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The Christ Child

Hope for Humanity: Science, Religion and Technology

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Editorial

Hope, Joy and Peace of Christmas!

A distinctive vibe permeates the air around us in December. Yes! The Christmas holiday and the New Year's celebration that follows are much anticipated. Christmas is unique because of the joy and hope it inspires. The Promised Land is what the birth of Christ makes us think of, giving life momentum and joy. Every year on December 25, the entire globe observes Christmas to commemorate the birth anniversary of Jesus Christ.

The perfect time to send our family, friends, and connections greetings is right now. To share with everyone on this Christmas Day, here is a compilation of holiday greetings and messages.

May you spend this graceful season with the people you care about, celebrating the virtues of appreciation and charity. May the joy and calm of the holiday season flood your home. I'm sending my love to your family and am eagerly anticipating the day we will meet you again. Stay safe and take care of one another.

May the Christmas spirit of peace and pleasure surround you now and in the coming year. A very Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays from our family to yours. We are aware that the previous year has been extremely trying for you, and we wish that the

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upcoming year will bring your family more stable times. All of our love and best wishes are sent for happier times ahead.

So we can wish one another a Merry Christmas filled with joy, laughter, and goodwill. And may the coming year be filled with happiness and fulfilment. Merry Christmas to you! Let us enjoy this Christmas season to the fullest and be thankful. Grace-filled Holidays to you and your loved ones!

Christmas is a time for gathering with loved ones and enjoying yourself. I hope you have lovely memories of this.

We hope and pray that this Christmas brings you new hope, optimism, joy, and delight. Happy Holidays and a Prosperous New Year to you and your loved ones!

We hope and pray that this Christmas brings you new hope, optimism, joy, and delight. Happy Holidays and a Prosperous New Year to you and your loved ones! May the proximity of your family, friends, and loved ones bring you joy. We hope the wonder, surprises, and fun of your Christmas celebrations is abundant!

May God's blessings of goodness and joy be upon you and your family.

Graceful Holidays and Meaningful Celebrations! May war and violence, especially in Ukraine, give way to peace and joy. May depression give way to hope! May sadness give way to joy in abundance!

This issue of the journal remembers gratefully Rev Fr Ornellas Coutinho, SJ, former rector, Papal Seminary, who passed away recently! May his life be an inspiration for all of us!



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Hope for Humanity: Science, Religion and Technology

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Abstract: Based on the hopes of the Nobel Laureate Anton Zeilinger, this article pleads for progress in science, technology and religion, which can make humanity a better and peaceful place. Affirming that there is no conflict between science and religion, the author pleads for an enriching and enhancing relationship between science and religion.

Keywords: Science-religion dialogue, hope for humanity, progress in science, progress in religion, progress in technology.

The Austrian physicist Anton Zeilinger one of the three Nobel Prize winners in Physics in 2022 “for experiments with entangled photons, establishing the violation of Bell inequalities and pioneering quantum information science”

The ability of two or more particles to coexist in what is referred to as an entangled state is one of the most amazing features of

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quantum mechanics. Even if two particles are far away, what happens to one of them in an entangled pair affects what happens to the other particle. Using entangled light particles, or photons, Anton Zeilinger carried out ground-breaking experiments in 1997 and 1998. These and other experiments support the validity of quantum physics and open the door to quantum networks, computers, and encrypted communication (Gregersen and Rafferty, 2022).

Zeilinger is a both a man of science and religion. "Some of the things we discover in science are so impressive that I have chosen to believe," stated the world authority on quantum speech.

Science, Religion and Technology

The fact that he is upbeat about the three most important facets of human life—science, religion, and technology—is astonishing. In a series of articles in *Edge* on what he is truly optimistic about, he mentioned these three things, already in 2007 (Zeilinger, 2022).

He has high hopes for the direction of science. Since only a few hundred years ago, science has been Humanity's deliberate effort to understand the natural world. It is either a show of arrogance or a lack of fantasy to think that we have uncovered the fundamentals of understanding Nature in such a short period of time. Science has so far been governed by the Cartesian distinction between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*, which Zeilinger believes to be false. It is untrue to think that the outside world exists without our ability to observe it. However, it is also incorrect to think that it only exists as a result of our observations. We must and will develop a brand-new perspective on reality that goes well beyond our current materialistic paradigm. After all, we have learnt from quantum physics that there is no such thing as a material existence. Probability fields, or probabilities of the outcomes of observations, are all that are left at the end. He firmly believes that science is at the beginning stages of its exploration. We shall have a fundamentally different understanding of the world than we do now (Pandikattu, 2022).

He has high hopes for the direction of religion. According to him, we shall learn to let go of the superfluous dogmas, regulations, definitions, and prejudices that many religions have amassed over the course of centuries and millennia. We will discover that they originated from human insecurities and the intrinsic desire of mankind to identify and comprehend even the indefinable and incomprehensible. He is certain that we shall find the fundamentals of what it is to be a human in this planet in all major religions. We will be successful in persuading religious and church leaders to be more adventurous, open to different points of view, and less reliant on what they believe to be their own access to the truth (Zeilinger, 2022).

One day, the current conflict between science and religion will be recognised as a conflict between opposing viewpoints, each of which is unjustified, even from their own point of view. Religion will discover that its essence is much deeper than fleeting problems like whether or not we were formed by evolution, and science will never be able to show that God does not exist. I think we'll eventually reach a coherent worldview that transcends both what we currently refer to as science and what we currently refer to as religion.

Further, he has high hopes for the direction of technology. Again, we haven't even begun to scratch the surface here. With quantum information technology, humanity is pioneering a technological area that, as far as we can tell right now, Nature hasn't employed in the course of evolution. He is certain that will be the case for the majority of future technology (Zeilinger, 2022). We will invent new concepts and new technologies that were only possible because we already had them. There is no other way to make things come to pass.

Conclusion

Zeillinger is optimistic about the future of humanity. He will remain upbeat as long as there are young people, individuals

who gaze up at the night sky in awe, music, poetry, the Mona Lisa, old monasteries, budding painters, beginning scientists, and all the other examples of human ingenuity. That brings to mind a statement made by Ravindra Nath Tagore: 'Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man.'

Proper, integrated and adequate progress in science, technology and religion can save us. But not a one-sided growth. This is shown by this intellectual giant and faithful Christian!

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Our Personal Grief as a Lens to Understand and to be in Solidarity with Others in Their Suffering

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Abstract: Listening not only means to listen to their words but also to their silence and cries. It is very difficult to listen to silent suffering and grief of others; especially a person is in pain and unable to express himself or herself. Recalling the experience of our own suffering will help us to understand the depth of other's suffering; even when they are not able to express their pain; we will be able to listen to them and to experience deep solidarity with them. When people are suffering the pain of loss, they are like people walking alone in the darkness of fear, sadness, anger, loss of hope and aimlessness. When we recognize, identify and stand with the sufferings of other who lost hope; we are giving them the hope that Jesus has given us.

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What they need is our presence which make them feel that they are not alone.

Keywords: Grief, Suffering, Resilience, hope, presence in the absence, solidarity, conversation, meaning-making

Introduction

I have always considered grief as something bad or something that needed to be kept away from me. But on 27th August, 2021, on my arrival to the United States from India, at the airport I received the shocking news that my father died in an accident. As I boarded the flight, he was in good health but as I landed, I got this heart-breaking news. My grief grew deeper and deeper for the following reasons: It was an unexpected death; I had not seen my father for the last two and half years; I was the last one in family circle to receive this news; I could not be part of the funeral; I was in a totally new place and with new people at this moment of unexpected sorrow.

I considered this grief like beast which is to be killed or I should be running away from it. The following insights from Fr. James F. Keenan, SJ, on his experience of grief of losing his friend Lucas Chan made a lot of meaning in my grieving process and reflection.

The phenomenon of grief is the willing openness to the loss of love. During that Pentecost, I discovered that my grief was a form of love. In fact, whenever I touch that grief, encounter the love that connected me to my friend Lúcas. Entrance into grief is not solely an encounter with absence but with presence as well. The more one feel's the presence of the love, the deeper one feels the loss, and yet the gulf of love remains, like the upper room itself, a place of vulnerability (Keenan SJ, 2021:9-10).

In that sense, grief was no longer a beast for me but what the grief at the sudden death of my father helped to have a deep bond with my father. It helped me to relive my memories with him. I could speak with him. I could experience his love for me. Now I feel that

my connection with my beloved father remains stronger because of this gap.

Here I attempt to reflect how one's personal experience of resilience after a personal loss makes him/her effective in pastoral care in accompanying the people who lost their dear ones.

Importance of Grieving Process to be Resilient

a. Description of Terms

It is important to understand some of the key terms related to grieving.

Grief

Grief is defined broadly as one's response to an important loss. The response is sometimes marked by severe or prolonged distress, which may be manifested by mourning (Kelly, 2010:8). Each individual has a personal way of grieving, depending on one's own time and space. Normally, we connect grief with death. But we also know from experience that death is not the only loss that gives rise to grief. Loss of job, loss of an organ, loss of memory and loss of relationship are examples of other losses which can also lead to grief.

Entrance into grief is not solely an encounter with absence but with presence as well. The more one feels the presence of the love, the deeper one feels the loss, and yet the gulf of love remains, like the upper room itself, a place of vulnerability

Resilience

According to Southwick and Charney, resilience is "the ability to bounce back after encountering difficulty (Southwick and Charney, 2018: 8)." Two other researchers, McKinley and Lilly defined the concept of Family Resilience as "the capacity of the

family system to withstand and rebound from adversity, strengthened and more resourceful (McKinley and Lilly, 2021:111).” We should not limit our understanding about resilience only to overcoming adversities and difficulties; resilience also means the ability to accept, make new meaning and to live with the loss. It also should be noted that "building resilience and bouncing back is easier for some than for others (Southwick and Charney, 2018: 26)." Everyone experiences different amounts of pain and hardship. Therefore, we cannot define a pace of resilience applicable to all. All we can and should do is to be with the people in the adversity without rushing.

b. The role of grieving in developing resilience

Grieving as family communication

Family sharing after loss is a grieving process that is vital to a family’s well-being and resilience in staying together and facing future challenges. According to McKinley and Lilly, family communication is a prominent aspect of family resilience (McKinley and Lilly, 2021:108). Janice Nadeau also affirms the role of family in meaning making, by pointing out that “Grief is a family affair (Nadeau, 1998:95).” When a family experience loss, not only are the individuals in the family left to make sense of the loss, but also the family as a whole. Nobody can make meaning alone, because meanings are co-constructed. Dr. Melissa Kelley rightly points out that human life is fundamentally grounded in stories (Nadeau, 1998:95). Therefore healthy communication within the family will unite the family in love and help the family members in meaning making and to become resilient.

Grieving by expressing one’s pain

Grieving by sharing with others by writing or by personal conversation will help the individuals to reduce their pain, to find hope and to become resilient. Authors like Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche, Nicholas Wolterstoff and C. S. Lewis grieved over their losses through their writing (Adiche, 2021; Wolterstoff, 1987 and

Lewis, 2021). They expressed how they felt when they lost their dear ones. They found it difficult to accept; it was terrible for them. They even questioned God's love. But they found new meaning and hope by expressing their pain and their memories connected to it. When we share our grief with others, our frustration, anger, hurt, loss of hope, sorrow and bitterness may be transformed into a positive energy that will lead us to resilience.

How One's Experience Becomes a Mirror in Pastoral Care

This section focuses on the graces that I received in the personal grieving process which can become a mirror for pastoral care.

a. Experiencing presence in the absence

My grieving process after the sudden death of my father helped me form a deep bond with my father. It helped me to relive my memories with him. I could speak with him. I could experience his love for me. According to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "it is wrong to say that God, fills the gap. God doesn't fill the gap at all. Rather he leaves it unfilled, and in this way, he helps us to maintain our true communion with our loved one, even though it is painful (Bonhoeffer, 2009:89). Now I feel that my connection with my beloved father remains stronger because of this gap. 'Experiencing the presence of our loved ones in their absence', is a grace that all of us can receive by our grieving process.

b. Solidarity

My personal experience of grief has become a mirror for understanding the grief and pain of others much more deeply. One of the graces that a person receives during personal grieving is the ability to connect oneself with people who are suffering with similar pains. Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche

describes how she used to console grieving friends with the following words, “find peace in your memories.” But after experiencing the grief of her father’s death and the pain and helplessness of not being able to be present for the funeral to say final goodbye to him, has given her a different understanding that the consoling words she used to make were not much help to anyone (Adiche, 2021:22). Our personal grief teaches us that what people need while grieving over their personal loss is our presence, not our soothing words. Our presence in the moments of pain will give them the assurance that they are not alone. This is the grace of solidarity which helps us share the burden of others as our own.

My personal experience of grief has become a mirror for understanding the grief and pain of others much more deeply. One of the graces that a person receives during personal grieving is the ability to connect oneself with people who are suffering with similar pains.

c. Conversations with self, God and others

Conversation with myself helped me be in touch with my own feelings of hurt, anger, frustration, sadness and hope. It helped me communicate with family members and other people my feelings and memories about the loss. It was a process of meaning making and strengthening the bond with others. Conversation with God in prayer helped me grow in my faith and hope; and accept the will of God.

d. Assurance of Strength in weakness

In my grieving process, I experienced the grace that I had the strength to bear my pain. It was god’s grace and the prayerful support of many people. St. Paul says that God’s strength is made perfect in his weakness (2 Cor. 12:9-11). This shows us that resilience is not something we do by our own effort, but God walks with us in our sufferings.

Models to Imitate – For Caregivers and Grieving People

a. Mary

Mother Mary is model to imitate for grieving people as well for the caregiver. When Mary who said “yes” to the will of God; had to go through losses, suffering and humiliations. She had to go through the humiliation of being pregnant before marriage, the pain of not finding a place to give birth to Jesus, losing Jesus in the temple, the pain of Joseph’s death, the pain of being alone when Jesus was away in his mission, the struggle that she went through when people made accusations against Jesus and the pain of witnessing Jesus’ passion and death. She never left the cross. She was at the foot of the cross. She accepted everything as will of God and accepted the suffering with it, because she knew it was for a higher cause (Salvation of the humanity). She also knew that suffering is not the end. She believed and witnessed the resurrection.

b. Jesus

The Agony of Jesus in the Garden (Matthew 26:39): A memorable example was Jesus’s agony in the Garden before the crucifixion. He was not running away from the grief, but was sharing his grief with the Father. That helped the human Jesus to become aware of the vulnerability of his own body, to recognize the will of Father, and accept the cross saying, “Father, if possible, let this cup pass away from me nevertheless not as my will; but as you will (Mt 26:39).” By sharing his own grief with the Father Jesus moved forward with new a spirit of love to save humanity.

Jesus Weeps (John 11:35): James Keenan explains the deep meaning of this passage. He says that Jesus did not begin to weep when encountered by Martha or Mary, but rather when he directly confronted the reality of Lazarus as dead, that is, when he is brought to the tomb. This grief exposed Jesus’

vulnerability to the death of Lazarus. That is revealed to us in the very next verse, “Then the Jews said, ‘See how he loved him!’” (Jn 11.36). Through grief, the Spirit leads us as vulnerable in the face of death, through love to hope (Keenan: 2022).

c. Disciples

The disciples and mother Mary who were grieving in the upper-room after the death of Jesus is a model to imitate. We can assume that they were praying and were sharing their fear, grief and memories of Jesus with one another. They were united in love.

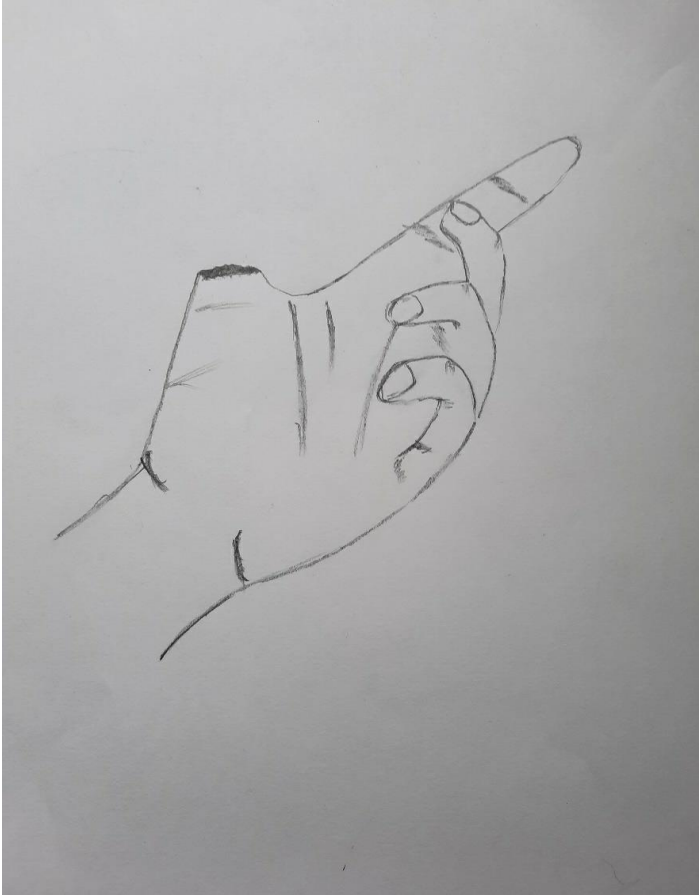
d. Parents who lost their only Son

I vaguely remember that a few years ago watching a TV interview of parents who lost their only son during his graduate study abroad. They shared how hard it was for them. After a few months, they were motivated by the inner-voice to live with this grief. They decided to connect with the people who lost their dear ones in untimely ways. They came together, had a WhatsApp group, and organized gatherings to share their experiences. They started organizing seminars, prayers, arranging scholarship for students, and became involved in charitable works. They have all become a family and have started to support the other grieving people in a profound way. It is a good model to imitate.

e. Images explaining the pain of loss yet being resilient

The following pencil drawings are the attempts to communicate creatively, the pain of loss and meaning making.

Image: 1 The above image is self-evident in communicating to us that wounds cause pain but wounds do not remain a wound. It is healed but there will be always a scar. The mark of the wound will not give us pain but will unite us with the memories, the vision and the love of the lost one. Even with the absence of the thumb, the fingers are united and functions well in communion. Every family can make meaning in their loss when they are united



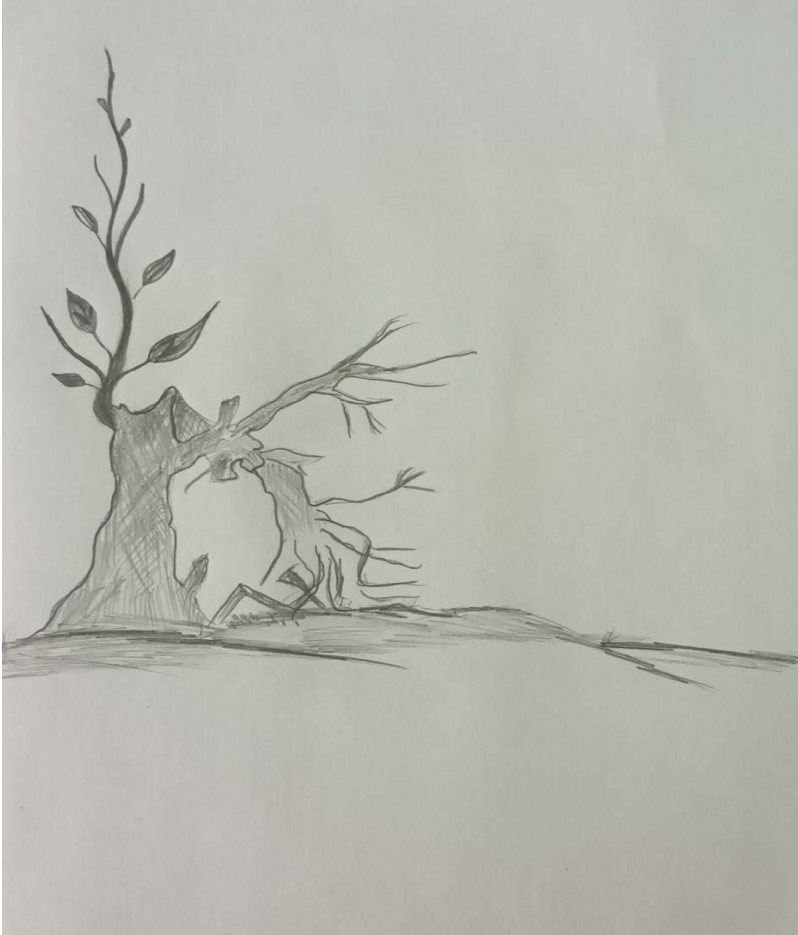


Image:2 This image communicates the message of hope in hopeless situation. It is an assurance that God can perform a miracle even when people think everything is over. Like the soil, water and sun that helped the plant sprout again, people around us can give us a ray of hope in our hopelessness.

Conclusion

As Christians, we cannot deny suffering and death, but we can focus on the resurrection of our Lord which makes us a people of hope and faith. It is important to see that Christian hope begins at the cross

of Jesus. Our faith allows us to connect our sufferings with Lord's suffering with hope of resurrection. In our suffering we are not alone, because our God is not only the God of the sufferers but also a God who suffers out of love (Wolterstorff, 1987:67-92).

In our suffering we are not alone, because our God is not only the God of the sufferers but also a God who suffers out of love.

We believe hope can make meaning in our pain. This conviction and faith not only help us to be resilient on a personal level; it is also a step towards giving hope to the people who grieve in their loss.

I experienced support of many people who listened to me and stood with me in my suffering and pain. It was a great help in my grieving process. People around me made me to feel that I was not alone. Therefore, I feel the best step for pastoral care is to listen to people. Sometimes it is very difficult to listen to silent suffering and grief of others. For instance, often suffering results precisely because a person is in pain and unable to express himself or herself.

“In some instances, this inability to speak is an even greater suffering than the pain itself because the sufferer is acutely aware of her isolation and is unable to communicate it. In particular, the person in chronic pain finds often that the pain perpetually keeps the sufferer from speaking. Pain inhibits the sufferer from doing the only thing that the sufferer wants to do: communicate her pain (Keenan, 2016: 73).

Listening not only means to listen to their words but also to their silence and cries. It is very difficult to listen to silent suffering and grief of others; especially a person is in pain and unable to express himself or herself. Recalling the experience of our own suffering will help us to understand the depth of other's suffering; even when they are not able to express their

pain; we will be able to listen to them and to experience deep solidarity with them. When people are suffering the pain of loss, they are like people walking alone in the darkness of fear, sadness, anger, loss of hope and aimlessness.

“Hope is to have confidence for things not yet seen. Hope, too, is a gift. Sometimes people think of Christian hope as what we have in light of success. But Christian hope is our aid in the face of adversity. By hope, we believe we will attain what even now seems so unattainable. I think it is important to see that Christian hope begins at the cross of Jesus. We are not foolish in hope; rather, we are realists. We understand the challenges of life, but we believe that by hope we can meet and overcome those challenge (Keenan,2016:97).”

When we recognize, identify and stand with the sufferings of other who lost hope; we are giving them the hope that Jesus has given us. What they need is our presence which make them feel that they are not alone. Our presence can make a difference in their lives to make meaning in their suffering and to be resilient.

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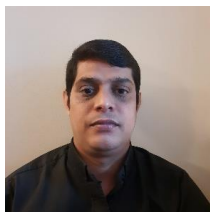
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Understanding the "I" Through the Chinese Language: Catholicism-inspired Meditation on Chinese Characters for “Self”

Anna Mahjar-Barducci

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Abstract: Some ancient Chinese characters give useful insights on humanity's propensity for evil. For example, the Chinese pronoun for "I" ("我," pronounced "wǒ"), defined as a conscious thinking subject, is written by combining two characters: "手" (shǒu – "hand") and "戈" (gē – a dagger-like tool); that is, "I" is depicted as a hand holding a deadly blade. However, the Chinese depiction of "I" appears to be as well one of the best representations of our inner struggle with the temptations of evil and to even transform into good. This analysis presents a Catholicism-inspired viewpoint on the

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character, "我", which may assist 21st century's Christians and non-Christians, in their spiritual struggles. In fact, Chinese characters tell us that the spiritual struggle to improve is inherent in the human condition. In that sense, Chinese tradition is not so foreign to the Christian one as most people think.

Keywords: philosophy, religion, ethics, Chinese characters, redemption, freedom

Introduction

Some ancient Chinese characters ("漢字," pronounced as Hànzì in Chinese) reflect deep aspects of human nature, such as humanity's natural inclination to destroy things (and to destroy itself).

For example, the Chinese pronoun for "I" ("我," pronounced "wǒ"), defined as a conscious thinking subject and the essence of each one of us, is written by combining two characters: "手" (shǒu – "hand") and "戈" (gē – a dagger-like tool); that is, "I" is depicted as a hand holding a deadly blade.

In an article dedicated to the character "我", the media outlet *Qingdao Daily* questions: "Why is a murder weapon being used to define the pronoun 'I'? When did this usage first appear? A series of questions still require us to continue pursuing" (Qingdao Daily, 2013).

However, the Chinese character for "I" (meaning the ego, the self, the person) seems to reflect our innate propensity for violence. After all, as American playwright and anthropologist Robert Ardrey wrote: "We are Cain's children... Man is a predator, whose natural instincts is to kill with a weapon" (Barash, 2014).

It is worth noting that in classical Chinese, this interpretation of the word "我" (wǒ) has little usage. This analysis presents a Catholicism-inspired viewpoint on the character, though the debate in China on why the pronoun "I" is represented by a hand holding a murder weapon is still open. This article is an intercultural philosophical reflection, which may assist 21st century's Christians and non-Christians, Chinese readers and non-Chinese readers, in their spiritual struggles.



(Source: Dailyqd.com)

The "Sound of the Heart"

According to philosopher Emmanuel Mounier, who has been the guiding spirit of the French personalist movement, in order to develop as a person ("I"), like the poet and the religious man, it is needed to recollect oneself and listen to one's inner self.

In fact, for "I" ("我") to use the weapon that the hand is holding, "willingness" (愿意, "yuànyì") is necessary. Interestingly, the second character in this word ("意", yì) is formed by combining the radical "心" (xīn) character (meaning "heart" – indicating that the word relates to emotions and thoughts) with the word "音" (yīn), which means sound. Literally, the Chinese word for "willingness" contains the

meaning "sound of the heart" – that is, the sound of one's inner being, as mentioned by Mounier.

On World Communications Day 2022, Pope Francis spoke about the importance of listening. He said: "There is an interior deafness worse than the physical one... Listening concerns the whole person, not just the sense of hearing. The true seat of listening is the heart" (Francis, 2022). Listening to the sound of the heart brings therefore to listen to our own inner self.

From Intent/Willingness to Repentance and Redemption

Intent and willingness come from the "sound of the heart" that the "I" is supposed to listen to in order to follow the moral path. "Moral" in Chinese is "德" (dé), and it means "to walk with a straight heart." It is in this way that Cain's children can redeem themselves and draw closer to Abel, through repentance.

In Chinese, repentance can be translated as "悔改" (huǐgǎi), which contains the word "regret" ("悔" huǐ). The word "regret", "悔" (huǐ), is formed – on the left side – by the character of the heart, "忄" (xin) and – on the right side – by "每" (měi), which has the meaning of "often". In other words, people who feel regret often blame themselves in their own hearts. At the same time, the character "每" is as well a variant of the character "母" (mǔ) meaning female, mother, as if indicating that regret provokes the same excruciating feeling sensed by a mother's broken heart. Furthermore, the word repentance "悔改" (huǐgǎi) is also constituted by the character "改"

(gǎi),¹ which means change. Hence, repentance can be defined as a change that starts in the heart.

German theologian and Lutheran pastor, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, asserted that if the person (the "I") becomes aware (by listening to the "sound of the heart") of his/her own guilt, this same person will develop a guilty plea that will lead (by "walking with a straight heart") to change, conversion and redemption (Bonhoeffer, 2017).

The word "redemption" can be translated into Chinese as "救赎", (jiùshú), which is composed by the characters "救" (jiù), meaning to save, and "赎" (shú), meaning to redeem, or to ransom. The first part of the word redemption is "救" (jiù). From the perspective of the structure of the font, the right side of the word is composed by the character "支" (pī), which means a person holding a weapon or tool to strike with, on the left side is composed by "求" ("qiú"), meaning fur, that is, the fur of the killed beast. Therefore, from the etymological analysis, the word "救" (jiù) means to kill a beast to save someone's life. Hence, in redemption, the same hand of the "I", is now using a weapon to kill the beast (which is a biblical symbol for evil) in order to bring salvation.

It is worth noting that in *The Brothers Karamazov*, novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky tackles this same topic of repentance and redemption. In the book, Dmitri, the oldest Karamazov brother, who is innocent, takes the responsibility for the killing of his father, even though he had actually been killed by Smerdyakov, who is Old Karamazov's illegitimate son. Dmitri takes the blame because he had also wished for his father's death. During his time in prison, Dmitri goes through

¹ It is worth noting that the word change, “改” (gǎi), depicts a hand with the stick and a crying child.

a spiritual conversion and, feeling a sense of shared responsibility for humanity, finds redemption, giving an optimistic look at the nature of mankind.

Good and Evil

In this regard, the "I" has "freedom/liberty": (自由, zìyóu,) meaning being one's own master, with no restrictions or no restraint. The word 自由 is composed of the character "自", meaning "oneself" and of "由", meaning to let, allow, follow, pass through, or even walk. In other words, "自由", "freedom", is to make one's own decisions, to be oneself, to follow or obey one's own will. That is, "being oneself" due to one's own decisions rather than external forces.

Intent and willingness come from the "sound of the heart" that the "I" is supposed to listen to in order to follow the moral path. "Moral" in Chinese is "德" (dé), and it means "to walk with a straight heart." It is in this way that Cain's children can redeem themselves and draw closer to Abel, through repentance.

Hence, the “I” has the “freedom” to choose between using the weapon and not using it – that is, to choose between good (“善”, shàn)² and evil (“恶”, è).³⁴

The question of whether human nature is “good” (善) or “evil” (恶) has been put forward throughout Chinese intellectual history. According to Chinese philosopher Mozi (Mo Tzu), “human nature is inherently good”. In his Theory of Human Nature, Chinese philosopher Mencius (Ho Hwang, 1979) does not mean that “human nature is inherently good” (人性本善),

² The literal meaning of the Chinese word for good, “善” (shàn), is to speak like a sheep, representing an auspicious connotation. Shuowen, the literary reference book of the Eastern Han Dynasty, said: “善 means auspiciousness”. From the perspective of the font’s structure, the character is composed on the top by “羊” (yang), meaning sheep, on the bottom by “言”, meaning “speak”, the ancient pronunciation is dàn. The sheep’s eyes are gentle and peaceful among animals, and its meat is considered to be healthy and delicious, so it is appropriate to use a sheep as a metaphor for goodness (善). From the etymological analysis of the overall structure of the word “善”, it is possible to understand that everyone praises the “sheep” for its gentle, tame and beautiful character. The original meaning of “善” is “good”, “tame”, and “kind”. Consequently, “善” is extended to “friendship”, “good at”, “praise”, “easy”, “familiar with” and other positive meanings.

³ The word evil, “恶” (è) is an ideogram. The character has an upper and lower structure and consists of two parts: on the top the word “亚” (yà), meaning inferior, and on the bottom “心” (Xīn), meaning heart. “亚” has the meaning of ugly, and refers to an ugly behavior; the character “心” at the bottom refers to a bad action coming from an evil heart. The earliest Chinese character dictionary Shuo Wen explains that “恶” has the meaning of sin, fault. In other words, the literal meaning of “恶” is “very bad behavior”, coming from the heart.

⁴The word evil, “恶”, can also be referred as “罪恶”, composed by the character “罪”(meaning sin) and “恶”.

but that "human nature is to the good" (人性向善). Whereas, for Chinese philosopher Xunzi, evil is part of "nature", but this situation is not incorrigible. Xunzi says that "man will conquer the sky" by overcoming his instincts (Sohu, 2018).

In 2008, Pope Benedict XVI spoke about the doctrine of original sin. He said to his audience: "Each person is called to do the good, and intimately wants to do it, but at the same time is driven by the impulse to do the opposite, to follow the path of egoism and violence, of doing what he or she wants knowing that he or she is acting against God and his/her neighbor." According to Benedict XVI, "this contradiction is experienced everyday... The power of evil gave origin to a dirty river in our soul which is poisoning the geography of human history." Nevertheless, from this contradiction "a redemption must arise." (Benedict XVI, 2008)

Despite knowing what is good, the "I" very often chooses evil, since our "自由" (zìyóu) freedom has been corrupted by original sin ("罪", zuì) and by personal sins.

In the Epistle to the Romans (7:14–25), Saint Paul described this feeling: "For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members."

The Punishment

It is worth noting that the Chinese original character of the word "sin" ("罪", zui) is "鼻" (also pronounced as zui), which means cutting one's nose off with a knife. The word "sin" includes therefore in its writing the concept of "punishment" for committing a sin/a crime.⁵⁶

On May 18, 2021, at the general audience, Pope Benedict XVI talked about sin and punishment, stating: "Evil, in fact, cannot be accepted, it must be identified and destroyed through punishment: The destruction of Sodom had exactly this function." However, Pope Benedict XVI added: "Yet the Lord does not want the wicked to die, but rather that they convert and live (cf. Ez 18:23; 33:11); His desire is always to forgive, to save, to give life, to transform evil into good" (Benedict XVI, 2011).

Inner Struggle with the Temptations of Evil

The Chinese depiction of "I" as a hand holding a weapon appears to be one of the best representations of our inner struggle with the temptations of evil and to even transform into good. It is worth noting that Erasmus of Rotterdam wrote in

⁵ In Chinese the word for sin and for crime is the same, "罪", zui.

⁶ Qin Shihuang (秦始皇, which means the incipient emperor of Qin dynasty), the first emperor of China, thought that the character "鼻" (zui) to represent the word "sin" looked like the character "皇" (huáng) meaning emperor, in other words, himself, so he changed "鼻" to "罪". The original meaning of the character "罪" is a net for catching fish, and by extension, a net of law to catch wrongdoers. Up till now, people use the character "罪" modified by Qin Shihuang. "鼻" is a variant character of "罪" with the same pronunciation, but it has been largely abandoned.

It is also worth noting that people often use the word "罪過" (zuìguo), where "罪" refers to a crime or a sin, and "過" refers to a fault, a mistake or at most an unintentional crime. However, "罪" cannot be replaced by the character "過", since "罪" is more serious of a sin than "過".

1503 a treatise titled "*Enchiridion militis Christiani*" (The Manual of a Christian Knight). Tellingly, the Latin word "*enchiridion*" (coming from Greek *enchirídion*, derived from *chéir* "hand", with the prefix *en-* "in", literally "that you hold in the hand") means "manual", but also dagger (as the one held by the "I"), which symbolized of the interior battles against evil, in defense of the faith (Erasmus, 1503), helping us "to walk with a straight heart".

The Confrontation Between the Two "I's"

However, in classical Chinese, there is also another word for "I": "吾" (wú), which is composed of the character "五" (wǔ, meaning five) and "口" (kǒu, meaning mouth). According to the renowned Ricci Chinese-French dictionary, the word "吾" (wú), which represents the union of five mouths (openings), derives from the Buddhist idea of the five Skandha (五蘊, wǔ yùn), i.e., the five constituents (form, sensations, perceptions, mental activity, consciousness, as the basic elements of human existence) of the empirical person (a conventional "I" that is not permanent but is the fruit of the daily experience). Interestingly, as a verb, the

Chinese characters give us a unique opportunity to analyze and meditate about the "I" and human nature in a new way. The media outlet China Daily writes: "Chinese characters have evolved over thousands of years. The quintessence of Chinese civilization and culture has thus been handed down from generation to generation. But they do not only express Chinese words in written form – as they also convey traditional and philosophical thoughts"

character "吾" means to resist (and in this case is pronounced as "yù").

The dictionary explains that there are contrasts, confrontations, and struggles between the two types of "I", represented by the two different Chinese character, 我 ("wǒ") and "吾" (wú). The 我 (wǒ) is opposed to the 吾 (wú), as the struggle of the two differs. The "I" that holds a weapon (我, wǒ) is the exterior and ephemeral individual, while the "I" of the five mouths (吾, wú) expresses more the constancy of humanity in the individual. Yet, both of them are battling - "resisting" – to find the unity of the person.

Conclusion

The school of philosophy of personalism puts the self, the "I", which has to be cultivated and protected, at the center. In fact, the understanding of the "I" is the first step in our relation with the "other".

Surely, Chinese characters give us a unique opportunity to analyze and meditate about the "I" and human nature in a new way. The media outlet *China Daily* writes: "Chinese characters have evolved over thousands of years. The quintessence of Chinese civilization and culture has thus been handed down from generation to generation. But they do not only express Chinese words in written form – as they also convey traditional and philosophical thoughts" (Choi, 2014).

Yet, these characters don't tell us only about Chinese people, since they describe the universal human condition.

Concerning the "I", the Chinese character "我," ("wǒ") gives a point of reflection for a new point of view on the internal conflicts within oneself. The Italian Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci hinged his apostolate on two cornerstones: the study of Chinese literature and mathematical sciences, and the exercise

of Christian charity. In the spirit of Ricci, who is defined as "a paragon of cultural exchange between China and the West" (Lau, 2021), Chinese characters can give new inputs to a Catholicism-inspired meditation on the self, the "I", whose dagger, "戈", can become not a symbol of violence, but a new *enchiridion militis christiani*, to conquer peace within oneself and with others.

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Ecclesia and Ummah: Understanding Pope Francis' Fraternity

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Abstract: The sustainability of the universe depends on our interactions with each other and with creation. Catholics and Muslims make up about a third of the world's population, and our intercultural relationships are critical to the well-being of the world. Pope Francis has created a constructive forum in which trusted Muslims and Christians can participate in a revitalised discussion about the causes of violence and terrorism, in the spirit of St Francis of Assisi and with the help of Fratelli Tutti. The interfaith dialogue will be more in line with Pope Francis' theology of compassion for the poor, which includes the words "ummah" and "ecclesia". This theology offers a compelling social critique of our existing society,

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namely materialism, covetousness and an abundance of worldly goods. The theology offers a sharp social critique of our consumer culture.

Keywords: Ecclesia, Ummah, Fraternity, community, Christianity, Muslim, well-being, Universe, dialogue, inter-religious, interfaith.

The well-being of the universe depends not only on our interactions with each other but also on our interactions with humanity in general. Catholics and Muslims make up about a third of the world's population, and the well-being of the world depends not only on our interpersonal relationships but also on our interactions with civilisation. Our religions not only educate us to be good and just, but they also provide us with a language that expands the possibilities of what social solidarity can look like in a world beset by one tragedy after another. A. Rashied Omar, Associate Teaching Professor of Islamic Studies and Peacebuilding and an Imam (religious minister) at the Claremont Main Road Mosque in Cape Town, South Africa on *Fratelli tutti*, says, It is my considered view that Pope Francis's third encyclical letter, *Fratelli Tutti* (which means we are all brothers), undoubtedly marks a big step forward in promoting interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding, especially between Catholics and Muslims. Moreover, *Fratelli Tutti* resonates well with the teachings of Islam." (Omar, 2021) Pope Francis' call to all people in the

Catholics and Muslims make up about a third of the world's population, and the well-being of the world depends not only on our interpersonal relationships but also on our interactions with civilisation. Our religions not only educate us to be good and just, but they also provide us with a language that expands the possibilities of what social solidarity can look like in a world beset by one tragedy after another.

world to become brothers and sisters of all creation. To love everything and to consider everything and every person as your brother and sister, just as St. Francis of Assisi did, is the appeal of this encyclical. The concept that every human being has an "inalienable dignity" (Fratelli Tutti 27) is the most important message Pope Francis wants us to take away from the encyclical about our life as Christians. This is the aspect of truth that Francis considers extremely important.

"Humans are social beings comfortable in society with other individuals and communities with whom they can interact. We believe that humans thrive in a well-organised community where they are required to follow laws that can be rationally explained. People prefer to assume a cyclical relationship between people and their communities. Individuals exist for the benefit of their communities, and the community is responsible for promoting the conditions for human flourishing. People can form communities, communicate, and collaborate on projects because communities are built from the ground up to enable their members to engage in these activities. This is because interacting with others and contributing to achieving a common goal are essential parts of the human experience. Christianity and Islam are considered distinct communities due to the differences in their respective founding documents. Even though they differ in many ways, there are also commonalities.

In numerous places in the Bible and the Qur'an, building meaningful relationships with the people around is emphasised. The Bible gives the aspects of community life as,

"The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." However, for Adam, no suitable helper was found. So, the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the

Lord God made a woman from the ribs he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man” (Gen 2:18 -21).

Moreover, in the Book of Genesis, we immediately learn that the first man was satisfied with this social existence, declaring, “The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she is taken from the man.’” (Gen 2:23). In this essay, I will compare and contrast the community aspects of Islam and Christianity to ultimately provide a platform for dialogue between the different world religions. One of the most important differences between Islam and the two monotheistic religions that preceded it is that Islam accepts that the two previous religious prophets in the revelation of the Quran are also identical. Islam also suggests that there is no priesthood in Islamic tradition. The priesthood is one of the most important differences between Islam and the two monotheistic religions that preceded it. Since Judaism and Christianity each have their priestly structure, it is commonly assumed that the followers of these religions are members of an organised group or institution. This is especially true of the Catholic faith and other Christian denominations.

Ecclesia

In ancient Greece, the assembly of the inhabitants of a city-state was called an *ekklesia* (Greek, “gathering of those summoned”). Its origins go back to the agora, the marketplace, in Homeric times. In the New Testament, this term occurs 114 times. Gospel preachers have been drawing people’s attention to the origin of the word “*ekklesia*” for many years. This word is made up of two different parts: the preposition *ek*, meaning “out of”, and the verb *Kaleo*, meaning “to call out”, which is where the expression “to call out” comes from. The only word used in the New Testament for a church is “ecclesia”, which means “assembly”. Ecclesia was the name given to the governing assembly of Athens, which was officially convened by the relevant officials and had extensive political power, including the ability to exercise judicial functions. It is a symbol of the worldwide Church, which is the body of Christ and

in which the Lord is the head (Mt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22; 1 Tim. 3:15). The term can be used to refer to the people of God in a particular area (Acts 9:31). It is often used to refer to a local church with its congregation of Christians (1 Cor. 1:2; Rev. 1:11). It could also refer to a congregation of people following the Lord and gathering together for worship (1 Corinthians 14:34-35). When Pope Francis discusses "charity" in the Encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, he begins with the most personal and profound form of charity, the very heart of the Church. The earliest Christian communities clearly understood the concept of charity. In the face of the Church's desire to close itself off and isolate itself, St Paul exhorts it to a broad love that "overflows among you and toward all." (1 Tess 3.12). (Tejado Muñoz)

Ummah

The Ummah is a community that includes all humanity. Its members are obliged to support each other and consider each other as their brothers and sisters in order to be a part of it. Quran says, "O Humankind! We have created you of a male and a female, and fashioned you into nations and tribes, so that you may know each other (recognize each other); surely, the most honorable of you with God is the best in conduct. Lo! God is the All-Knower, Aware of all things. "(Q. 49:13)

The meaning of the Arabic word Ummah, often rendered as "community", is taken literally. This term should not be confused with *shab*, which refers to a nation sharing the same ancestry or location (Hughes, 1994, p.654). Instead, this term refers to people who speak the same language. Therefore, it is conceivable to refer to it as a transnational community with a common historical background. A fundamental concept in Islam emphasises Muslims' underlying unity and theoretical equality, even though Muslims come from various cultural and geographical backgrounds.

When we speak of the Muslim Ummah in its meaning as laid down in the Qur'an, the Prophetic Hadiths and the Islamic heritage, we realise that it has experienced two tendencies: on the one hand, the meaning of unity, cohesion, solidarity and support, and on the other hand, a second tendency in its present reality, namely, the division into states and societies, sects and schools of thought, ethnicities and languages, etc. We will discuss the importance of the intellectual construction of the Ummah under the two conditions mentioned, individually or together. (Malkawi, 2020: 80)

In the Qur'an, where it is stated that God has sent a messenger to each of the Ummahs, this phrase has theological significance. Since they are considered the recipients of the scriptures and builders of the Ummah, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad are considered the most important messengers in the history of the religion. The Qur'an is the foundation of the Muslim community, the so-called Ummah, which was "sent down" from God to Muhammad. The Torah is the basis of the Jewish community, also the people known as the Ummah. The Bible, also known as the Gospel, was given to Jesus by God, and Christians form a community based on this book.

Moreover, Muslims are a community called Ummah, according to the Qur'an. To be precise, the term occurs slightly over sixty times in the Qur'an's Holy Scripture. The Meccan period of revelation is often mentioned in these verses. In contrast, the Medinan period of revelation is responsible for only a minimal number of allusions in these verses (Abdullah, 2015: 15).

Omar also comments that, Above all, Pope Francis promotes peace and compassion that are compatible with Islam. For example, he offers a broader and more inclusive view of the concept of charity that is fully compatible with the goal of zakah, the third pillar of Islam (Omar, 2021). And he quotes, "It is an act of charity to assist someone suffering, but it is also an act of charity even if we do not know that person to work to transform and change the social situation that caused the suffering in the first place" (Fratelli tutti. 186)

The Scriptural Understanding of Community

In the Bible

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayer. Everyone was awed at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the people’s favour. Moreover, the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2; 42-47).

Belonging to a group allows one to spend time with people at different points in their spiritual journey. It also allows you to share in their struggles (Galatians 6:2). According to the Bible, the Holy Spirit is present wherever two or more believers come together (Matthew 18:20). The early Church described in Acts is an excellent example of this principle, as its members gathered regularly for worship, shared meals and fellowshiped with each other. Acts 2:46-47 states that “the Lord added to the daily new men who were being saved”. Paul placed love above all other virtues in his letter to the Corinthians. Furthermore, he did the same in the letter he wrote to the Colossians: “Be forbearing with one another, forgiving one another if any of you has a grudge against another.” As the Lord has forgiven you, you must forgive others. Colossians 3:13-14 says, “And above all these virtues put on love, which binds them together in perfect harmony.”

The term has been used to refer to a group of people who adhere to a particular religious faith (Qur’an 5:48), the followers of particular prophets (10:47), the faith of a particular group of people (43:22), and even a group of people in general. The term ‘Ummah’ can be used in a variety of contexts (28:23). It has

also been used to refer to a group of people who are part of a larger community (3:113), to describe a group of people who follow the wrong path (43:33), and to refer to a group of people who follow the wrong path and are followers of a prophet. All these usages are found in the Qur'an (27:83). In addition, the word "ummah" is used to refer to a period of time (11:8) as well as communities of non-human people, such as flocks of birds and herds of land animals. This is because the term "ummah" is derived from the Arabic word for "community" (6:38). These are just a few of the many different contexts in which the term can be used; there are many more.

The Muslim community, also known as the Ummah, is referred to in the Qur'an as "the best community". This is because the Ummah was established to serve humanity. This Ummah promotes what is right and discourages evil; faith in God is central to its teachings and principles. This account of the Ummah is explained in a number of verses in the Qur'an, of which verse 3:110 of the Qur'an is the most famous: [Allah] said: "[Believers], you are the best community provided for humankind, for you enjoin what is right, you forbid what is wrong, and you believe in God. "If the People of the Book had believed as firmly as you do, their situation would be much better today. The reason is that most of them break the law, although some believe in God.

In the Quran

Ummah is a versatile term: it has been used to refer to a group of people who follow a particular religion (Qur'an5:48); the followers of the prophets (Q 10:47); the beliefs of a particular group of people (Q 43:22); and even simply a group of people (28:23). It has also been used to refer to a group of people within a larger community (Q 3:113), to describe a misguided group of people (Q 43:33), and to refer to a group of people who are misguided among the followers of a prophet (Q 27:83). In addition, the Ummah is also used to refer to a period of time (Q 11:8) and communities of non-human beings such as birds and land animals (6:38). These are just some of the many uses of the term. In the Qur'an, the Muslim Ummah is the best

community that has evolved to serve humanity. This Ummah enjoins what is right, forbids what is wrong, and is centred on faith in God. This account of the Ummah is explained in several Qur’anic verses, but most notably in Qur’an 3:110: “[Believers], you are the best community chosen for humankind: You enjoin what is right, forbid what is wrong, and believe in God. Had the people of the Scripture also believed, it would have been better for them. For though some of them believe, most of them are lawbreakers.”

[article to be continued]

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Review Article O God, Where Are You?

Kuruville Pandikattu SJ

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Abstract: Review article of Thomas, M.J. SJ. *O God, Where Are You?* Ernakulam: Atmamitra Publ. 2022. pp. 100. ₹ 150/-

Keywords: Christian spirituality, God and suffering, Finding God in Everything.

‘There is a plethora of religiosity but hardly any spirituality’, says the author, M.J. Thomas, S.J. This book, *O God, Where Are You*, is not a systematic treatment about spirituality but a collection of articles written on different occasions. But every article contains elements of genuine spirituality. The author states that the heart of Christian spirituality is sincere imitation of Jesus, not just acclamation or veneration of Jesus.

In the Introduction, he quotes Rev. Albert Nolan (of ‘*Jesus before Christianity*’ fame, who died Oct 17, 2022) at length. It is worth reproducing it here. “Many millions throughout the ages have venerated the name of Jesus, but few have understood him and fewer still have tried to put into practice what he wanted to see done. His words have been twisted and turned to mean everything, anything and nothing. His name has been used and abused to justify crimes, to frighten children, and to inspire men and women to heroic foolishness. Jesus has been frequently honoured and worshipped for what he did

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not mean than for what he did mean. The supreme irony is that some of the things he opposed most strongly in the world of his time were resurrected, preached and spread more widely throughout the world – in his name.”

Nolan continues; “In the last analysis faith is not a way of speaking or thinking, it is a way of living, and can be adequately articulated in a living praxis. To acknowledge that Jesus is Lord and Saviour is only meaningful only in so far as we try to live as he lived and order our lives according to his values. We need not theorize about Jesus, we need to reproduce him in our lives and our communities.”

Popularity of Spirituality Today

We live in a world where everyone wants to become a spiritual guru and make others better. Spirituality today, unfortunately, has become part of a ‘do it yourself’ business, which gives them both profit and fame. Further, spirituality has become a catchword to lead a happy and harmonious life. It is part of our popular need to become successful and famous. In this sense, today spirituality has been tied with success, glamour, happiness and fame! Such a spirituality is linked with the rich and the powerful who are well-fed, well-educated and well-earning!

It is in this context that Fr M. J. Thomas presents a challenging book on authentic spirituality. Such an authentic spirituality, a sincere imitation of Christ, recognises that spirituality is related to psychology but not identified with it. It recognises that genuine spirituality is not to be equated with well-being, fame, wealth or success. It recognises that spirituality emerges from the down to earth living with its unavoidable pain, agony and terror. The cross of Jesus is intimately linked to the resurrection of Jesus. This is true for us, too, today.

Elements of Genuine Spirituality

Genuine spirituality takes life seriously, recognises the injustice and pain and joys present in our world and moves to a world of meaning and significance.

The author states emphatically that direct, personal and intimate Father/son/daughter relationship with God is the most important element of genuine Christian spirituality. The article ‘My Dearest Father’ shows that such a relationship is possible and life-transforming. God is presented as one who is continuously labouring for us. There is an article on the ever fascinating nature of God. The article on ‘Contemplation’ is a help to make encounter with Jesus real and effective.

This book is a cry to find God in everything and everyone, including our own failing and sufferings. It is an earnest effort to discern God’s presence in everyone

Two articles bring out the most important elements of love, that love is unconditional and forgiving. ‘Handling Anger’ and ‘Absolution Every Night’ are very practical. Two other articles help make the celebration of the Eucharist and Confession fruitful, not a routine. The article ‘Be Responsible’ is a challenge to all. Important themes, like, who and what saves us, who gives grace, and will I be saved? are also handled. ‘Devotion to the Blessed Mother’ is a corrective to popular piety and veneration of saints.

A recurring theme in this short book is that prayer is not an end in itself nor a means to please God. According to the author, effective prayer should lead to conversion, making the praying person better and better. The final article is about making God's kingdom come, a kingdom of welfare for all.

This book is an inspiration to accept our broken and fragile lives, discern its sacredness, see its depth and meaning. In other words, this book enables us to be ‘mystics in the marketplace,’ seeing God in our ordinary experiences and natural phenomena. The author quotes the famous German theologian of the last century, Karl Rahner, SJ, “the

Christian of the future will be a mystic or nothing.” For me personally, reading the articles was a spiritual joy and stimulation.

Conclusion

This book urges us to acknowledge our own weakness and the imperfection of the world, focusing our attention on the unconditional love of an ever active and saving God, and live as Jesus lived so that all may live in peace and prosperity. As such this book is a cry to find God in everything and everyone, including our own failing and sufferings. It is an earnest effort to discern God’s presence in everyone.

I would highly encourage all Christians to read this book, personalise it and live it so that their spirituality may be more and more genuine, making life joyful and fruitful.



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Rev Fr Ornellas Coutinho SJ: An Inspiration, a Teacher, and a Genuine Role Model

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Abstract: Fr. Ornellas Coutinho SJ (Gujarat province), fondly called Orny, died at 3 pm on 27 October, 2022, at Vadodara. He was born on 6 August, 1942 in Mapusa, Bardez, Goa. He joined the Society of Jesus on 20 June 1961. He pronounced his first vows on 21 June 1963 at Vinayalaya, Mumbai. He did his philosophy (1964-66) and Theology (1970-73) at Jnana Deepa, Pune. He was ordained a priest in Bombay, on 07 April, 1973. From 1976 to 78 he served as Minister, De Nobili College. Most of his life he spent in the school as teacher or principal. He was a well-known musician and football coach.

As rector of Papal Seminary, Pune (1st June 2004 - 9th June 2007), he radiated a spirit of joy and enthusiasm. As an affable and joyful person, he was well liked by the students and staff alike. He organized the Golden Jubilee of Papal Seminary's transfer to Pune (2005). Here is an appreciation of him by a former student.

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Keywords: Ornellas Coutinho, Jesuit educator, Papal Seminary Rector, Gujarat Jesuit

A Genuine Inspiration for Me

All of us have some special favourite people in our lives beyond family and friends....ones who have a deep impact on our lives! Father Orny Coutinho was one such favourite person for me.... One who played a very vital role in shaping me as a person!

I remember as an 8 year old kid I always looked forward to meeting him as he brought so much joy with his wholeheartedness ...he would laugh heartily with us, share chocolates with us, enjoy eating out of our tiffin boxes and express his joy and appreciation in a way which always doubled our joy! Today knowing he is no longer with us took me back to those days back in school that brought back memories of all his actions and words that knowingly/ unknowingly inspired me...

- To believe in my own self and have the grit & gumption to make things happen
- To never lose the connect with the joyful child within
- And most importantly embrace the simple art of respecting all around you by simply listening to them & giving them your time & undivided attention (Something which he did so beautifully & effortlessly even with us class 4 kids)

There were so many more ways in which he inspired by him. Although he is no longer around us, I believe a part of him continues to live within innumerable students like me in the form of the values he instilled in us! (I am so glad I got an opportunity to share my gratitude in person when I met him a couple of years back!)

Father I will miss you a lot, but I promise to continue to celebrate the life you lived by practising what you taught us not by teaching but by example! — with Orny Coutinho.

Teacher Who Taught Without Teaching

It was recess time in school. Me, a class 4 kid then was having her sandwiches from her lunch box when a stranger came up to me with a beaming smile and said “Wow!! You seem to have some tasty sandwiches! Can I try one?”. I didn’t know him, perhaps he was a teacher from higher classes. But I couldn’t stop myself from giving him a piece of my sandwich – such a sunny persona he had! And as he took a bite of the sandwich I could see he loved it! He asked me my name and asked me whether I would share my tiffin again sometime. I smiled back with a yes before he went his way. After he left I got to know he was our new School Principal who was supposed to take charge from the following day. Never before had I seen the Principal of the school so lively and friendly! And even at such a young age I really looked forward to have him as the Principal!

Father Orny Coutinho certainly was a Principal/ teacher like no other....sitting and chatting with kids during the recess time, being a foodie(that’s what I felt he was then) trying out whatever we got in our tiffin boxes, and amazingly remembering the name of every kid he met.

One day he asked me whether I liked deer....and then to my surprise he said we would soon have 2 in a little sanctuary he was planning to build inside the school campus.... With deer, birds, rabbits!

This was like a dream come true for a class 4 kid and during every lunch break before I opened my lunch box I would knock at his cabin door..... go inside and ask the same question everyday – “Father, when will the deer come?”

This went on for weeks and not once did I see him irritated. He would always welcome me into his cabin, at times share a toffee and tell me “Himani, still there is time”, sometimes he would show the sketches the horticulturist had made for designing the little sanctuary, but not a day was there when I was made to feel unwelcome or my curiosity was curbed. Till the day came when he came searching for me during the lunch break and said “Himani, there is a surprise that I want you to see” and somewhere I knew what it was and as I walked or rather sprinted along with him we came face to face with parents of a student who had

come to meet him and for a moment I felt... “Oh! Now I won’t get to see the surprise”, but then my eyes twinkled when he told them “Can you wait for 10 minutes in my cabin? I have promised something to this kid since long; need to fulfill that first”. As a kid that was a memorable moment....as it made me feel valued!

Father Coutinho, its been years since I last met you, but I want you to know, these little things that you did left an everlasting impact in my life, teaching me some vital life lessons which I do try to practice!

1. The value of making people around you feel valued – could be just remembering names.
2. The value of making people feel comfortable with you.
3. The value of living up to your promises
4. The value of encouraging curiosity
5. The value of being kind and patient
6. The value of spreading smiles
7. The value of giving importance to little things in and for others thus instilling confidence in others
8. The value of developing the spirit of enjoying little things in life – could be just a sandwich shared

Concluding Wishes

Without actually teaching all of this you have contributed in creating a “Himani” who is a little more curious, a little more confident with a little more perseverance, a little more kind, a little more patient and yes a little more happier and contented in life than I would have been otherwise, with you instilling the seed of the spirit of enjoying the little things in life and spreading that joy! Father Coutinho, I always loved what and the way you taught (The Subject of English) but the above lessons you taught are far more valuable!

[Modified from her Facebook postings]

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Life of Orny in Brief

He was born on 6 August, 1942 in Mapusa, Bardez, Goa. He joined the Society of Jesus on 20 June 1961. He returned to the Lord on 27 Oct 2022 at Baroda.

Formation	Institution	Place	Year
First Vows	Vinayalaya	Mumbai	21 June, 63
Juniorate	Vinayalaya	Mumbai	1963-1964
Philosophy	JDV	Pune	1964-1966
Language	St. Xavier's School	Anand	1966-1967
Regency	Loyola	Ahmedabad	1967-1968
B. Ed	St. Paul's College	Belgaum	1968-1979
Regency	St. Mary's School	Nadiad	1969-1970
Theology	JDV	Pune	1970-1973
Ordination	St. Peter's	Mumbai	7 Apr 73
MA		Surat	1978-1980
Final Vows		Pimpri	21 June 80

Responsibilities Held in the Society of Jesus		
Responsibility	Place	Year
In charge of Pre-novices	Ahmedabad	1973
Vice Principal	St. Mary's School, Rajkot	1974-1976
Minister	DNC, Pune	1976-1978
Principal	St. Xavier's School, Surat	1982-1983
Principal, Rector	Loyola Hall, Ahmedabad	1983-1990
Principal, Superior	Rosary School, Baroda	1990-2000
Dean, Superior	Juniorate, BTC, Pune	2000-2003
Director, Manager, Superior	St. Xavier's School, Surat	2003-2004
Rector	Papal Seminary, Pune	2004-2007
Coordinator	Alumni Association, Gujarat	1983-2004
Coordinator	Baroda District	1996-2000
Parish Priest	St. Xavier's Parish, Ahmedabad	2007
Superior	Gurjarvani	2007-2010
Rector	St. Xavier's College, Ahmedabad	2010-2014
Coordinator	Ahmedabad District	2011-2014
Manager	XICA, Ahmedabad	2012-2014
Rector	Sneh Jyoti, Sevasi	2014-2020
Animator	English Medium School, Anand	2020-2021
	Infirmery, Jeevan Darshan, Baroda	2021-2022

Thanks to Gujarat Jesuit Province



Rev Fr. Ornellas Coutinho SJ (Gujarat province) died at 3 pm on 27 October, 2022, at Vadodara. He was born on 6 August, 1942 in Mapusa, Bardez, Goa. He joined the Society of Jesus on 20 June 1961. He pronounced his first vows on 21 June 1963 at Vinayalaya, Mumbai. He did his philosophy (1964-66) and Theology (1970-73) at Jnana Deepa, Pune. From 1976 to 78 he served as Minister, De Nobili College. Most of his life he spent in the school as a teacher or principal. He was a well known musician and football coach. As a rector of Papal Seminary, Pune (1st June 2004 - 9th June 2007), he radiated a spirit of joy and enthusiasm. As an affable and joyful person, he was well-liked by the students and staff alike. He organized the Golden Jubilee of Papal Seminary's transfer to Pune (2005).



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