, comprised of religious leaders, representatives of civil society and other relevant stakeholders. Through the interreligious dialogue platforms, religious leaders work together to agree on common stances which allows them, in return, to work with policy-makers on issues such as development, youth engagement, media etc. Within the framework of interreligious dialogue platforms, religious leaders receive capacity-building trainings and the relevant know-how for working together towards finding solutions to common concerns. This approach is motivated by the belief that interreligious dialogue, combined with other efforts, can uphold the basic human rights of members of the communities and strengthen the social fabric in the affected societies.

The success of platforms is determined by the confidence of all parties that the dialogue will be fair, inclusive, open, sustained and safe. For these conditions to be met, KAICIID invited by the national government agencies, partners with non-partisan organizations, creating an environment conducive to dialogue. KAICIID and its partners act neutrally and impartially, not promoting specific solutions, but rather facilitating dialogue among involved actors. These institutional partnerships are crucial, both for attracting resources and guaranteeing the necessary credibility of the overall dialogue process.

4. Action for Change

Since its foundation in 2012, the Centre works hard to enable cooperation between religious leaders and policymakers in the Arab region, the

Central African Republic, in Myanmar and Nigeria, where the Centre supports inclusive, interreligious platforms that help communities build trust and bridge the divides that separate them. The initiatives in the Arab region unite religious leaders in denouncing any justification of violence through religion and in supporting the common citizenship of all. The first network of Muslim & Christian Religious Faculties and Institutes that was established in the Arab World helps incorporate interreligious dialogue in their curricula. The KAICIID-supported Interreligious Platform supports religious authorities from Muslim and Christian institutions to advocate for the rights and inclusion of all communities in the Arab Region. The platform equips members to combat hatred and sectarianism and promotes the fundamental rights and dignity of all human beings based on the concept of common citizenship. The platform also connects religious leaders with policy makers in the region to advocate inclusive policies and give a stronger voice to marginalized communities.

This initiative is combined with social media trainings, which provide over 300 social media advocates in the Arab region the skills to push back against online religious extremism and incitement. Aiming to further enhance the capacity of religious activists and future religious leaders to promote cooperation, the Fellows programme introduces interreligious dialogue to the educators around the world who are training tomorrow's religious leaders in conflict regions. These initiatives are conceptualized as capacity building for peace and social cohesion, training young people, from scouts to young refugees, to use dialogue to solve real-life challenges.

Collectively, it is important to determine how to empower leaders ready to constructively engage in peace-building efforts and examine ways in which we can, together, move away from violent conflict and towards paths of peace. Among the interreligious dialogue platforms supported by the Centre, is the Muslim Jewish Leadership Council in Europe. Religious leaders and faith-based organizations have communicated the need of a greater degree of understanding of how to approach and engage policymakers and KAICIID has tailored its engagement with this set of stakeholders to support them. With an understanding of policy frameworks, human rights, and sustainable development, as well as practical skills such as the use of social media and the protocols of advocacy, greater strides can be taken towards achieving the UNSDGs. At the same time, policymakers need training on religious literacy, interreligious dialogue and inclusion.

Working to equip religious actors across all communities with the tools to cooperate across intrareligious and interreligious lines and to aid policymakers in their endeavor to overcome violent extremism, prevent further conflict, build bridges, foster coexistence in diversity and, in turn, strengthen communities, KAICIID actively strives to contribute to the transformation of societies affected by conflict. When religious leaders and actors have the tools to identify and overcome hate speech or incitement; when they work together as equal partners in the effort to rebuild their communities; when they have the support, they need to foster peace, share knowledge with policymakers and international organizations and work together with them, then we have moved one step closer to our goal.

In this context, significant strides have been made over the past years in the Central African Republic. The country has undergone a surge of violence since March 2013. With almost 900 000 people forcefully displaced since then, the crisis has become one of the worst humanitarian disasters of our time according to UN reports. There are more than 460 000 CAR refugees in neighboring countries and 436 000 are internally displaced. Intra-religious and interreligious division affects the stability of the country, causing clashes between and within the different religious communities and ethnic communities and weakening reconciliation potential. Due to the magnitude of this displacement, the country risks becoming divided between a Muslim north and a Christian south. According to various sources, Christians represent 80% of the population (55% protestant, 25% Catholic) and Muslims approximately 15%.

The Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation conference was organized in May 2015 by the transition government that led to the adoption of the Republican Pact for Peace and Reconciliation. In October 2015, the UN Security Council called "upon the international community to continue to support the CAR by addressing critical priorities articulated by Central Africans during the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation" and "commended the joint action of religious leaders in the CAR in pursuing intercommunal peace." Therefore, it became an imperative that international and local actors continue to support dialogue, including between the religious leaders to pave the way for peace and reconciliation.

The role of religious leaders in achieving peace in the country is crucial, given their capacity to foster national efforts of reconciliation from within their respective communities. To this end, KAICIID is advocating for the establishment of operational and sustainable mechanisms to strengthen the capacity of

the religious leaders (with an initial focus on the Muslim community) to prevent violence and engage in interreligious dialogue for reconciliation. Through its work, the Centre has focused on establishing inclusive mechanisms that strengthen the capacity of the CAR religious community leaders to successfully engage with each other, including an early warning mechanism to monitor, mitigate & prevent interreligious violence in the conflict areas. Furthermore, together with partners, the Centre develops the capacity of religious actors to conduct interreligious initiatives. This includes training Muslim leaders for future intergroup cooperation with Christian leaders. Striving to offer innovative approaches to building peace, KAICIID implements pilot initiatives in targeted conflict areas in partnership with members of the existing Interfaith Platform and it provides technical and financial support to the Interfaith Platform to coordinate the activities of its members. A needs assessment study was conducted to map issues as well as identify gaps that need to be addressed in future. The Centre prides itself with adopted Vienna Action Plan, which comprises of a set of actions aiming to promote interreligious dialogue and which was supported by representatives from the Muslim and Christian communities as well as various governments. Imams representing the two main Muslim groups agreed to unite and work together with Christians for peace constituting a first step in addressing the issue of leadership within their community. Conscious that a long-term engagement is necessary, the Centre remains committed to work with partners in order to support the Central African Republic on its path towards peace, inclusiveness and stability.

Within the framework of activities in Africa, KAICIID developed uniquely-tailored initiatives to address the challenges Nigeria faces. With over 182 million inhabitants comprising over 500 ethnic groups (according to the 2015 census), Nigeria has an almost even split between Islam and Christianity. According to a recent UN report, Nigeria is projected to overtake the United States as the third-most populous country in the world by 2050. Rising tensions along religious, regional, ethnic and political fault lines have damaged intercommunal relations in Nigeria, which are under even more pressure due to the lack of sustained dialogue and a competition for available resources. Northeastern and central Nigeria have witnessed an increase in violence by various groups, including Boko Haram, trying to manipulate religious and ethnic identity in Nigeria for political ends. These violent acts have threatened social cohesion in this historically diverse and multi-religious society. KAICIID sees the considerable potential of functioning dialogue platforms which leaders from different

religious traditions can use to address these and other emerging issues. These platforms can serve to combat growing intolerance and mistrust. The Centre has solidified its role as a dialogue facilitator in Nigeria and laid the foundations for sustainable interreligious dialogue through the establishment of dialogue spaces, capacity building, and support of local initiatives.

Recognizing the need for diverse and inclusive solutions to the conflicts, the Centre convenes religious leaders, policymakers, regional stakeholders and experts from Nigeria in a series of intra-and interreligious meetings in the Coordinate to Achieve (CtA) process. In order to foster collaboration, and provide resources and support for local initiatives, the Centre works through a three pillar approach: a) Interfaith Dialogue Forum for Peace; b) Support for Local Initiatives and c) Strategic Partnerships. The Centre supported the launch of the Interfaith Dialogue Forum for Peace (IDFP). The IDFP was the result of consultations with over 80 stakeholders and local partners in order to promote more effective and sustainable collaboration. As a locally owned, and legally registered entity, IDFP works on the promotion of interreligious dialogue for peace in the country, bringing together religious and interreligious actors, with international, governmental and civil society partners. The Forum has succeeded in adopting an interreligious action plan focusing on the establishment of Interfaith Networks and the support of social cohesion, interfaith education, the freedom of religion and the protection of holy sites, interfaith exchanges and media sensitization, as well as countering hate speech. In each of these areas, the Forum and its members have successfully implemented activities, including visits to communities in Kaduna State, Plateau State, Taraba State, Benue State, and Zamfara State affected by tensions between farming and pastoralists groups, a high level intra-faith round table meeting on the deradicalization of extremist tendencies in Nigeria, resulting in a roadmap and a consensus working document for further implementation by the Muslim community. The Centre also supports local and grassroots initiatives which foster dialogue throughout the country. Through the grants scheme up to 20 grassroots organizations are supported each year, broadening our impact among the Nigerian population. For example, funded by the Centre's small grants scheme, students from Kaduna Polytechnic University took part in a series of workshops which taught skills in dialogue and challenging hate speech. Although sometimes reluctant to get to know one another, Muslim and Christian students built relationships after completing the programme, counting each other as friends and committing to dialogue and interreligious solidarity.

KAICIID is also actively involved in promoting interreligious dialogue and cooperation in Myanmar, the second largest country in South-East Asia, with around 56.8 million inhabitants and a country facing both political and economic transition. It struggles with identity issues along ethnic and religious lines (with more than 135 recognized ethnic groups). A number of violent attacks target the Muslim community in various parts of the country, particularly in the Rakhine State. A surge of violence erupted again in August 2017, which resulted in over 1000 people killed, according to the UN special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar, while Médecins Sans Frontières reported casualty numbers of 6700 people killed. The UNSG has called on Myanmar authorities to end violence against the Rohingya. Following violent tensions in this region in October 2016, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights issued a report in 2017 which spoke of the "devastating cruelty" deployed against the Rohingyas by Myanmar's security forces; documenting serious human rights violations. The newly elected government faces a huge challenge in calibrating its political, policy and security responses to keep violence under control. Negotiations for a national peace settlement with the ethnic armed groups have yet to make any significant progress. Although the government argues that the Rohingya are illegal migrants from Bangladesh and has made no real eff ort to provide them any formal legal status, recent events show that it has started increasingly turning against the radical groups. More than half a million Rohingya refugees have fled a violent offensive since August 2017, with the UN repeatedly calling "to suspend military action, end the violence, and uphold the rule of law".

Against this complex backdrop, KAICIID and its local partner network, the Peaceful Myanmar Initiative (PMI), a multi-religious network of religious leaders and CSOs, are focusing on the development of dialogue activities as part of local peace advocacy efforts, to revive the spirit of tolerance in the country.

KAICIID's overall objective, as in other parts of the world where it is active, is to promote interreligious dialogue, coexistence and reconciliation between the followers of the main religious traditions in the country. The main methods of engagement include supporting and strengthening an inclusive and sustainable national interfaith dialogue platform, training of religious and community leaders on interreligious dialogue, with a focus on using social media as a space for dialogue and supporting local peacebuilding initiatives through a small grants scheme, awareness raising campaigns and interfaith forums thus initiating pilot activities through local partners also in Rakhine State.

KAICIID prides itself in particular with the establishment and functioning of the Peaceful Myanmar Initiative, a multi-religious and inclusive network composed of around 50 prominent religious leaders from various faith traditions (Buddhists, Christians, Hindus and Muslims) and civil society organizations (CSOs), who promote peaceful dialogue across Myanmar, including in Rakhine State. PMI and its partners aim to serve as sustainable networks and platforms. Through them, these Burmese-led activities aim to build bridges between diverse religious, ethnic, political and regional communities.

5. Partnerships

KAICIID's external relations priorities are embedded in the Centre's statutory documents, which recognize the importance of building and sustaining partnerships. The Centre's commitment to multilateralism is a defining principle of its core policy, as KAICIID's work is carried out through, with, and for, partners. Throughout the years, the Centre increased efforts to cooperate with international partners, in order to prevent duplication of efforts, leverage existing synergies, and focus on the implementation of existing formal cooperation agreements.

KAICIID attaches special importance to its cooperation with the UN and building relations with relevant UN entities, in particular under the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Centre contributes to the SDGs through a multi-dimensional approach, drawing on its main areas of expertise in the field of interreligious and intercultural dialogue and focusing on multi-stakeholder partnerships for implementation, which lies at the core of KAICIID's methodology, in line with SDG 17:

> Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries. Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

KAICIID developed a strategic approach to capitalize on the Centre's comparative advantages, as well as on new opportunities with regards to partnership with intergovernmental organizations. It works to strengthen links

between religious actors and policymakers by building their capacity in interreligious dialogue for peace and social cohesion. The Centre partners with UN entities, intergovernmental organizations, international nongovernmental organizations and governments. KAICIID aims at contributing to transformative social change by empowering religious leaders and policymakers to participate in dialogue for peace. KAICIID upholds the UN Declaration on Human Rights, as well as the UNESCO Culture Conventions and their operational activities, which demonstrate how culture can help achieve the 2030 Agenda. In line with UNESCO's approach to the 2030 Agenda, KAICIID aims to contribute to peaceful societies and inclusion, through the enhancement of fundamental freedoms and the strengthening of participatory systems of dialogue towards the respect for cultural diversity and the promotion of gender equality. KAICIID partners with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, United Nations Development Programme and others supporting local communities to address challenges they face in volatile conflict environments.

Through all its partnerships, the Centre works towards strengthening the dialogue between religious actors and policy makers by providing an enabling context for religious leaders to actively contribute to the strategic policy orientation of intergovernmental organization. Experience has shown that religious actors' contributions represent an important factor in the success of peace and social cohesion activities.

6. Conclusion

Religious leaders can play an important role in international peace agenda when invited to participate in a respectful and inclusive manner. The cooperation between religious leaders from different religious denomination as well as their collaboration with policy-makers has been historically a sensitive one, as reluctance and misperceptions created tension and alienation. This partnership, nevertheless, provides a variety of opportunities for both religious leaders and policy-makers to benefit from the added value these stakeholders bring to the table. While religious leaders can reach out to local communities and positively shape the perceptions of the Other, policy-makers have the means to support these initiatives and multiplying their positive effects. Nevertheless, when creating partnerships among religious leaders and between them and policy-makers, it is important to take note of several factors.

First, actors facilitating dialogue and cooperation between religious and policy actors should work to safeguard the uniqueness of their standpoints and the separate spheres of influence. Often and unconsciously, policy-makers try to change the attitudes of religious leaders, attempting to assimilate them to the more secular/policy discourse, and vice versa, religious leaders expect that policy-makers will change their attitude towards religion and accept the language or discourse of moral values

Second, a systematization of these partnerships based on clear principles and values, as well as the respect for the rights and responsibilities of each actor shall be put in place. This can help dialogue facilitators manage the expectations and the feasibility of the outcomes.

Third, the institutionalization of systematic engagement between religious actors and policy makers is far more challenging that sporadic or ad-hoc linkages that can be established around certain temporary issues or crisis. This process of institutionalization requires a deeper and more comprehensive and strategic planning on the two sides.

Fourth, the cooperation between religious leaders and policy makers can have long-lasting results only when facilitated in a fair and inclusive manner.

Successive initiatives by the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID), including statements by its multi-religious Board as well as engagement at policymaking and thought leadership levels, are driven by the Centre's deep rooted concern over the hundreds of lives lost or destroyed by those seeking to bypass the message of peace inherent in all religions in pursuit of twisted ideologies and/or political ends.

As the only intergovernmental organization governed by religious representatives and dedicated to the facilitation of dialogue between followers of different religions and cultures, KAICIID's mandate allows it to bridge the gap between religious leaders and policy makers in order to advocate peace and combat violent extremism. This approach stems from a belief that religious leaders and policy makers must work together in order to address the many conflicts and problems in which religious identity is manipulated to justify violence. Despite the numerous challenges that today's world still faces, KAICIID's methodology is increasingly becoming interesting to international stakeholders, who realize that building peace requires holistic policies and inclusive methodologies.

9

SCHOLAS OCCURRENTES: YOUNG PEOPLE AND INTERFAITH AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

Marta Simoncelli

Pope Francis explained at the closing of the World Congress of Catholic Education in 2017 that:

> Scholas seeks to open new horizons and harmonize the language of the mind with the language of the heart and the language of the hands. Scholas is teaching young people around the world to think, feel good and accompany in doing, so that the child, the young person, may think what he feels and what he does; may feel what he thinks and what he does; may do what he feels and what he thinks. Scholas builds the culture of encounter and inclusion, and harmonically remakes the educational pact (Pope Francis, 2017).[1]

From Scholas we propose a positive vision, inviting young people to reflect on their own being in relation to the other. The basis of Scholas' educational experiences are the following premises: "All people are a 'yes'" (Pope Francis, 2017).[2]

Whenever we talk about interfaith and intercultural dialogue, we cannot put aside what lies beneath this desire for self-knowledge, recognition and exchange. Deep down, talking about dialogue means conceiving the human being in himself or herself and in his or her relationship with others in a certain way.

1. Discourse of Pope Francis at the closing ceremony of the World Congress for Catholic Education, 2017.

2. Discourse of Pope Francis at headquarters inauguration of the Pontifical Scholas Occurrentes, June 2017.

As evidenced in the history of humankind, different conceptions exist and coexist, and some of them do not understand the otherness in terms of mutual recognition and dialogue.

Everything that concerns human beings, their creation and their way of comprehending the world arises from a worldview about oneself and the other. Likewise, in order to talk about interfaith and intercultural dialogue, it is important to pick up the underlying dimension of "person" again, that is, how we interpret the encounter between the different ways of being that exist in the world, expressed also in religions and cultures.

We might begin with the premise that "all people are a 'yes'", a key provided by Pope Francis for the interpretation of the human person. This premise also poses an interesting anthropological perspective, regardless of whether we know their personal history, by which we may have a glimpse of how this *yes* has to do with creating a place for those excluded and marginalized by a society that says *no* to them.

If we consider the phrase with its word order, we find the first word that directs the gaze the way of understanding reality: *all*. This word contains, precisely, everything: the totality of continents, countries, cultures, faiths and religions that we know. To say *all* means trying to encompass and include the diversity of ways of being existing on Earth.

If we add to that the word *people* and say *all people*, we will see how that *all* embraces the human person; that is, the *all* that contains the culture, the diversity of entities called "people", with dignity in themselves. Thus, the Pope is saying: *all people*, which is the same as saying *people all around*, in this inherent interaction between human being and culture.

All people are. Saying that *people are* means coming to terms with their existence in a certain way. The verb *to be* establishes a relationship of belonging to something (in this case, the world). Based on this perspective, no person is-not. On the contrary, this phrase is all about understanding that everyone must be and exist.

Lastly, *all people are a "yes"*, perhaps means to say "yes" to everything that was exposed before: to all of the people in their particular (diverse) way of being and inhabiting this world.

To point out that *all people are a "yes"* is to set off on the basis of equality, to propose that nothing is left uncontemplated, to understand that, in order to speak about dialogue, it is fundamental to conceive the other as a "yes" and all others as a valid "yes".

With this anthropological premise, we may make a breakdown of the way in which we look at human beings, tracing a both educational and vital path. Pope Francis, in the same speech, also invites us to reflect on the meaning of life and of people in themselves: "discover that they mean something, just as a pebble has a meaning".

"To have a meaning" in the Western rationalist world is not saying little. On the contrary, it implies granting the human person a standing that contains a sense of being, and that, thus, the stated meaning is genuine and not subject to debasing or disposal.

Now, delving into the sense of being, which is so often emphasized by Pope Francis as a spiritual guide, he retrieves the importance of interiority: "Finding one's identity is a path: a path of dialogue, a path of reflection, a path of interiority".

That is to say that the first dialogue to be held is with ourselves. But it does not end there: being alone in a world where others exist is practically impossible. Which is why he continues as follows:

> […] each of us has their own uniqueness, their own treasures, and the challenge lies there […] I must seek my own uniqueness, my own treasures, and share them with others because I have a meaning, I mean something […] What's the purpose of having a meaning? To give something (Pope Francis, 2019).[3]

1. A "YES" TO GIVE

"In this society which is very much used to excluding, selecting and attacking, […] Scholas does not. All of us are a 'yes', for themselves and others, a 'yes' to give.

Ontologically speaking, and according to the conception that we have already mentioned at the beginning, the human being is a "yes" that –he adds– is donated, i.e., it is *a "yes" that relates*, that has the ability to give itself to others and to the otherness.

Being in relation sets out the great challenge of exchanging, coexisting and sharing. About this, Pope Francis says:

3. Message of Pope Francis to the #STOPCYBERBULLYINGDAY marathon participants | Scholas Talks 24 hs, June 2019.

> It is up to you to discover your meaning in life, the way you are, your potentials, and the way you give that meaning to others, how you share it. What's the point of a life which is not shared with others? It goes to a museum. And I don't think you want to end up in a museum, do you? (Pope Francis 2017).[4]

In a life which is shared and acknowledges the other as a gift, there is a relationship, something to give and, therefore, something to receive; a relationship that "is inclusive, shakes hands, gives hugs, does not attack and recognizes that no person is a `no'" (Pope Francis, 2017).[5]

Our collective interfaith and intercultural history has plentiful of examples of rejection of the other. One interesting example of a "no" present amongst young people was noted in the Scholas videoconference on Bullying in June 2019:

> […] a very easy way not to not make this journey is to attack or diminish the identity of others. This is where bullying is born. Bullying is a phenomenon of self-compensation, of self-appreciation, not of finding oneself but of diminishing the other in order to feel superior. It is learning to look down on others and wrong. Keep in mind that it is only valid for one person to look at another from top to bottom when helping the other to get up. Otherwise, it is invalid (Pope Francis, 2019).[6]

From these examples, we may show the conception of *being in relation* mentioned at the beginning, as well as how our own identity is built as a reflection of the otherness (although, in this case, by obscuring the identity of others).

"To go out to meet one another" –says Pope Francis at Scholas IV Congress– means understanding that in this *being-relationship* there is an *other* who builds that being. It is the other who gives back the root of our own self and makes us understand and know ourselves.

For this reason, at the back of this dynamic and dialectical relationship between beings, Pope Francis' call to be "on the way out" unfolds, which, in

4. Discourse of Pope Francis to Scholas' youngsters at Scholas Headquarters in the Vatican City, June 2017.

5. Discourse of Pope Francis to Scholas' youngsters at Scholas Headquarters in the Vatican City, June 2017.

6. Message of Pope Francis to the #STOPCYBERBULLYINGDAY marathon participants | Scholas Talks 24 hs, June 2019.

terms of dialogue, implies just a little more: it suggests that, starting at the "yes" to all people (diversity of cultures, religions, economic backgrounds), all individuals reflect our own ego, submit it to reflection and uplift it, embrace the diversity present in humankind and make us find one another and, even more so, ourselves.

2. Identity as a work of art

> I would like to thank you for letting life tell you a new chapter at each step. Don't be afraid of that: of bringing yourselves to mixing your languages, opening your history and allowing others to rewrite it without forsaking it; of what is different and unknown; maintaining always that diversity and being more and more authentic at the same time, turning that identity –that sense of belonging that you have received– into a work of art. That is what I wish for you (Pope Francis, 2018).[7]

The message of Pope Francis begins by saying that "the word `identity' is not an easy one". Undoubtedly, there is a myriad of reflections and conceptions surrounding that word, which holds in its very signifier deep meaning about everything we have been proposing about being, the other and otherness (world), and the relationship between everything involved in cultures, religions, social organizations, etc.

However, in relation to this, the Holy Father adds something very important about "identity", not only with the question as to *who I am* but also explaining that "this question is dovetailed to the question of the meaning of our own lives. Who am I and what is the meaning of my life?".

And he adds to this: "But caution: this is not a question to get rid of or to answer hastily. This is a question we should always keep in mind and open, close to us: `Who am I?'".

The dynamic nature of a work of art as a unique and beautiful creation which is never finished, that appears unexpectedly and that gives rise to an expression of being, is the most appropriate image to understand the complexity of "identity". As Pope Francis said, "identity" is about a path, about a question

7. Message of Pope Francis to the participants of the World Youth Encounter organized by World ORT and Scholas Occurrentes. Buenos Aires. October 2018.

that remains and is asked repeatedly throughout life in the encounter with others. That's why he continues that:

> So as to prevent the identity from denying differences, it needs a constant encounter with the other. It needs dialogue, it needs growing from each encounter. […] There are no abstract identities. Identities are not motionless. Each of us should ask ourselves again: `Who am I?', and rebuild the path. Let's grow in the path, with dialogue, with a sense of belonging, with hope. That way, we will enrich ourselves more and more every day (Pope Francis, 2018).[8]

For this, during the videoconference held this year with the young people of Scholas, Pope Francis introduced the key of this "encounter", and said to us: "The only way is the way of dialogue, of sharing, coexisting, listening to the other, taking the time to walk this path together, taking the time because time builds relationships" (Pope Francis, 2018).[9]

3. The origin and experience of Scholas, an education in the culture of the encounter

At the onset of the XXI century in Argentina, where Jorge Bergoglio (Pope Francis) sat as Archbishop of Buenos Aires, a deep social, political and economic crisis prevailed, causing death and poverty, and with a population gathered under a common cry demanding "Throw them all out". In the midst of chaos, despair and indifference, Bergoglio brought together educators José María del Corral and Enrique Palmeyro and tasked them with the mission of listening to the hearts of young people, since it is only from that place, from their pain, that a new culture could emerge.

Then came the formation of the first group of students from Catholic, Jewish, Muslim and Evangelical schools, both public and private, from all over the city. These young people started thinking about this challenging social reality, and asserted that their pain was mainly caused by the educational system, since it proposed an education that was not close to their lives. However, this group of teenagers decided that they would not surrender to this

8. Message of Pope Francis to the participants of the World Youth Encounter organized by World ORT and Scholas Occurrentes. Buenos Aires. October 2018.

9. Message of Pope Francis to the participants of the World Youth Encounter organized by World ORT and Scholas Occurrentes. Buenos Aires. October 2018.

reality: they created a bill which climbed all the way to the City Legislature and which was unanimously voted and became Act no. 2169 (Buenos Aires, Educational City), summoning several social agents to the educational task.

This initial group of 70 students grew to the point that, by the end of the year, 7000 teenagers were already participating and, unknowingly, became the origin of Scholas.

Today, twenty years after its first experience in Buenos Aires and six years after its early steps in the world, Scholas is constituted as the International Organization of Pontifical Law, based in Argentina, Vatican City, Colombia, Spain, Haiti, Italy, Mexico, Mozambique, Panama, Paraguay, Portugal and Romania, with its network in 190 countries, connecting more than 500 000 educational centers and public and private educational networks of all faiths, bringing together more than one million children and young people from all over the world. There are many programs and initiatives that have emerged from this seed first sown in Buenos Aires. All of them aim at generating encounters between the diversity of realities, social classes and religions. And from these off shoots, Pope Francis and the Scholas community have found educational keys to dialogue and the culture of the encounter.

4. Educating in beauty (Pope Francis, 2019)[10]

One of the keys of this education for the culture of the encounter has to do with giving back to young people and adults that which is ever-present in childhood: a sense of awe. "Today we educate on the basis of reason. We pass on certainties which have hindered our sense of transcendence, the doubt that gives way to belief and awe" (Pope Francis, 2018).[11]

Awe is the ability to be affected by the reality that surrounds us. It is a movement that leads to understanding the other as a stranger, and that brings about curiosity, inquiries.

Now, this awe that implies a glance at what surrounds us in the way we have been suggesting, entails a way of understanding this encounter. Pope Francis says: "As educators, we have to sense a path that strips our eyes in

10. Message of Pope Francis to the #STOPCYBERBULLYINGDAY marathon participants | Scholas Talks 24 hs, June 2019.

11. Discourse of Pope Francis at the Youth Pre-Synod, March 2018.

order to open up to the mystery of the otherness and to that unique –and, therefore, beautiful– charm within us all" (Pope Francis, 2018).[12]

When awed, children discover the beauty in the world. In the same line, when encountering others, the key proposed by Pope Francis is to empty ourselves so as to become amazed by this new other, source of mystery, and, in this encounter, find its beauty, as whenever we discover a flower we had never seen before. "To take away the amazement is to remove the ability to contemplate beauty and to open up to the mystery of the otherness" (Pope Francis, 2018).[13]

Therefore, educating in awe and in beauty will imply opening up to what is different and understanding that the mystery of the other means beauty, and not rejection or violence.

5. Rediscovering play as an educational expression (Pope Francis, 2018)[14]

Pope Francis has repeatedly mentioned the limitations of traditional education developed today in most countries. One of the many issues he addresses is that "Education is not merely information, it is creativity and play" (Pope Francis, 2014).[15]

While playing, we realized through young people how to start from parity, from equality. Any free play, typical of infants, always invites us to create possible (or impossible) worlds; and Scholas has discovered that, most of time, the answers to the problems affecting young people and the world may be generated from there.

By living in a culture where everything is exchange, business, barter, a culture where everything has a utilitarian purpose, playing is the call to return to the world of gratuity, where, in the absence of utilitarian goals or purposes, our being appears in its fullest expression. Playing is the possibility of sensing oneself and the other again as a gift and to give thanks for it: "In a liquid world without roots, the real game is always lost: the free play. The ability of the children we see in the field who are able to put together a football team,

12. Discourse of Pope Francis at the Youth Pre-Synod, March 2018.
13. Discourse of Pope Francis at the Youth Pre-Synod, March 2018.
14. Discourse of Pope Francis at the Youth Pre-Synod, March 2018.
15. Pope Francis Message for the Interreligious Match for Peace, September 2014.

use two sticks representing the goal and a free goalkeeper who moves forward and scores" (Pope Francis, 2019).[16]

As mentioned above, these educational perspectives converge today in programs that seek to generate this encounter from the diversity of each one, and that leave us testimonies of young participants, such as those we share below.

6. The feast of gathering: Scholas Citizenship

"We need to consider the feast as a human expression of the celebration of meaning" (Pope Francis, 2017).[17] Scholas Citizenship was born as a replica of that first experience shared with the youngsters from Buenos Aires. It was the founding experience of Scholas whereby around two hundred and four hundred young people from different public, private, secular and religious schools from the same community gathered at one place for six days. The experience proposed a journey in which the youngsters started by choosing two issues that affected them in their social reality, and later delved into them and undertook to create projects.

This has been experienced over the last four years by more than 25 thousand young people from countries as diverse as: Paraguay, Colombia, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Honduras, United Arab Emirates, Israel, Palestine, Cuba, United States, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Mozambique.

In this "feast of gathering" –as Pope Francis calls it–, young people live the vision of the human person that we have been describing. According to Patricia, a student participant of Scholas Citizenship in Madrid (Spain): "(The program) was a way to escape our environment and share. Diversity is enriching, and sharing is understanding. We could see that there is a world beyond our neighborhood. And that worried and concerned us".

Generating a common space for these youngsters, where diversity is proclaimed and the problems of their reality may be approached is the first step of Scholas Citizenship. One of the first sensations in this regard, which we

16. Pope Francis in response to a to a question from Scholas at the Youth Pre-Synod, March 2019.

17. Pope Francis Message at the Scholas Chair Congress at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, July 2017.

have seen throughout these years, is the ability of young people to go beyond differences. It is they themselves who quickly embody this "*yes" to all*: "All of us are different but equal at the same time" (Pascuale, student participant of Scholas Citizenship in Rome).

At the beginning of the day, a space called "re-creation" summons all young people to be themselves by means of games. It is a moment based on listening to each person's uniqueness, encouraging them to be themselves. The re-creation invites to recreate. It is where young people express themselves artistically through dance and music, play on the basis of improvisation and open up to whatever happens, sharing the uniqueness that each one brings with their culture and history.

At this first stage, the feast of the encounter is what reigns, and the stars are the youngsters. "Scholas was a `yes' in the midst of many `no's' that separated us. And it generated a space of trust that awoke in us what each brought with ourselves: singing, dancing, poetry, thousands of things that in this space of trust we could show as our passions and work as a team" (Estefanía, young participant of Scholas Citizenship in Buenos Aires). "First of all, Scholas joined us, as we attend schools of different religions, private and public. Scholas opened for me a space to have the courage to share my poetry" (Lucas, participant of Scholas Citizenship in La Matanza, Argentina).

During the re-creation activity, we saw how young people feel engaged by the look of the other participants. It becomes an almost sacred space for them, where each one is valued and accepted by the rest. "It helped us see our worth and our relevance in the society. I'm certain that Scholas has developed another meaning within us" (Vedenson, Haiti, participant of Scholas Citizenship).

This is how young people have taught us what interfaith and intercultural dialogue means: through the way they live such dialogue between them, from that first experience in Buenos Aires to each of the Scholas Citizenship experiences:

> I love this program because I can express myself and be myself, I can see what happens to others, what they suffer, I can support the one beside me and not just look at myself and my actions. I have met many friends from different places, from different schools, with different opinions. What makes us friends is that we are here with the motivation to come and learn from each other. I would love everyone to be able to feel the same as I do right now because I have met different people and been able to discuss what is happening and give

> them a solution. Although I am from another religion –I am Jewish–, I love Pope Francis' idea of uniting us all and creating an environment in which there are no differences, and where we may all realize that we are equal. Scholas, to me, is union" (Janet Cohen, participant of Scholas Citizenship in Metepec, Mexico).

Then, it is from this first moment, where mutual recognition reigns amongst the children, that the focus is placed on working with the issues chosen. In Scholas, and based on the perspective of Pope Francis, the starting point is always play and re-creation, and the unity and creativity with which youngsters work on their realities arise from there: "We realized that, together, we can make a difference. A different reality can only be built if we work together" (Alessandra, participant of Scholas Citizenship in Dubai). "We have listened to each other and learned to work as a team" (Vanessa, participant of Scholas Citizenship of Barranquilla).

That is how the feast of diversity takes place amongst youngsters, and it is they who show in every experience how working together is possible: "This harmonious space was generated by dialogue and the expression of each one of us. Neither race, religion nor economy is relevant if we stand together against the issues that affect us as young people" (Samantha, participant of Scholas Citizenship in Mexico).

> We came into contact with people from various social classes, with multiple opinions and a diversity of physical abilities. It is very enriching to be able to exchange experiences and acknowledge in ourselves and in others that we had the same hopes. Listening more and taking into account each other's differences so that thoughts are built together (Julia, Brazilian, participant of the World Youth Encounter in Jerusalem).

Apart from that, in a transversal way, this experience also includes the invitation to young people who want to approach the problem chosen through art (music or painting). Art, like any game, frees life, allows life to be more "life"; it helps the rock cease to be a rock and become a temple or a sculpture. In art there is room for creation of possible worlds together, that is why it is always present in the education of Scholas: "Through this mural, we can make the young people of today see that although art is not within our schools, it is still present within us." (Giovanni, participant of Scholas Citizenship in Rome).

> To me, art has always been one of the ways of thinking, a way of expressing oneself, a way of living life and a way of spreading knowledge as well. And what better way to break society's problems through knowledge and its expansion? With art we can pass on ideas, messages. And that can help us solve many things. As we are doing right now" (David, participant of Scholas Citizenship in Lima).

The approach to education proposed by Scholas is based on this experience with young people. Not only because they are the protagonists of the spaces, but also since –as argued by Pope Francis in his anthropology of the other– these "others" reflect the image of what is done and make us self-recognize ourselves:

> Scholas suggests a more open education, based on our passions, on play, on thinking, on achieving more, growing and learning from what you like. Nobody says that learning has to be only about sitting down, picking up your book, listening to a talk, going to your house and doing what you have to do. You don't learn that way. You really learn when you are passionate about something and you look for ways to grow through it: art, play, thought or whatever you like. That's what it is about, that from these branches you can learn, grow and educate yourself, which is what matters at the end of the day (Sergio, participant of Scholas Citizenship in Madrid).

Lastly, in each experience proposed by Scholas there is always a moment where we try to grasp the meaning created in the encounter. To put in words and in language what happens to us in the encounter with the other and with otherness. It is a space where we take our time to think, not rationally, but passionately, about what happens around us. By focusing on letting oneself be affected by what is happening, participants are always invited to take a moment and write. This space is called "What's up?", and it has to do with what happened within the young participants. These testimonies arise from this activity, and Scholas always uses them to reflect about its educational work:

> On the first day of Scholas, I had no idea what to expect. I'd heard that we would be solving problems in our community, but nothing else. I do a lot of programs and internships and they are always serious. We are treated as adults, and we're expected to conduct ourselves professionally. I've spent years trying to trick the world into thinking that I know what I'm doing, and that I am capable of handling anything that is thrown in my way. Through these programs, I've learned how to look and act the part. I polish and polish myself, but I've never felt this confidence and knowing of my heart. I expected a serious Scholas. This is not what I got. I experienced a carefree Scholas. An honest and open Scholas.

> I didn't know what was going on. I couldn't wrap my mind around it, or figure out what was happening. Logic wasn't our government here. For a while, this bewildered me. Then, I had an epiphany: Scholas is only understood when you stop trying to understand it. Scholas is a feeling. Scholas is Valentina, Andres, Nanda, Alvin. Scholas is dance, parties, and solving serious issues. Scholas is the ability to view the world openly, as a child does. I've finally understood that to be a child is not a bad thing. I'm forever grateful for this time (Marina, participant of Scholas Citizenship in Miami).
>
> Time is not important. Never has silence had such voice. Only a little is enough, a look, a smile, that incredibly possesses you every time you see it. Nothing else matters. In the perfume of music, we instantly become brothers. Each with their way of being. Its culture, its history. And everything always moves together and creates something bigger, supernatural. Something that exceeds the difference. A great "us" (Vincenzo, participant of Scholas Citizenship in Naples).

7. The common house

The image of the common house has given us a path to reflect on our Earth and its care. But this idea helps us understand the depth of the perspective on *the other* posed by Pope Francis. In this image of the common house, we are all included under the same roof, in the same human family.

Starting from this first experience with the young participants, Scholas has, throughout the years, generated this encounter between teachers, schools, chairs, universities, educational systems and governments. Many and diverse are the experiences reached under this perspective; but a particularly moving one in the reflection on interfaith and intercultural dialogue was the "Interreligious Citizenship Encounter", the interfaith world summit organized together with the Truman Institute that took place in July 2017 in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

This Encounter summoned 75 young people from Israel, Palestine, Spain, Mexico, Argentina, Kenya, Burundi, Congo and Brazil, in addition to the participation –thanks to the Scholas Chairs program– of 70 academics from 41 universities in Africa, Latin America, Europe, North America and Asia and major religious from the three Abrahamic religions.

The summit took place over four days in which youngsters were able to share and express their views on the problems present in their own countries and get to know the issues affecting others:

> It was very interesting to know problems from other countries, since here we are very involved in our problem due to living in such a complicated area. I never knew how blind I was about these problems and places. I appreciate being able to experience this in Scholas. I leave Scholas with curiosity, wondering about so many things. I want to look further, visit these places, keep my friendship with the people I've met here, and tell everyone around me about this. I would recommend this experience to any human being" (Adam, from Palestine, participant of the Interreligious Citizenship Encounter).

In the Scholas experience, starting from the *yes to all*, we find the keys to dialogue, *opening our gaze* towards *the other* and "reaching outside ourselves". Even more, as in Adam's experience, the possibility of having this type of encounters puts our own truth, our own identity, into perspective.

From the experience of generating these spaces, the culture of the encounter is gradually being generated, as so desired by Scholas and Pope Francis.

> I was able to meet lots of people here, especially the Palestinians, who live so close to me and I never had the opportunity to meet. It was a very revealing experience. I learned that I have to look at everything from another perspective. I thought that Israel had the worst problems with the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, but I discovered that there is a civil war in Congo (Niri, from Israel, participant of the Interreligious Citizenship Encounter).

On the other hand (and as in each experience), art helped to create the experience of bonding beyond language and culture. At the closing of the summit, the participants presented the murals and the songs that they had worked on together over those 4 days:

> Art and music express freedom, and you can say how you feel and represent it through dancing, singing, painting or any way you want. You can find something in common with others that can start a relationship. This has changed my life, because I can appreciate what I have and what I can give. This is a unique experience (Ignacio, from Spain, participant of the Interreligious Citizenship Encounter).

Lastly, at the close of the summit, the video message of Pope Francis and his words gave a framework not only to this experience, but to the entire educational task of Scholas as the key to interfaith and cultural dialogue:

> At this time, young people and adults from Israel, Palestine and other parts of the world, from different nationalities, faiths and realities, all breathe the same

> air, all step on the same land, our common home. The stories are many, everyone has their own. There are as many stories as people, but life is one only. That is why I want to celebrate these days lived there in Jerusalem, because you yourselves, from your differences, achieved unity. No one taught that to you. You lived it. You were encouraged to look into each other's eyes, you were encouraged to strip your eyes, and this is essential for an encounter to occur.
>
> In the nakedness of the gaze there are no answers, there is openness. Openness to everything else that is not me. In the nakedness of the gaze we become permeable to life. Life does not pass us by. It crosses us and moves us, and that is passion. Once we are open to life and others, to those I have beside me, the encounter takes place and, in that encounter, we create a meaning. We all have a meaning. We all have a meaning in life. None of us is a 'no'. We are all a 'yes'.
>
> (…) We need the feast as a human expression of the celebration of meaning. Then, we discover the deepest feeling we may experience. A feeling that exists in us for and in spite of everything. This feeling is gratitude.
>
> The education that opens us to the unknown, which takes us to that place where the waters have not yet divided. Open-minded. In other words, free from judgments that block us, so as to, from there, dream and look for new paths. Hence, we adults cannot take away from our children and young people the ability to dream, or to play, which in a way is daydreaming. If we do not let the child play, it is because we do not know how to play, and if we do not know how to play, we do not understand gratitude nor gratuity nor creativity (Pope Francis, 2017).[18]

8. And, in the end… everything finds meaning

In a world this big and this complex, talking about diversity and dialogue may be difficult. However, they exist, and we increasingly find small beacons that help the human community to glimpse a path of mutual recognition.

To conclude, we return to the words of Pope Francis followed by a "What's up?" by a young girl from Argentina. The final invitation, together with the Scholas community, is to meditation and reflection about ourselves, about our being in relationship, about others and about what interfaith and intercultural dialogue means in depth (to us).

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18. Pope Francis Message at the closing ceremony of the Scholas Citizenship Interreligious Encounter at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, July 2017.

Don't be afraid to dialogue. Each of us has something to give to others. Each of us has something good to give to others. Each of us needs to receive something good from others. Dialogue makes us equal, (…) it makes us equal on the journey. We are all travelers, all equal. We all travel, but all of us different, but all of us in harmony. Gamble on dialogue. Gamble on journeying together. Gamble on the patience of listening to others. Then there will be true peace, and that same true peace will cause you to discover your own dignity (Pope Francis, 2019).[19]

Locked in a magical world, harboring dreams and releasing them all together. Filling us with magic and peace. Feeling finally heard. Sharing our lives, not those lived, but those felt. Releasing heavy loads and being free of past distresses. Trying not to change the world but starting a new one. A new world we did not know but we dreamed of. And in the end… everything finds meaning (Dai, participant of Scholas Citizenship, Argentina).

19. Message of Pope Francis to the #STOPCYBERBULLYINGDAY marathon participants | Scholas Talks 24 hs, June 2019.

10

THE RECOGNITION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO THE CULTURE OF ENCOUNTER

Lourdes de Miguel Sáez

1. Introduction

The structure and contributions of this text focus on some reflections and concerns that do not seek to make use of a rhetorical discourse, but to review the recent history in order to rediscover and trace the true foundations of a culture of peace and encounter starting with the recognition of Human Rights.

In this chapter we will analyze how Human Rights fit into the culture of encounter and if the efforts for its observance and recognition can become its promoters, starting from a common origin on the fringes of cultural, religious or social connotations and beyond any discourse and particular interest.

In addition, we will stop to identify what are the social and political challenges, necessary to open the path of dialogue that destroys existing prejudices, and how the Catholic Church, defender and promoter of a culture of peace in human relations, can rescue and renew a world affected by an indescribable identity crisis, appealing, fundamentally, to the integral development of the human being.

We ask, therefore, what is the degree influence in favor of the recognition of Human Rights and to what extent can it constitute the prelude and precursor to achieve a culture of encounter, where the person is placed in the center

and heart of all the projects and institutions, with the aim of overcoming the barriers of selfishness and personal interests.

2. The education in the human dimension as basis for a culture of peace

It passes unnoticed by no-one that in our current society there is a very serious and worrying gap between technical and moral, cultural and social advances, where the human being, it is true, has less and less needs and yet he feels an immense dissatisfaction, having access to the results of a progress he has generated, and which remains a good that is not distributed on an equal basis among all subjects.

We prosper developing activities that are increasingly artificial and move away from the essence of a human being, from his identity and the aspects that define him, such as honesty, trust, authenticity and moral rectitude. And interestingly, man becomes less and less important in this evolution, despite being the creator of all these inventions and becoming the protagonist of that progress.

Voltaire said: "we are responsible for what we do but also for what we don't do". Well then, the human being has to be aware of the responsibility that also implies assuming certain knowledge. And when in emotive events, in anniversaries of universal and constitutional declarations of Human Rights, entire populations echo the promulgation of that series of rights and freedoms, which has been known and studied already since school-and so is believed learned, that is where we must start our reflection.

When we relate with others, we are developing a unique opportunity for humanizing ourselves. And by humanizing our relationships we are fostering a climate of peace and prosperity. Peace is the absence of conflict and when conflict does not exist it is because respect prevails. But on the horizon of our lives, this vision is always present as an ideal and while it is true that we all work to fulfill and put it into practice, there is still a long way to go.

There are many actors responsible for the promotion of peace, such as States, public and private entities, and even citizens themselves. For that reason, and although the recognition of a right implies the duty to build and maintain it, any of these interveners, in isolation or altogether, could break the peace either by action or by omission.

It is true that the issue of Human Rights deals with a reasonable utopia that depends on the effort of each person to become a reality. But certainly,

the fundamental problem does not consist in recognizing Human Rights, but in putting them into practice, for in truth, for a human right to exist, it is only needed that a right represents a value whose universal dimension is unequivocally recognized. Therefore, it is found that its violation takes place in both poor and rich countries, and perhaps in the latter, the diversification of violation is greater, adopting new forms that arise and are established in the society with the acquiescence and passivity of many. But the injustice is also sown in more developed countries and extends like a scourge that seems cannot be eradicated.

Thus, it is necessary to insist on this issue in those forums where the new and young generations are present, such as at the University, a necessary space where must be forged the knowledge and recognition of Human Rights in order to achieve a culture of peace and encounter. This area, especially, is the most propitious to tackle any eagerness to belittle the importance or underestimate the reality of others, as it could trigger episodes of fundamentalisms of a political, religious or ideological nature. It should be recalled that the imposition of one's own truth arouses a hatred and an irrational confrontation that greatly hinders the work of understanding and the perspective of peace.

Therefore, the concern of Pope Francis throughout his Pontificate to achieve the culture of encounter hangs, in turn, on the educational structures and programs, highlighting that "an education that favors the weaving of civil society (civilized or civic) is necessary. That education is a place of encounter and common efforts, where we learn to be a society, where the society learns to be a solidarity society. We have to learn new ways to build the city of men".

In the family context first, and in the school afterwards or in parallel form, it is where children and young people must find the first sources of information and the main learning references in order to relate through tolerance, respect and dialogue. Therefore, educational practice must propitiate learning elements that are inspired in respect, in mechanisms and principles that encourage integrity and interdisciplinarity, and link them with development, democracy and, definitely, with peace.

The family undoubtedly becomes a heritage of humanity where values are forged that, in turn, confer on society a spirit of fraternity and solidarity between generations, the welcome of life and ethics of care. And that is why, as the family is a perfect reference for internal solidarity and social participation, in it we find the link between many ideologies and confessions that advocate recognizing, protecting and promoting the value of family.

Therefore, opting for dialogue and for intercultural and interreligious integration involves a previous mutual respect, an exact definition of the values that must govern coexistence and a reciprocal integrative learning of what is positive for all, and helps to build a space of common dignity. Pope Francis, at the 48th World Day of Social Communications, clearly expressed what the meaning of the word "dialogue" is: "to be convinced that the other has something good to say, to welcome his point of view, his proposals. Dialogue does not mean giving up one's own ideas and traditions, but the pretention that they are unique and absolute".

In November 2011, the General Assembly of the United Nations approved the Declaration on Education and Training in Human Rights, and highlighted, precisely, the value of education and training in Human Rights, understanding it as a process that is prolonged throughout the whole of life and affects all ages without exception.

All the actions and efforts undoubtedly pass through the development of the human personality and the sense of dignity, and through this to promote understanding, tolerance, gender equality and friendship between all the nations, racial, national ethnic, religious and linguistic groups. And something that should not be lost sight of: that the effective participation of all people in a society where the rule of Law prevails is facilitated. Because when it works in justice and it presides over our actions, each one is granted what is his and there are no inequalities or damages.

3. The role of the holy see in favor of peace

The input and contribution of the Catholic Church for the defense and promotion of Human Rights is undeniable as well as the tireless work in order to achieve the peace of the peoples, at internal level and the national environment, and also in bilateral and multilateral relations, from its representation to States, on the basis of the recognition of its international legal personality and through the political and diplomatic functions of the Holy See.

From the beginning, the Catholic Church has supported the recognition of Human Rights and fundamental freedoms, and has done so through the Pontifical Magisterium and with a message of sharp rejection violence of any origin, however minimal. And it has continually appealed for the observance of those rights, considering them the most optimal means to protect

mankind, the persons of all peoples, and to promote and defend their dignity. Pope Francis, in the Conference "Rethinking Europe" addressed to Christians, reminded them that they are called "to give Europe a soul again, to wake up the awareness, not to occupy spaces – that would be proselytism – but to animate processes that generate new dynamisms in society". And who says Europe, the same is applicable to the rest of countries from different continents.

Violence, and this must be clear, is not only that which arises from the military confrontations or fights and quarrels that end in physical injuries. Neither is violence a negative quality that is only associated with men and excludes women. Violence is not something that is linked to an age, but is exercised by any child, youth, adult or elderly, who present defects in their human formation. Violence adopts many forms and extends to diverse areas of daily life and society, manifesting itself verbally, physically, emotionally, culturally, ideologically and structurally, and those kinds of violence that are recorded in the crime statistics and which the media echoes become a clear obstacle for building peace.

Peace is a right as well as the ultimate aim of the future of our democratic society. And if we do not consolidate this right in a climate of respect, on which the rest of the rights pivot, society will stop feeling free and become a slave of particular interests and selfish goals. The Government of a nation, as an instrument and an executing arm of a State guarantor of rights, whose roots descend into a history of democratic achievements, cannot satisfy the interests of a few. Because to recognize rights does not mean to grant a special protection *status* that remains under the arbitrary decision of the State, of intermittent efficacy, but implies guarding it because its existence is not questioned as it is something inherent to the human being. The State can never disregard this duty of protection and care.

Leo XIII warned about this in his Encyclical *Rerum novarum:* "if the citizens, if the families, participants of human coexistence and society, find in the public powers prejudice rather than help, a curtailment of their rights rather than its guardianship, the society would be, more than desirable, worthy of repulsion" (n. 9). Therefore, when the voice of the people is raised to advocate rights which the public Powers do not attend to, when it brings to light the existence of injustices, perhaps it is the moment to rethink what is failing and what are the reasons. Something that does not result alien when, in modern democracies, many rulers try to impose absurd egos by circumventing

the duty of service to the citizen and losing sight of security and protection for the future generations.

In 1789 the French people came out onto the streets to confront the previous Regime, the so-called "Old Regime", and marked the beginning of the contemporary age as a prelude to modern democratic society. Then arises that Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizen that was still imbued with the spirit of the United States Declaration of Independence, upholding three of the principles on which the Constitutions of the States would be based: equality, freedom and fraternity.

But we had to wait to witness the horror of the world wars for the international Community to react and join in a unanimous demand, agreeing on a common roadmap that was applicable to all peoples and nations. Human Rights were presented as "the recognition of the inalienable dignity of human beings". And in this historical context of good purposes and firm intentions, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed in 1948 and thus recognized by each State in its legal system and in the international treaties, ratified under the heading of Civil, Political and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Meanwhile, we must point out that Human Rights are not simple legislative measures or normative decisions taken by those in power. Human Rights constitute those principles that are expressed as human values, legal norms or political agreements to regulate the peaceful coexistence between all the citizens. They are dynamic, not static, although their essence is unalterable and immutable. And although we refer to them from their positive nature, in as much as a right is in force and included in valid laws in the for all, we must not only accept that they are found within a normative structure, but must insist that they are observed effectively.

Therefore, these rights are accompanied by the qualifier of inalienable, non-transferable, inherent or innate, universal, limited, obligatory and inviolable. All of them enjoy a common and unique nature and essence, creating an insurmountable barrier of protection that pretends to curb any attempt to violate them, and that Universal Declaration undoubtedly reinforced the conviction, that respect of the Human Rights is rooted principally in the justice that does not change, on which the binding force of the international proclamations is also based.

For its part, as we will now see, the Catholic Church has played a relevant role in the promotion of Human Rights and has maintained a total and

absolute commitment and implication, remaining over time without changing an apex of its messages and declarations.

The example is to be found in the Pontificate of John XXIII, which also meant a reconciliation of the Catholic Church with the modern world, thanks to the reforms introduced to its approach not only to believers, but also to those who had not raised Christ in their lives. He spoke about social justice and sought peace, because he had lived in the first person the devastation of a war on the battlefield during World War I, when he was incorporated into the body of military chaplains. Hence, his last Encyclical, *Pacem in terris,* became a call to all human beings and all nations to fight together in the pursuit of peace. He was also appointed Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the UN and knew that, in order to achieve a true civilization with deep values and reasons to live, the world needed to recover its soul to dynamize the communion, inclusion, integration and to create bridges against the walls and trenches. And that soul is what the Pope Francis advocates today, qualifying it as the "culture of encounter".

Pope John XXIII conquered the heart of many because of his close, simple and paternal style. He held that we had to seek more what unites us than what divides us. He was a person characterized by being a "the man of encounter", "the Pope of peace", because the testimony of his life was an example of the attempt to overcome all the barriers and to confront together humanity's current problems which increasingly tend to divide people and groups, and to create tensions between societies and States. He was able, even with the manifest opposition and scandal of some cardinals, to open the convocation of the Second Vatican Council to the members and representatives of other Christian confessions gathering them in Rome and attributing to them, in turn, an important role in the promotion of the culture of encounter that himself began to engender.

It should be remembered how, then as Archbishop Roncalli, Apostolic Delegate of the Vatican in Turkey during World War II, his intervention was decisive in saving the lives of thousands of Jews. As also, during his Pontificate, his intervention was vital to avoid a third world war with devastating consequences after a scheduled nuclear confrontation between Kennedy and the Soviets. His message was clear and overwhelming: he asked the two powers not to ignore the anguish suffered by Humanity in that October 1962. And both leaders, Kennedy and Khruschchev, withdrew the ships carrying those nuclear missiles at the same time.

Undoubtedly, the Popes who succeeded in the Pontificate of the twentieth century had known and experienced the terrible consequences of wars that had

left many wounds open which would take years to close. And all of them had advocated the defense of the Human Rights as principle and basis of understanding between the nations, as that universal language that was understood by all and also caused effects on all.

Paul VI was also a protagonist of the Cold War, having raised his voice of peace in world forums such as the UN; or through Encyclicals such as *Ecclesiam suam and Populorum progressio* to attend more swiftly to the problem of developing countries. He therefore instituted the World Day of Peace for each January 1, beginning on the first day of the year 1968 and pronouncing himself in this regard with these words: "It would be our wish that later, every year, this celebration be repeated as an omen and as a promise, at the beginning of the calendar that measures and describes the path of life in time, that it is Peace with its just and beneficial balance that dominates the development of the future history".

Karol Wojtyla, as a young student, experienced persecution during the Nazi occupation of Poland and had to lead a clandestine life for some time in order to avoid being killed as some of his companions had been. A scene in one of the films that were made to make his life better known is very representative, when in the middle of some ruins he meets one of the companions of the Theater group, who heartbreakingly cries without comfort:

> Why are these horrors repeated? They only get worse… what is it that makes their hearts, eyes and minds incapable of feeling compassion and respect, who are those human beings who have fathers, sons and daughters, who have wives and husbands they love, they are also made in the image of God? Where is God? Why do innocents pay? How many innocents have to be born to be exterminated?

Roman Pontiff, John Paul II remained faithful to the commitment to intervene as a mediator in social conflicts, revealing that dialogue and forgiveness are indispensable elements to curb any outbreak of violence, something he knew to live in practice with Christian coherence, exercising mercy and charity without limits.

We must remember today that message of 1999, where he himself recalled the first Encyclical, *Redemptor hominis*, that addressed all men and women of good will, where he spotlighted the importance of the respect for Human Rights:

> Peace flourishes when these rights are integrally observed, while war is born of its transgression and is converted, in turn, into the cause of further even more serious violations thereof (…) On the contrary, if Human Rights are ignored or despised, or the search for particular interests unfairly prevails over the common good, the germs of instability, rebellion and violence are inevitably sown (n. 1).

The successor of John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, put all his endeavor into denouncing the dictatorship of relativism, implanted in our society, where one ends up looking in the mirror of one's own vanity and self-interests, quite the opposite to the universal ethics that asks us to focus first on others and their needs. In his Social Encyclical *Caritas in veritate*, Benedict XVI recalled the importance of putting charity into practice because only through it, Christianity results credible, being the first expression of this truth the priority of service to others, the respect, without turning a blind eye in the face of the suffering and misery of the men and women of our world.

Therefore, today's society needs to rediscover its most fundamental truth in order to overcome the crisis that that has been experienced for some years now. Without this basis, some will exploit others for their own ends and human beings will be used instead of being respected.

Benedict XVI knew how to speak courageously and was able to label the cancer that is consuming our society. Surely, we all remember that famous phrase where he pointed out that: "A dictatorship of relativism is being constituted that recognizes nothing as definitive and leaves only its own self and its appertences as a final measure" (Homily at Mass "Pro Eligendo Romano Pontifice"). A relativism, which as we know, abandons the possibility of dialogue to achieve a common truth on which to build human coexistence, development as persons and as a society, and introduces a dictatorship, which leads to selfishness and individualism.

In a relativistic context tolerance does not reign, but the strongest prevails, with an aggressive and belligerent discourse, provoking the destruction of that network of containment that is universal human rights, common truths. It is not necessary to cross the borders of each country to talk about conflicts, because although our countries labeled as "democratic" do not have the character of "armed" and although we are not facing a declared civil war, the tension and confrontation for purely ideological reasons generate conflicts that wear away the coexistence and fragment our society. The attacks on national unity, the different social conflicts, the struggle in order to eradicate the Christian heritage and roots, the verbal aggressions and profanation of places

of worship by militants of radical laicism, the open gap against immigration and confusion before the deviation of a religion, labeling all its faithful as potential terrorists, provoking racist and xenophobic attitudes, reveal that their discourse is empty of content, because some rights cannot be vindicated at the cost of violating others. And we live in European democratic countries, which have even subscribed to the Charter of Fundamental Rights and our Constitutions endorse rights and freedoms enshrined in law, but the loss of values and principles and by having allowed the entry of relativism, only demonstrates the sad reality of those who defend their particular and personal pretensions on the margins of the common good.

It is curious that, according to a 2018 Report of the Observatory for Religious Freedom and Consciousness, the majority of attacks against religious freedom in Spain, which is a fundamental right, are against Catholic Christians. And all because the Church is annoying and uncomfortable, since it awakens the conscience and makes a firm call to recover the identity of the human being, as a man of peace and promoter of it.

Justice is going to be that instrument capable of restoring the imbalances provoked by partisan struggles and unfounded pretensions, capable of remaking poorly designed layouts that have moved away from rectitude. But sometimes, also, we hear with surprise judicial pronouncements by judges and magistrates in charge of justice, protecting conduct damaging human rights under a supposed right to the freedom of expression.

Therefore, today, in the face of the challenges presented by a society endeavoring to destroy itself under the false conception of self-reliance and progress, it is necessary to work actively in favor of defending life in all its phases and, fundamentally, to promote the respect for the human embryo, tutelage and promotion of the family, freedom of parents in the education of their children, social guardianship of minors, and the release of the victims of new forms of slavery, religious freedom, the development of an economy that is at the service of the person and the common good, respect for social justice, for the principle of human solidarity and subsidiarity, and the promotion of peace, as the work of justice and the effect of charity.

In view of the foregoing, Human Rights remain "orphaned" if there is no active commitment on the part of the Peoples' Governors to not fall into indifference about a globalization that has taken away the conscience. Two years ago, Pope Francis recalled, referring to the European reality, that:

> There are no citizens, there are votes. There are no emigrants, there are fees. There are no workers, there are economic indicators. There are no poor, there are poverty thresholds. The concreteness of the human person has thus been reduced to an abstract, more comfortable and reassuring principle. The reason is understood; the persons have faces, they force us to assume a real and personal responsibility; the figures have to do with reasoning, also useful and important, but they will always remain soulless. They offer us excuses for not compromising, because they never touch our own flesh.

The latest events and phenomena in Europe, that reflect a deep socio-economic-political crisis, are what lead the Pope to insist in his speeches on the importance of procuring the reconciliation of all orders of society.

Benedict XVI also proposed two antidotes for the challenge posed by contemporary culture: to extend the limits of reason and to put charity into practice. Opting for a shared ethic, common values, is a possible goal of reason. It is possible to come to the truth about the dignity of the human being, even if it is not something empirical. For that one has to open oneself and expand the limits of reason.

The German Pope, when visiting in 2008 the headquarters of the United Nations, when he took the floor as his predecessors Paul VI and John Paul II had done, recalled that Human Rights are based "on the natural law inscribed in the heart of man and that it is present in different cultures and civilizations" and added that "Human Rights are increasingly presented as the common language and ethical substrate of international relations". Representatives from all over the world listened to the master lines that define a culture of peace, those words separated only by a different language, but with an unequivocal meaning: the recognition of Human Rights as the precondition for peace.

Contemporary history has tragically highlighted the danger that is contained in the oblivion of the truth about the human person. The fruits of ideologies in the first half of the previous century are visible, such as Marxism, Nazism and Fascism, as well as the myths of racial superiority, nationalism and ethnic particularism (let us also think of all the atrocities and genocides from the last quarter of the 20th century in Cambodia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Liberia, Somalia, Rwanda, Kosovo and Serbia). No less pernicious, although not always so eye-catching, are the effects of materialistic consumerism, in which the exaltation of individual and egocentric satisfaction of personal aspirations become the ultimate goal of life. In this perspective, the negative repercussions on others are considered entirely irrelevant. It is necessary to

reaffirm, however, that no offense to human dignity can be ignored, whatever its origin, its modality or the place where it happens. When a human being suffers, the entire Humanity is brought to its knees.

4. Current reflection on the contribution of human rights to the culture of encounter

We will enumerate below, from a practical and current perspective, some of the rights that remain news today, with greater or lesser incidence according to the scale that measures their severity or their social impact, and we will analyze in them the original elements that can respond positively in favor of propitiating the culture of peace and encounter.

The very first, is the fundamental right to life, a dignified life that is protected from the conception until it ends naturally. The innocents are unprotected under the supposed protection of the bearers of life, who later, precisely because they cannot live in peace with themselves and the weight of guilt, decide to attempt suicide. These statistics do not appear in the media, but are recorded, for example, in the consultations of many Psychiatrists.

Human gametes are also manipulated by experimenting in laboratories in order to meet a demand "à la carte", to cover a supposed maternal and paternal instinct that does not cease to be a whim and a challenge to the natural cycle of life, and human beings are created in exchange for a price, becoming an object of buying and selling. The dignity of the human being is ignored and the grace of receiving a talent is perverted to stay diluted in the middle of one more manifestation of the reigning consumerism.

In the same way, society, with a certain hypocrisy, seems obsessed with the accessibility and inclusion of disabled people, with diverse diseases or in the phase of the senescence, but admits and supports their elimination under the justification of saving unnecessary suffering to family members and the person in concern. Thus, is detected the existence of an intergenerational conflict that succumbs to the budgets of a utilitarian society and promoter of a short-route "progress". Therefore, at the 73rd Plenary Assembly of the United Nations, the Permanent Observer of the Holy See, Mons. Auza, argued with determination that "integral human development ultimately requires a renewal of the humanity that allows to persons to discover who they really are, and to learn to build a hospitable and inclusive society with space for everyone".

The right to life is also constantly threatened by the presence of poverty, precariousness and hunger, lack of health care (within a right to health), trafficking in human beings and organ trafficking, attacks on the physical and psychic integrity of vulnerable persons. In some less developed countries we find in greater numbers violent deaths as a consequence of organized crime and of diverse criminal modalities with collective or individual authorship, the trafficking of weapons and drugs, as well as the damage to the environment that causes people detrimental consequences. And despite the fact that national plans and specific programs are designed to combat it, the integral fulfillment of respect for Human Rights does not challenge us to the point of generating concrete actions to strengthen and preserve them from any attack and interference.

Another right is religious freedom, which our democratic society attempts to silence and is an object of continuous provocations that surprisingly some courts see as legitimate on the basis of the right to freedom of expression. We are concerned about the terrorist threat of the self-proclaimed Islamic State, which clearly disturbs the peace of a large part of-international society, but we do not identify as damaging acts in times and places of stability which outrage the religious feelings of Catholics and other minority groups by representatives of parts of the population inciting hatred and marginalizing and discriminating people for following a determined religious creed. Not only do they not seek to eradicate all manifestations of hate in this sense, but use their position to enliven it and to contaminate thought. Today the populisms of the 21st century, with their political programs based on being built on the discredit of others, have introduced mysteriously the hatred towards everything that is related to religion, concretely with the Catholic Church.

On the other hand, in many towns the right to participate in the life of community and to decide on the future of their nation is still limited to citizens through the legitimate representatives who consider they must hold the power of representation. We saw it recently in the relating to us the reality of a country like Venezuela, which is going through a political and humanitarian crisis that becomes, as the days and months pass by, more dramatic. But there are more countries whose reality is silenced and does not reach public opinion. That is where the Catholic Church exhorts us to respond to the primary needs of the population, as well as urges political dialogue to propitiate an immediate solution to the existing conflicts, so that a political program can be tackled in a climate of serenity, that prompts a true democratic process.

In fact, we cannot ignore either how the victims of oppression and despair, whose human dignity is violated with impunity, can easily yield to the impulse of violence and become themselves the transgressors of the peace. Reproducing the patterns of violence can be something very simple and that operates in a short space of time. Once again, we highlight the role of education in avoiding this type of conduct spreading among the youngest, since it is they who, by natural tendency, are more exposed to be contaminated and to imitate the exercise of the evil.

Likewise, the international community must intervene without concern for the economic interests that interfere with the achievement of their objectives, and which in reality prompted the intervention in the first place. It should avoid producing even more mismatches in internal governance that lead the country to submission to a new power and denies it its right of self-determination. The International Community is legitimized, therefore, to protect Human Rights and to restore the conditions that make their recognition possible, and in part, it must not only provide the humanitarian assistance to meet the basic needs of the population, but also must endow them with the means of education and innovative projects in order to encourage advanced technology and expand knowledge and aptitudes to a level of fair autonomy. This, in turn, affects the right to a decent job in any employments that make possible useful service to society and the right to self-realization, both personal and professional, and in a manner that will optimize the development of one's personality. It must suppose a form to restore, on a smaller or larger scale, the respect for rights of the person that are not granted, but must be directly recognized.

Very closely linked to the international responsibility in the exploitation of the natural resources and their impact on the natural environment is found the right to a healthy environment, harmonizing a more moderate lifestyle with the rational use of wealth offered by creation. Also, environmental development, as part of the interests of an interconnected reality, is one of the objectives present in the culture of encounter as it empowers human development among the nations.

And finally, the right to Peace, the foundation of all human rights because without it, the integral development of the peoples cannot be promoted. As the ultimate goal is the common good, it is the main engine of the fight against the terrible experience of wars, conflicts and violence of diverse nature.

It is a verifiable fact how Pope Francis has joined**,** in his multiple messages, in the universal call for peace through the respect of the rights of each and every person that populates the earth. He has done so in a special way at the World Peace Days. In addition, taking advantage of his trips to other countries, he exhorts dialogue and negotiation in order to overcome and resolve conflicts and differences, which he has repeatedly qualified on various occasions as a third world war.

Currently there are many active conflicts, ranging from those qualified as large scale defining those wars that cause more than 10 000 deaths a year, to those that are denominated as small conflicts for not causing more than 1000 deaths a year. We recall, among others, Ukraine, the Korean peninsula, the War against the Islamic State in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan, Libya, the recent tensions between Israelis and Palestinians, the *status quo* of Jerusalem or the African continent. Wars that suppose the failure of all authentic humanism and that divide international support again into the duality of groups of world powers with greater economic and arms capacity. And a new concept of war has also been generated, which has passed from being strictly defensive to "preventive war", especially after what happened in the attack on the United States.

In many homes, victims continue to suffer abuse, violence, exclusion, discrimination and even semi-slavery in the family. In schools, some children suffer abuse in the form of rejection, harassment, abuse by their classmates or even some teachers and, in some families, the elderly are not only mistreated, but also are abandoned in the literal sense of the term. Perhaps here it would be necessary to rethink the educational system and endow children with knowledge and competence to be able to resolve conflicts in a civilized manner, in order to eradicate the violence generated by the loss of values in a new social and political framework.

That is why, paradoxically, in a society where technology brings people closer to the knowledge and education as to why these values are necessary to preserve social coexistence, the statistics are chilling. Really, we are not certain about what constitutes an injustice and what a manifest violation of the superior quality of the human being.

Human Rights undoubtedly involve the parameter of the civilized life. These rights must be known, exercised and respected, but it is not just about understanding them, because this would leave the open door to the debatable and opposable, and we would only face a clear legal uncertainty but an

arbitrary form of conducting something exclusive to every human being. And for this, we must teach people to reflect on our own behavior and actions. Therefore, given this exposition of the great challenges that confront fundamental rights, seeing that these are located in the genesis of the necessary recognition of human dignity, we can only support the hypothesis that the fulfillment of the natural requirements implicit in the operating reality in this series of rights is part of the path towards the construction of a culture of encounter, of a culture of peace.

6. Conclusions

Designing training projects on Human Rights involves the most effective strategy to eliminate the inequalities between countries and social groups and, therefore, to increase the security and, thus, achieve social peace. And that promotion has to be carried out through an increasingly solid, democratic, inclusive and safe education, contemplating, among other initiatives, the transformation of conflicts through communication, developing empathy towards the problems of the other; proposing and favoring a space for critical-creative thinking, developing skills to understand reality and transform it through collaborative solutions and build bridges to foster participation and social awareness. Sincere support for the culture of encounter must be nurtured by objective responses, tangible facts and secure conquests in terms of the rights of persons.

It is undeniable that Human Rights respond to a dynamic process and that, through their experience, we reaffirm our humanity and make possible the creation of a world in which it will be more difficult to violate them. Therefore, we must suggest a real education and training in Human Rights, not only the conceptual part related to history, to classification of declarations, letters, treaties, generations of new rights and problems of foundation; and neither only the attitudinal, expressed in the testimonies of human rights violations, news, texts, films, but it is necessary to accompany an innovative training with the strengthening and transparency of the conscience, and the formation of a correct public opinion, that pursue one of the main objectives: propitiate the effective change in order to have active and responsible citizens. For this, it becomes necessary to demand that the State creates conditions to confront the socio-economic challenges at national and global level for peace to become a reality.

Certainly, the recognition of Human Rights by the Church, as we have seen, is and has been in practice much broader than by the secular power, because it makes no exceptions and because, as already stated in the Encyclical *Centesimus annus*, "Above the logic of the exchanges based on parameters and their fair forms, there is something that is due to the man because he is man, by virtue of his eminent dignity" (n. 34). It is also true that from a Christian perspective there is a significant relationship between the evangelical message and the recognition of Human Rights, according to the spirit of the editors of this Declaration.

Clearly, the key is found in families, in classrooms, in the vote delegated to political representatives in each nation. It is necessary to work and ask – because also in this requirement a right persists to work with the concrete guidelines of action. Everyday behavior, as the supreme expression of the culture, must be directed towards the acceptance of the infinite cultural diversity and towards learning without borders, seeking the activation of young people's talent and potential and delivering them an experience marked by success and failure, making them the most important heritage to be safeguarded; supporting the transition from the reason of force to the force of reason, from oppression to dialogue, from isolation to interaction, in all cases acting from a position of respect, which must be the fundamental basis of our peaceful and free coexistence as a society in peace building and peoples' progress.

Finally, it is essential to convert the promotion of Human Rights into its own life style and to return to their materialization in a global context where an open, fruitful and integral dialogue is promoted. On the basis of Human Rights, the paradigm of a society must be constructed that has an integrative memory of its values, its culture, its religion and of all those achievements that contributed to overcoming the historical challenges. The strengthening of unity from the historical, cultural and religious roots pass through respect for diversity, becoming the space of the encounter where the preconditions for defending human dignity converge, whose root is found in the recognition of the Human Rights inherent to every human person.

7. References

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11

UNIVERSITY AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION

Concepción Albarrán Fernández & David Sanz Bas

1. Introduction

The last 30 years have been characterized by a strong acceleration in the level of economic and social globalization among different countries. This process has been an inevitable consequence of the technological advances and greater political openness of countries.

Undoubtedly, this globalization has led to greater economic prosperity in most territories and has enabled hundreds of millions of people to escape poverty. However, it has also generated highly significant conflicts and cultural clashes such as terrorism, crime, xenophobia, forced migration, dilution of identity, neocolonialism, etc. These situations have had, among others, a visible effect on the political plane in different countries and, in Europe and North America, the consensus between Social Democracy and Christian Democracy that was established after the Second World War is collapsing. The coexistence between cultures, in many cases so different, has given rise to numerous problems and stressful situations.

In this article, the intention is to reflect on the role of the University in the culture of encounter and in the resolution of conflicts. We will argue that the university is an institution that, on the one hand, contributes enormously to the economic and social development of countries and, on the other, is capable of building bridges for understanding and dialogue between people and cultures. Therefore, the university is an institution that serves to build a society with greater harmony and maturity.

The scheme is as follows. In point 2, we reflect on the university and its function of generating economic and social development. In point 3, we talk about the university and its function as a creator of dialogue. Finally, in point 4, we offer some conclusions.

2. The university and economic and social development

2.1. *University education as a "common good"*

In a world such as the one in which we find ourselves today, university education is considered essential to provide the best response to the socio-economic problems of the global environment.

Adam Smith, in his work "The Wealth of Nations" in 1776, argued that education should be provided to the entire world. Stuart Mill although he defended that "laissez-faire (…) was common practice", accepted the intervention of the state in the case of education.

The emerging welfare state sanctioned this practice – the education was seen as a public good and the state became responsible for providing it to the public.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the consideration of education as a public good is not completely correct, given the characteristics that, according to the economic definition, a public good should meet; i.e., no exclusion due to prices and no competition in terms of consumption.

The definition of a public good is due to Musgrave (1941, 1959, 1969), although Samuelson (1954) generalized it in contrast to that of a private good; it is defined as "a good whose consumption does not diminish its availability for other consumers". And this, for technical reasons, is not fulfilled in the case of education, although for ethical or legal reasons it does. Daviet (2016) expressly states that "education is not considered as non-exclusive for technical reasons, but rather for ethical or legal reasons" and, in this sense, considers that state intervention is essential for education to be accessible for all people and, therefore, equity may be guaranteed.

Additionally, there are other reasons that justify the intervention of the public sector in the field of education, specifically in the education market. These are: lack of rationality of economic agents due to imperfect information that exists in the labor market (companies offering jobs are unaware of

the educational and training level of people who offer their time and knowledge for work) and the production of externalities associated with education (a more educated and trained society has more productive capacity and is also capable of solving problems in a more "rational" way and, therefore, produces collective as well as individual benefits).

Furthermore, it should be noted that according to Musgrave (1959), education is also a merit good, meaning, a good that must be accessible to all people, by the mere fact of being, regardless of one's ability to pay. The invention of this concept by Musgrave sought to introduce ethical, social, and cultural considerations to the characterization of education as a public good.

In 2005, UNESCO proposed the rethinking of education from a humanist and value approach considering it as a common good. Common goods relate to a social order that is not reduced to individual needs and have much to do with the merit goods defined by Musgrave.[1] Daviet (2016) defends this idea, considering education as a common good to include ethical and political aspects while taking into consideration the role of agents other than the state for the provision of education.

2.2. *The importance of education for regional development*

The development of countries cannot be identified as a mere increase in per capita production, but rather by the development of the potential of individuals that comprise a society. In particular, Pope Paul VI explains in *Populorum progressio* that one can only speak of economic progress if the aspirations of man are satisfied:

> Today we see men trying to secure a sure food supply, cures for diseases, and steady employment. We see them trying to eliminate every ill, to remove every obstacle which offends man's dignity. They are continually striving to exercise greater personal responsibility; to do more, learn more, and have more so that they might increase their personal worth. […] Moreover, those nations which have recently gained independence find that political freedom is not enough. They must also acquire the social and economic structures and processes that accord with man's nature and activity, if their citizens are to achieve personal

1. Mastromatteo and Solari (2014) define common good as "an inter-subjective evaluation related to the processes necessary to respond to the needs of the community".

> growth and if their country is to take its rightful place in the international community (n. 6).

As can be seen, economic development has multiple dimensions and depends on many factors. Among them, undoubtedly, one of the most important is education. In this sense, for example, Díaz and Alemán (2008) in their article "Education as a factor of development" insist on the importance of the educational process for regional development and state literally "societies that seek development must promote education which educates creative, innovative, and free people addressing all social sectors". And people with more education will have more capacity to promote progress and adapt to changes in the environment. Therefore, they will use dialogue and not violence, thus avoiding many unnecessary conflicts.

The firm belief in these capacities of people with more education has become the primary justification for the expenditure by public entities of different countries for the education of their citizens, as well as action by the Church for global education.

Proof of this is the central role that the investment in education has in the abundant literature on economic development of the last 60 years (Bustelo, 1998; Sharipov, 2015; Piętak, 2014).

It may be said that economic development depends on the combination of three factors:

— Production factors: human capital, physical capital, and technology.
— Institutions: property rights, political stability, fair legal system, honest government, and open and competitive markets.
— Country features: history, culture, and geography.

In this scheme, it is evident that education, especially university education, is an essential element for any society that aspires to develop since it affects the three elements that make economic development possible. Specifically,

— The human capital of a country is a consequence, in part, of the educational system. Thus, a society with good universities will tend to generate more sophisticated and productive human capital. Likewise, the continuous change generated by the dynamics of globalization requires a continuous update of human capital. To this, universities contribute enormously, above all, through their distance learning programs.

— Education reinforces, develops, and perfects the different institutions on which modern society is articulated. A well-educated society becomes demanding of its government, legal system, law enforcement, etc. In the same way, better general qualification means that the members of these institutions themselves are better trained and tend to make more appropriate decisions.
— The educational system (schools, institutes, universities) is one of the main foci through which the culture of a nation is generated and spreads.

Therefore, as is evident, the University is a key factor for economic and social development, which fosters the emergence of dialogue and the encounter among people and cultures. As societies develop (i.e., as people improve in the resolution of their material and social needs), attention and responsiveness to the weakest groups, such as the elderly, disabled, women, immigrants, developing countries, etc., tend to increase. This is the experience of the richest countries where both private and public initiatives to protect the most vulnerable members of the social fabric have flourished. In this context of greater awareness of the needs of others, dialogue and encounter among people and cultures can prosper. In this way, the university, as a key driver for economic and social development, is an institution that helps reduce the tensions of coexistence.

3. The university and the creation of dialogue

3.1. *The role of university education in conflict prevention*

In the context of the current global risks that must be addressed, new challenges arise, while conflict prevention acquires greater significance.

It is a fact that changes that occur in one place affect other countries within a very short period of time. Problems have acquired a transnational character. They occur in one country, but their consequences spread rapidly on a global scale. Moreover, it should be noted that in this scenario some fundamental elements stand out as threats to peace, security, and, thus, the generation of conflict. Among others:

— Environmental degradation.
— Natural disasters.

— Terrorism.
— Refugee crises.
— Sexual violence as a weapon of war.
— Economic and social inequality.

The fundamental purpose of the United Nations Organization since its inception, in its interest to maintain and build peace, is the prevention of conflict. Chapter VI of its Founding Charter (United Nations 1945) sets out preventive measures such as mediation, arbitration, or negotiation for the peaceful settlement of disputes. In the 21st century, its conflict prevention policies have become a fundamental pillar for achieving peace and security.[2]

Thought should be given here to how the university could contribute to this objective, given the desirability of conflict prevention.

Taking into consideration the tools for conflict prevention, which Cuadrado (2018) points out (preventive diplomacy, good offices, and mediation) and, considering that effective prevention "requires an integrated strategy by different sectors (diplomatic, military, political, economic, social, and cultural) and with different periods of action" (García, 2002), it is clear that people with the highest levels of university education are required to work on structural and operational prevention measures.

University education for participation in conflict prevention has been carried out, up to now, in a general manner, leaving the more specific education for further professional training (i.e. preparation for access to the diplomatic corps and security forces, among others). However, currently, master's degrees in this field are being implemented in some universities and the need to train people in this field is clear, given its increasing importance within the UN.

3.2. *The university as a point of encounter*

The university is always an instrument of encounter among cultures and people, regardless of whether its funding is public or private or its religious or secular affiliation. This is due to the *raison d'etre* of the university being the search for truth and, since truth is singular and unique, all people who honestly seek truth find themselves within it. In fact, consensus among people is only possible because there is an attainable common truth. Thus, the search

2. Cuadrado (2018) explains very clearly all the progress that has taken place in the United Nations Organization as regards conflict prevention.

for truth enables the encounter with others because the individual reaches the true "I" and the true "you". As everyone ("I" and "you") is connected and united by truth, the encounter is possible (Pope Benedict XVI, 200: 158).

Therefore, universities tend to promote the culture of encounter based on truth, which is the common link among all individuals and societies.

Likewise, the search for truth that occurs in the university context has two additional consequences that transform individuals and make them open to encounter others and overcome conflicts (Pope Benedict XVI, 2009):

— Dialogue and listening: in seeking truth, we encounter others, and in that encounter, a dialogue takes place that enriches the search for truth. Dialogue involves interlocutors who exchange points of view, results, difficulties, etc. and, therefore, results in active listening by all parties involved. This listening gives rise to mutual understanding that purifies and expands the spirit of the interlocutors, which is very necessary for our time. This is so because, when exchanging impressions, results, coming together, reaching agreements, etc., empathy grows and cultural barriers, prejudices, and one's own limitations tend to decrease. Therefore, the dialogue and listening that occurs in the search for truth lead to purification and personal growth of the individuals involved.

— Humility: the honest search for truth makes the individual humble when seeing the immensity of knowledge. Moreover, to know truth, the researcher tends to overcome their personal interests and prejudices and, in short, frees themselves from egoism. This personal purification that happens in the individual necessarily makes him/her kinder. Therefore, to the extent that universities encourage this selfless search for truth, the world is transformed and tends to be more just.

As is evident, the university, in seeking truth, gives rise to an encounter among people of different cultures and religions and to personal transformation based on the growth of empathy, humility, and kindness.

3.3. *The contribution of Catholic universities*

As we have mentioned, the university is a point of encounter among people and cultures, as its essence is the honest search for truth. Obviously, truth

may be discovered by all types of people, whether agnostic, atheist, or believers of different religions.

In this sense, it is worth asking what is the contribution of Catholic universities? At first glance, it would seem that Catholic affiliation would provide nothing special to this search for truth. Many might even believe that religion deflects and skews the researcher and, for this reason, it is counterproductive to have confessional universities. However, following Monsignor Fernando Sebastián (2009: 96-100), we can affirm that Christian faith greatly facilitates the process of searching for truth and, thus, Catholic universities are privileged institutions for encounter among people and cultures. These are the reasons that justify this statement:

3.3.1. Faith perfects and stimulates reason

For Christians, the universe was created by God and is not the result of fortuitous chance. Therefore, creation is built by a series of principles and laws designed to allow the whole to exist in harmony and balance. For Christians, these principles and laws exist and can be discovered through the use of reason. Furthermore, this task is a privilege for the faithful researcher since knowledge of the universe is a way of understanding God. As experts in literature know, the creator is known for his work. In this sense, in *Fides et Ratio*, John Paul II pointed out that "Faith therefore has no fear of reason, but seeks it out and has trust in it. Just as grace builds on nature and brings it to fulfilment, so faith builds upon and perfects reason illuminated by faith, reason is set free from the fragility and limitations deriving from the disobedience of sin and finds the strength required to rise to the knowledge of the Triune God" (n. 43).

3.3.2. The love of creation

Christians consider that God created the world and gave it to man. However, this dominion over creation is rather a lordship that implies a great responsibility. Man is lord of the earth and, therefore, must act with justice and love towards it. Pope Francis in *Laudato si'* expressed it in the following way:

> We are not God. The earth was here before us and it has been given to us. This allows us to respond to the charge that Judaeo-Christian thinking, on the basis of the Genesis account which grants man "dominion" over the earth (cf. *Gen* 1:28), has encouraged the unbridled exploitation of nature by painting him as domineering and destructive by nature. This is not a correct interpretation of the Bible as understood by the Church. Although it is true that we Christians have at times incorrectly interpreted the Scriptures, nowadays we must forcefully reject the notion that our being created in God's image and given dominion over the earth justifies absolute domination over other creatures. The biblical texts are to be read in their context, with an appropriate hermeneutic, recognition that they tell us to "till and keep" the garden of the world (cf. *Gen* 2:15). "Tilling" refers to cultivating, ploughing or working, while "keeping" means caring, protecting, overseeing and preserving. This implies a relationship of mutual responsibility between human beings and nature. Each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations. The earth is the Lord's" (Ps 24:1); to him belongs "the earth with all that is within it" (Dt 10:14). Thus, God rejects every claim to absolute ownership: "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with me (Lev 25:23). (n. 67)

All this has clear implications for the world of science and universities. The researcher must be aware that the universe can be studied, but it must be cared for. The research process itself cannot entail the destruction of that created. The researcher must act with "utmost respect and veneration and be surprised to discover the wonders that God has created" (Sebastián, 2009).

3.3.3. Science at the service of the good of man

Given that the universe was created for man, the fruits of his research must serve the good of man. As a consequence, universities and researchers have a moral responsibility in relation to what they do. The fact that something can be done does not mean that it should be done. For example, it is obvious that human beings can create weapons of mass destruction (lethal gases, atomic bombs, etc.), but this does not imply that he should do so. In this way, research is not an end in itself, but only a means to serve the common good. Thus, a Catholic researcher must be clear that there are certain thresholds that should not be crossed as they do not serve the good of man. This idea was

expressed very clearly by Pope John Paul II in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, a pontifical document that serves as the constitution of all Catholic universities around the world:

> A Catholic University possesses the autonomy necessary to develop its distinctive identity and pursue its proper mission. Freedom in research and teaching is recognized and respected according to the principles and methods of each individual discipline, so long as the rights of the individual and of the community are preserved within the confines of the truth and the common good (n. 2.5)

3.3.4. Fidelity to truth

We have mentioned that the essence of the university must be the search for truth and that this is precisely a point of encounter among people and cultures. However, on many occasions, this search is conditioned by economic, political, and ideological interests that contaminate the purity and honesty of this search. For the Catholic researcher, it must be clear that seeking truth is seeking God. Therefore, work must be carried out with scrupulous scientific honesty, since the love of God and truth must be the main motivation. Accordingly, two teachings that Pope Benedict XVI gave to young Spanish university professors regarding the search for truth, should be taken into account:

> We need to realize in the first place that the path to the fullness of truth calls for complete commitment: it is a path of understanding and love, of reason and faith. We cannot come to know something unless we are moved by love; or, for that matter, love something which does not strike us as reasonable. "Understanding and love are not in separate compartments: love is rich in understanding and understanding is full of love" (*Caritas in Veritate*, 30). If truth and goodness go together, so too do knowledge and love. This unity leads to consistency in life and thought, that ability to inspire demanded of every good educator.
>
> In the second place, we need to recognize that truth itself will always lie beyond our grasp. We can seek it and draw near to it, but we cannot completely possess it; or put better, truth possesses us and inspires us. In intellectual and educational activity, the virtue of humility is also indispensable, since it protects us from the pride which bars the way to truth.

4. Conclusions

In our opinion, the university, through the promotion of economic and social development, conflict prevention, and the search for truth, is an institution capable of generating the necessary dialogue for encounter among civilizations. We also believe that Catholic-inspired universities can have a leading role in this process.

The evangelizing mission of the Church is fundamental and, to this end, ecclesiastical universities and colleges were established. Given its importance, Pope Francis promulgated in December 2017 the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis gaudium*. In it, he clearly insists on the important mission that the Church currently has, which is, "[t]oday our proclamation of the Gospel and the Church's doctrine are called to promote a culture of encounter, in generous and open cooperation with all the positive forces that contribute to the growth of universal human consciousness" (n. 4b).

Encounter will be achieved through dialogue, which Pope Paul VI expressly referred to in *Populorum progressio* and in which the Magisterium of the Church has insisted on over the years.

In his trip to Peru in January 2018, Pope Francis pointed out how the Church wants to promote the creation of institutional spaces for respect, recognition, and dialogue among peoples; intercultural dialogue. Therefore, education –which is able to aid in intercultural dialogue– is understood as fundamental, and for this reason, the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* is published with updated guidelines regarding how ecclesiastical universities and colleges, through the education offered, must contribute to the evangelizing mission of the Church, encouraging intercultural dialogue at the highest level.

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12

WITTGENSTEIN AND A DIPLOMAT WALK INTO THE CULTURE OF THE ENCOUNTER

Shaun Riordan

Behold,
A ram, caught in a thicket by its horns;
Offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.
But the old man would not so, but slew his son,
And half the seed of Europe, one by one.
Wilfred Owen: *The Parable of the Old Man and the Young*

1. The Culture of the Encounter

The culture of the encounter seeks to promote understanding and dialogue among people from different religious backgrounds, specifically among believers in the three "religions of the book": Christianity, Judaism and Islam. In his chapter in this book "The Culture of Encounter Diplomacy: A New Diplomacy for the 21st Century", Mario Torres[1] argues that the culture of encounter represents a new approach to diplomacy. In this chapter II will explore the relationship between the culture of encounter and more traditional diplomacy. I will explore both diplomacy and the culture of encounter in terms of Wittgenstain's[2] concept of the language game and Lebensform (life form), and how these can impose limitations as well openings. Finally, the chapter

1. Torres, M. (2020). The Culture of Diplomacy: A Diplomacy for the 21st Century (chapter II).
2. Wittgenstein, L. (1978): *Philosophical Investigations*. Basil Blackwell.

will consider how the culture of the encounter and diplomacy can complement each other in confronting the key global issues of the 21st century.

The culture of the encounter seeks to promote understanding rather than conflict among the believers of the three Abrahamic religions, Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Key is the concept of encounter rather than confrontation. In the encounter, the different participants engage with each other, trying to see the world through the eyes of the other. This exercise in empathy, understanding how the other feels about the world, the other's experience of the world, rather than sympathy, necessarily sharing the views of the other, or the other's experience of the world, lies at the core of the encounter. It also lies at the core of inter-religious dialogue.[3] The encounter between believers of different religions does not mean that those believers give up core parts of their belief, or must accept the beliefs of the other. This would amount to conversion, not encounter, sympathy, not empathy. It is through the empathetic activity of seeing the world through the eyes of the other that the participants in the encounter can find the shared elements, those values or views that they hold in common, that can enable dialogue to begin. It is the common elements underlying the Abrahamic religions, the belief in a single personal deity, the shared text of the Old Testament and the consequent sharing of key religious leaders and prophets, that facilitate the development of the encounter between believers in these religions. Other chapters in this book explore the different aspects of the culture of the encounter, and the different activities undertaken to promote it, including the activities of the Scholas movements and the various intra-faith initiatives promoted by the Holy Father and his predecessors.

2. Diplomacy

What struck the author of this chapter when reading the other chapters of this book were the parallels between the culture of the encounter and an older tradition of diplomacy, especially the centrality of seeing the world through the eyes of the other (a skill that a current generation of western diplomats seems to have lost). A key debate in diplomatic studies at the moment centres

3. Francis (2013a). *Audience with the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See. Address of Pope Francis*. Holy See.
http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/march/documents/papa-francesco_20130322_corpo-diplomatico.html (last accessed: 2019/09/23).

on the nature of diplomacy and diplomats. A plethora of new "diplomacies" has emerged in recent years, ranging from education and science diplomacy to digital and cyber diplomacy.[4] Sports diplomacy advances the role of sport in diplomacy, while gastrodiplomacy appears to promote the idea of diplomacy based around food (hardly new – food and drink has always played a key role in the lives of diplomats – the infamous diplomatic cocktails and dinner parties).[5] The word "diplomacy" is commonly applied to a broad range of situations, including family disputes. The concept of "diplomacy" is in danger of being emptied of all meaning. If everyone is a diplomat, then nobody is. If everything is diplomacy, then nothing is. The problem is compounded by the irruption into diplomatic studies of a broad range of new non-state actors, including non-governmental organisations (NGOs), corporations, organised crime, terrorist groups and civil society groups. Their participation in international debates and relations has been facilitated by the evolution of new digital communication technologies. Which of these new non-state actors could or should be regarded as diplomats? Which of their activities could be regarded as diplomatic?

One approach is to identify diplomacy with the promotion of peace and international understanding. Any actor promoting international peace and understanding could then be described as a diplomat, and any activity promoting international peace and understanding could be described as diplomatic. The trouble is that historically this is inaccurate. Diplomats have not, and do not, promote international peace and understanding. They promote the interests of their countries, as incapsulated in the foreign policy evolved by their governments. If this leads to international peace and understanding, so much the better. But diplomats can equally seek to provoke conflict if their governments believe it in their interest. Thus, British diplomacy in 2003 sought not to avoid war in Iraq, but rather to create a more favourable international environment in which the war could be fought (it failed). Equally, diplomacy does not cease once conflict or war breaks out. Diplomats seek out new allies, try to steal allies from the rival, and ultimately try to negotiate the terms of the end of the conflict.

4. https://www.uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/stop-inventing-new-diplomacies (last accessed: 2020/04/07).

5. Varè, D. (1938). *The Laughing Diplomat*. John Murray.

An alternative approach[6] is to seek to list the activities undertaken by diplomats: political reporting, international negotiations, representation, commercial promotion, consular protection etc. Anyone undertaking these activities at an international level would count as a diplomat. The trouble is that many people carry out these roles individually at an international level that we would not want to call a diplomat, and who would not thank us for calling them a diplomat: journalists, businessmen, insurance agents, or corporate executives. Suggestions that it is not the individual activities that count, but rather the combination of these roles that marks out a diplomat, does not work either. Many diplomats will carry out only one of these roles throughout their diplomatic career (e.g. a consul). A narrower approach is to say simply that a diplomat is defined as set out in the Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations. In other words, the concept of diplomat is limited to those accredited as diplomats according to the provisions of that Convention, and diplomacy to their activities. But that seems unnecessarily narrow. It would exclude many whom we would want to call diplomats (e.g. officials working in foreign ministries between postings). It would also result in the paradox that whether or not someone is a diplomat is decided not by their own government, but the government of the country to which they are posted (which would accredit them as a diplomat).

3. The International Community of Diplomats

Something is missing. Neither diplomat nor diplomacy are looking useful concepts. Paul Sharp[7] sought a way out of the impasse by building on Hedley Bull's[8] concept of the international community. Sharp posits an international community of diplomats. This international community of diplomats, although representing different nationalities and different national objectives, shares certain "diplomatic ways of seeing the world" that can facilitate their ability to manage international issues and crises. The key point is that being a diplomat is not about what you do, but the way that you do it, and the world view that reflects. An important concept here is socialisation. Diplomats are

6. https://www.uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/would-real-diplomacy-please-stand (last accessed: 2020/04/07).

7. Sharp, P. (2009). *The Diplomatic Theory of International Relations*. Cambridge.

8. Bull, H. (2002). *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. Palgrave.

socialised into the international community in a way that often means they have more in common with fellow diplomats than with their own countrymen. In part this reflects the shared experiences of working as a diplomat abroad, and the alienation that can produce, not only in the diplomatic bubble abroad, but also when returning to their home country. Diplomats always see everywhere, home and abroad, as an outsider, "from the outside".

If this approach is correct, it allows us to identify a particularly diplomatic approach to dealing with international affairs, which goes beyond simply listing what diplomats do. It is not what diplomats do, but how they do it and the world view this reflects. Anyone who shares this diplomatic approach can be called a diplomat, and any activity that reflects this diplomatic approach can be described as diplomacy. Although it must to some extent be subjective, we can try to list the key elements in this diplomatic approach, the elements that diplomats in general share:[9]

— A willingness to accept "good-enough" outcomes rather than insist on optimal solutions;
— A tendency to manage problems rather than necessarily solve them;
— An analytical approach built around identifying the intentions of "the other", seeking to understand not only want the other intends, and why, but also how he interprets our intentions;
— The development of global networks of information and influence among both state and non-state actors;
— The constructions of "coalitions of the willing" built on shared preferred outcomes rather than necessarily shared values and ideologies;
— The socialisation of state and non-state actors into an international community;

A constructivist approach to international law, which recognises that the motivation for state and non-state actors to obey international laws lies in a combination of self-interest, self-perception (and how they want to be perceived by others) and a desire to remain a part of the international community.[10]

An important aspect that flows from the socialisation of diplomats into an international community of diplomats, and the elements identified above, is the ability of diplomats to keep talking in situations when others cannot. There

9. Riordan, S. (2019). *Cyberdiplomacy: Managing Security and Governance Online*. Polity.
10. Riordan, S.-Torres, M. (2020). *Science Diplomacy*, IEEI Global Policy Perspective Report.

is an almost amoral aspect to diplomacy that enables diplomats to maintain the conversation with other diplomats, even when they radically disagree, or even when their governments are in conflict. Often these conversations are unacknowledged (even, or perhaps especially to their own governments). One of the major advantages of the UN headquarters building in New York is the myriad of obscure coffee shops and bars where these conversations can be maintained far from prying and hostile eyes. Part of this ability to maintain the conversation derives from diplomats' ability to put them themselves in the position of the other, to see the world, including the actions of their own governments, through the eyes of the rival. To the extent that diplomats can maintain the conversation with other diplomats in situations when other actors, e.g. politicians or civil society activists could not, it can be said that diplomats make their contribution to international peace and understanding, regardless of the policies of their governments.

4. The Culture of the Encounter and Diplomacy

At this point we can return to the culture of the encounter and compare it with this conception of diplomacy. We have seen the importance of the shared traditions and culture of the Abrahamic religions in facilitating the encounter in the first place. But that is only the background that opens up the possibility of the encounter. If that were in itself sufficient, we would not have experienced the long history of conflict and discriminations among the three religions of the book which the Holy Father, through the culture of the encounter, is seeking to overcome. The essential part is the empathetic ability to see the world through the eyes of the other. It is this ability to see the world through the eyes of the other that allows the participants to identify those common elements, common experiences, that enable the encounter to flourish. We see similar dynamics in the concept of diplomacy and diplomats identified above. The common experiences of being diplomats, or being socialised into the international community of diplomats, makes possible what we might call the diplomatic encounter. But that is not enough. As in the culture of the encounter, what is essential is the ability to see the world, and the actions of his own government, through the eyes of the other. It is this empathetic diplomacy that allows diplomats to identify shared preferred outcomes, even with countries whose ideology or values they do not share, which form the basis of international

agreements and, ultimately, international law. The Treat of Westphalia was not signed in 1648 because Catholics and Protestants suddenly dropped their religious differences, or thought the other not automatically destined for hell's fire, but because they were able to find sufficient shared preferred outcomes that enabled them to end the fighting and, ultimately, serve as the basis for modern international law.[11]

5. Language Games and the Lebensform

Wittgenstein's concept of the language game offers a framework to analyse both the culture of the encounter and diplomacy. Wittgenstein[12] argued that words did not get their meanings individually, and that individuals did not learn language by having the meanings "pointed" out to them (at the beginning of the Philosophical Investigations he quotes and argues against St Augustine's recollection of learning language by having the meanings of individual words pointed out to him). Rather language is a game where meaning is governed by the rules of the game. Individuals learn the meaning of words through being socialised into the language game and acquiring its rules. The rules of the language game extend beyond purely linguistic and grammatical rules to social rules of the community in which the language game is played. We can get a flavour of this by reflecting on how learning to swear is the hardest (and most dangerous) part of learning a foreign language. It is not simply a question of learning the meaning of the individual swear words, but rather the social rules which decide when you can and, more importantly, you cannot use the word. Often the ostensive meaning of the word does not communicate its offensive nature (I still do not understand why "turtle egg" is an insult in Chinese). In other words, meaning does not reside in the individual word, but in the rich network of rules, including social rules, governing the language game. Wittgenstein argues that each language game amounts to a life form (Lebensform), or as Heidegger[13] would say, a way of being in the world.

Sharp[14] argues that diplomats partake in their own language game, where meaning is decided by a rich network of social and linguistic rules, and that

11. Wilson, P. H. (2009). *Europe's Tragedy: A New History of the Thirty Year's War*. Penguin.
12. Wittgenstein. *Philosophical Investigations.*
13. Heidegger, M. *Being and Time*.
14. Sharp. *The Diplomatic Theory of International Relations.*

diplomacy thus amounts to a life form or Lebensform in the Wittgensteinian sense. This diplomatic language game is distinguished from other approaches to managing international relations, eg the military, politicians, NGOs, which all have their own language games with meaning decided by social as well as linguistic rules. Indeed, it is the social rules, reflecting the socialisation of the diplomat into the international community of diplomats, which differentiates meanings. These social rules equate to the key elements in the diplomatic approach identified above, accompanied by the shared experiences of the diplomatic life-style. The latter amounts to what Heidegger[15] would call the earth in which the diplomatic world, or way of being, is grounded. Sharp illustrates the socialisation of diplomats through the example of the representatives of rogue regimes. For example, representatives of the Soviet Union sent abroad to occupy former Tsarist embassies following the Russian Revolution went not as diplomats tasked with managing relations with the countries to which they were posted, but as revolutionaries tasked with overthrowing their host governments, violently if necessary (even preferably). Yet by the 1930's, Soviet diplomats had been socialised into the international community of diplomats to the extent that the Soviet Ambassador to the Court of St James, Ivan Maisky,[16] was probably the outstanding foreign diplomat in London at that time.

Wittgenstein's concept of the language game can also be used to analyse the culture of the encounter. In this case the shared culture, the equivalent of the diplomat's nomadic lifestyle, lies in the shared experiences of the three Abrahamic religions: monotheism, a personal God who takes an interest in his believers and the common text of the Old Testament. But, as we have seen throughout history, these common cultural features can lead as easily to conflict as to the encounter. The language game of the encounter arises when people from the three religions adopt the behavioural elements of the encounter, above all the empathetic approach that allows them to see the word through the eyes of the other, to understand how the other experiences the world. This transforms the culture of the Abrahamic religions into the culture of the encounter. In doing so, it changes the way in which language is used in the encounter, generating news rules guiding the way in which words are used reflecting social as well as linguistic and grammatical norms. Thus, the

15. Heidegger, M. (2011). *The Origin of the Work of Art*, in *Basic Writings* ed Krell. Routledge.

16. Gorodetsky, G. (2015). *The Maisky Diaries: Red Ambassador to the Court of St James 1932-1943*. Yale.

encounter becomes a life form or Lebensform, not just an experience but a way of experiencing the world. In Heideggerian terms, the encounter becomes a way of being in the world. The relevance of Heidegger's thinking here should not surprise us. Like the Holy Father, he too was educated in a Jesuit seminary.

6. If a lion could talk…

But if the philosophy of Wittgenstein provides an intellectual framework in which we can think about both the practice of diplomacy and the culture of the encounter, it also offers warnings about the problems that language games encounter when they run-up against different language games. Wittgenstein famously commented that if a lion could talk he would not be able to understand it[17] (the philosopher John Gray[18] cites wildlife park owner John Aspinall saying that this just showed how little Wittgenstein knew about lions). Wittgenstein's point is that he shares so little culture with the lion that he is unable to understand how the lion experiences the world, that communication between them would be impossible because they have insufficient common culture. Their shared experience is insufficient for the rules of the language game to emerge. Diplomats often seem to have similar communication problems with politicians: "if a politician could speak a diplomat could not understand him".

This is of course an exaggeration, although it could make for a good cartoon. However, there is an element of truth. There are significant differences between the world views of the politician and the diplomat. They experience the world in very different ways. Politicians seek to solve problems, diplomats to manage them. Politicians tend to see international problems in black and white, whereas diplomats see shades of grey. Politicians often express moral outrage, real or simulated, at the behaviour of other international actors, while diplomats focus on keeping the conversation going. These different ways of being in the world, difference in Lebensform, inevitably lead to different rules for using language in the language game. The key frustration for diplomats focuses on empathy. As discussed above, the empathetic analysis whereby the diplomat can see the world through the eyes of the other, understand not only how the rival understands and experiences the world but also how the rival

17. Wittgenstein: *Philosophical Investigations.*
18. Gray, J. (2007). *Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals*. FSG Adult.

sees the actions of the diplomat's own government, is a (the) key element in the diplomatic approach to international relations. However, this analytical attempt to understand the thinking and behaviour of a rival is often interpreted by politicians as the diplomat defending or supporting the rival's behaviour. In the language of foreign policy, the diplomat is accused of "going native", his credibility undermined.

7. The Disappearing Anthropologist: The Dangers of Socialisation

Another way of thinking about the confrontation of different language games is the parable of the disappearing anthropologist. The anthropologist is studying an aboriginal tribe. But the fundamental cultural differences between the anthropologist and the tribe undermines the former's ability to understand it. His way of experience of the world is so different that he cannot understand the rules of the tribe's language game. So, he lives with the tribe, becoming ever more like them. Eventually his experience of the world is sufficiently similar that he can take part in their language game, understanding and sharing their way of being in the world. The trouble is that by becoming one of the tribe he has stopped being an anthropologist. He has lost the critical thinking that got in the way of his understanding of the tribe. To understand the lion, he has become one. The anthropologist has disappeared.

This again is an exaggeration. Yet again there is a kernel of truth. The danger for the diplomat is that he can be socialised out of being a diplomat into another kind of international actor. This is not necessarily a problem for the individual diplomat. The anthropologist may be happy living as a member of the aboriginal tribe. But if there is a specifically diplomatic way of engaging with international affairs, and it is thought that this diplomatic approach has value in promoting international stability, there is a problem if large numbers of diplomats are socialised out of being diplomats. The diplomatic approach to international engagement disappears, decreasing international stability as non-diplomatic actors compete for "optimal solutions" in a black and white world of mutual expressions of moral outrage. No longer interested in the way that the rival sees or experiences the world, international actors push ahead with their optimal strategies, heedless of the consequences or the reactions of others. Playing chess with yourself is very satisfying, in the sense that you always win, but it is no preparation for playing against competitors in a chess tournament.

There is evidence in recent years of diplomats being socialised into other ways of engaging with the international environment. On the one hand, the corporate world has socialised diplomats into seeing the world purely in terms of commercial interests and promotion. This tendency has been reinforced by the economic and financial crisis and the pressure on foreign office budgets. Foreign ministries have tended to defend themselves by emphasising their role in promoting national commercial interests and supporting a countries' companies abroad, downplaying their political and geopolitical work. Diplomats are socialised into being little more than marketing advisors, losing key diplomatic capacities (as western countries are now discovering to their cost, as old geopolitical agendas return to the fore). On the other hand, diplomats have been increasingly been socialised by NGOs and other civil society bodies to behave as humanitarian actors. Eschewing the relative amorality which enabled them to maintain conversations, and thus contribute to stability, when others were unwilling to do so, diplomats increasingly express their own moral outrage, competing in their aspirations to virtue and its recognition by the press. A recent British ambassador to the UN, instead of discreetly building influence and support for British policy inside the General Assembly and Security Council, specialised in expressing outrage in press conferences and flouncing out of meetings with countries of whom her government disapproved. It is not clear the disappearance of the one group of professionals who contributed to reducing volatility, calm and communication will improve the behaviour of rogue states of increase international stability.

If the culture of the encounter does function as a Wittgensteinian language game, or Lebensform, we would expect it to encounter similar problems to the diplomats. Bearing in mind that the cultural earth in which the encounter is grounded is the Abrahamic religions –the personal monotheistic God and the old testament– it would be likely to have problems when confronting other language games which do not share this cultural grounding. For example, how would the culture of the encounter deal with religious faiths which believe in multiple Gods, or with those who do not believe in God at all? Would there be sufficient shared culture to allow the empathetic understanding of the way that the other sees or experiences the world? Would, for example, the atheistic other be sufficiently willing to accept the possibility, or validity, of belief in God to allow the encounter to take place? A key point here is that the success of the encounter does not depend on one side alone. Just as the politician may dismiss the diplomat for "going native", the atheist may dismiss the Abrahamic

believer as a religious fantasist. The plurithеistic believer may dismiss him as rigid and narrow minded. If the atheistic lion could talk, would the Abrahamic believer be able to understand him. As with the diplomats and the politicians this is an exaggeration. Politicians and diplomats can understand each other, as can Abrahamic believers and atheists or believers in multiple Gods. But the scope for misunderstandings arising from different social and cultural rules in the language games increases.

The culture of the encounter also faces similar socialisation challenges as the international community of diplomats when confronting other language games. If the danger for diplomats is to be socialised into corporate priorities or the moral outrage of humanitarian activists, the danger for the culture of the encounter is to prioritise the cultural encounter with non-believers over the integrity of the cultural earth in which the encounter is grounded. The enthusiasm for communication with the non-believing other undermines the Abrahamic beliefs in which the culture of the encounter is grounded. Relevance to modern society is prioritised over relevance to God. If the socialised diplomat abandons his diplomatic role to promote narrow commercial interests or gain credibility with humanitarian activists, the socialised believer abandons that belief to appear relevant to the secular world.

8. Conflicting International Agendas

The international environment at the beginning of the 21st century has been marked by the development of two conflicting agendas: The New International Security Agenda (NISA) and the more traditional geopolitical agenda. The NISA emerged after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US. It was realised that traditional definitions of international security, based on the security and stability of the state, did not cover international terrorism. The 9/11attacks did not threaten the security or stability of the US as a state actor. But it seemed bizarre to exclude international terrorism from the international security agenda. International security was therefore re-thought in terms of the security and economic welfare of the individual within the state.[19] This included international terrorism within the international security agenda, but also opened up

19. Riordan, S. (2004): *Dialogue-based Public Diplomacy: A New Foreign Policy Paradigm?* Clingendael Discussion Papers in Diplomacy 95.

that agenda to a whole range of other issues, ranging from poverty and migration to climate change and pandemic disease. As time went by, it became clear that these issues were genuine threats to international security, as is now only too apparent with climate change and the coronavirus. Interestingly the issues of the NISA shared certain points in common: the individual issues were interrelated –they could not be tackled individually but required holistic strategies; no single country, or even region, could tackle them alone– they required collaboration at a global level; and governments were not the only actors, or even the most important actors – they required international collaboration extending beyond governments to NGOs and other civil society groups. Work began on developing new approaches to diplomacy to deal with the NISA.[20]

Just as diplomats, European diplomats in particular, were focusing their attention on the NISA, and reconfiguring themselves to deal with it, more traditional geopolitical agendas returned with a vengeance. Russia used military force to detach South Ossetia and Abkhazia from Georgia in 2008 and Crimea from Ukraine in 2014. China began constructing artificial islands to assert its claims to the South China Sea. The US invasions of Iraq resulted in a new competition for regional hegemony between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Balance of power and zones of influence were back. Diplomats found it increasingly difficult to manage the NISA and the geopolitical agendas at the same time. Geopolitical agendas are short term and urgent. The NISA is long term and existential. The short term and urgent tend to force the long term and existential off foreign ministry agendas. Most foreign ministers will be around for the consequences of geopolitical miscalculation. Few are still likely to be around if they get the NISA wrong.

9. The Culture of the Encounter and Diplomacy Confront the 21st Century

The conflicting New International Security and Geopolitical agendas pose serious challenges to both the culture of the encounter and the international community of diplomats. Both will need to escape their comfort zones, move outside their Lebensforms, to deal with other communities with different

20. Riordan, S. (2008). *The New International Security Agenda and the Practice of Diplomacy*. In Cooper et al. (ed.). *Global Governance and Diplomacy: Worlds Apart?* Palgrave.

language games and different social and cultural rules governing their use of language. If the lions begin to talk, the encounter and diplomacy must find ways of understanding them. Diplomats must engage with a raft of new international actors, including political leaders, NGOs, major corporations and civil society actors, developing an effective multi-stakeholder diplomacy in the process. The culture of the encounter must move outside the believers in the Abrahamic tradition to engage with both those who believe in many gods and those who believe in none. In doing so, both diplomacy and the culture of the encounter will depend heavily on their ability to see the world through the eyes of the other, to empathetically understand how the other experiences the world. But they will need to remain grounded in the earth of their respective cultures if they not to be socialised into something else, something alien to their original identity, which will undermine or even negate entirely their ability to make their key contribution. As diplomats struggle to manage the two conflicting agendas at the same time, they will need those imbued with the Abrahamic traditions and the culture of the encounter to remind them of the centrality of the long-term and existential, and warn them of being distracted by the short term and urgent. The international community of diplomats and the culture of the encounter are in many ways similar. They have different and complementary roles to play in managing the crises of the 21st century. But both are centred in dialogue and understanding the other.

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