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Ecclesia de Trinitate
Ecclesial Foundations from Above

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Abstract

This paper addresses the foundations of the Church systematically as it originates in the Triune God's plan of salvation. The Church is an extension of the missions of the Son and Spirit in history. Analogies are invoked to help ground the nature and the mission of the of the Church. The paper further explores the implications of *Ecclesia de Trinitate* in light of Vatican II, the visible and invisible missions of the Son and the Spirit, the role of Mary and the multi-religious context.

Keywords

Church, Multi-religious, Trinity, Missions, Lonergan

A. Introduction

This paper offers an exploration of a post-Vatican II theology of the Church, *ad extra*. I take as my presupposition the unprecedented paradigm shift that occurred in the Church's self-understanding during Vatican II. As I have argued previously, I respectfully disagree with those who believe that the shift can be wholly captured by an ecclesiology of communion. In contrast, I have argued that *communio* reflects the nature of the Church *ad intra* arising out of Vatican II, and in turn I have argued for an ecclesiology that complements the latter but also supports and continues to advance the theology of the Church in its ecumenical and interreligious priorities. I have called this proposed *ecclesia ad extra* an ecclesiology of friendship.[1]

In this era, the question of mission is not only more complex than it was in previous ages, but it has greatly expanded. In his

[1] John D. Dadosky, 'Towards a Fundamental Re-Interpretation of Vatican II.' *Heythrop Journal*, 49 (September, 2008): 742–763.

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textbook on mission, Roger Schroeder captures the 'single and complex' dimensions of contemporary mission in the following six ways: 1) witness and proclamation, 2) liturgy, prayer, and contemplation, 3) justice, peace and stewardship of creation, 4) interreligious and secular dialogue, 5) inculturation, and 6) reconciliation.[2] Naturally these six aspects of mission are not easily separable into the categories *Ecclesia ad intra* and *ad extra* respectively. In this paper I wish to conceive an expansion of the notions of the missions of the Son and the Spirit first, and in a subsequent work, articulating how these two are related to the differentiation and expansion of the mission of the Church as Schroeder suggests in his various aspects of mission.

In the following paragraphs I will articulate an understanding of the foundations of the Church 'from above'—one that takes the Triune God as a starting point and one that is related to the notion of *Ecclesia de Trinitate*—the Church as an extension of the missions of Son and the Spirit acting in history for the salvation of all. My reflections are exploratory and open to further refinement, clarification and revision.

B. Ecclesia de Trinitate

Ecclesia de Trinitate speaks to the intimate relationship between the Triune God and the Church as the historical community of the followers of Jesus Christ. Henri de Lubac wisely distinguishes between the active and passive aspects of the word *ecclesia*. The Church is at once *the community called together* and *the community of the called together*.[3] The Triune God calls the community together in history to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, but at the same time the community *as gathered* is the common fellowship of believers. Among other things, this distinction in de Lubac enables us to further distinguish between the *nature* and *mission* of the Church—the nature of the Church pertains to the people gathered, and its mission is *to gather others*. At the risk of oversimplifying this subtle, profound and complex distinction, I would like to draw out two distinct Trinitarian analogies and apply them to the Church so as to ground the latter more deeply into mystery of the Triune God. It is my hope that this will prevent two ecclesial distortions, which I identified in previous work: *naïve ecclesial realism* and *ecclesial reification*. The

[2] Roger Schroeder, MM, *What is the Mission of the Church?* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008), pp. 112–127.

[3] Henri de Lubac, *The Splendor of the Church*, trans. Michael Mason (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1999), p. 103–4.

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former is the error of the empiricist attitude, the latter the error of the rationalist attitude.[4]

As an extension of the Triune God in history, the Church analogously has a passive and an active component. The passive component, as I have stated, would refer to the nature of the Church, its distinctive identity in history, a community analogous to the community between the three persons in the divine Godhead. Moreover, the Triune God chooses in its benevolence to extend this immanent community to the rest of the created order in the economy of salvation. The created order's relationship to the community of the Triune God can come only by way of the former's participation in it. The promise of this participation is made available through the historical events of the Incarnation, Death and Resurrection of Jesus. The Triune God's desire to extend its own loving fellowship to the whole of humanity provides an analogy for the mission of the Church. By extension, the mission of the Church from its inception is to be the principal explicit mediator in history of the Gospel message, to extend the fellowship of the Triune God to the rest of human history.

The second analogy concerns the nature of the immanent Trinity. Within the fellowship of the Triune God, there stand three distinct persons in one God. It is not a Tritheism of separate Gods, nor is it a modalism of one God with three manners of existing; rather it is three distinct persons in one Godhead. Moreover, there is a relationship of mutual indwelling between the persons of the Triune God. This *perichoresis* or *circumincession* refers to the mutual indwelling of the divine persons within each other.

Both the distinctness of the divine persons and their mutual indwelling provide an analogy for understanding the nature and the mission of the Church respectively. Just as there is a distinctness to each of the divine persons, in an analogous manner, there is a distinctiveness to the identity of the Church that is expressed in fundamental principles and recurrent structures believed to be entrusted to her *in jure divino*: the scriptures, the Creeds, the sacraments, and apostolic succession to name a few of the primary ones. These normative principles are integral to sustaining the community through the ages.

Just as there is mutual indwelling of the divine persons within one another, so we possess an analogy for understanding the mission of the Church. Her relations with others *ad extra* are to be guided by a principal of mutuality that is analogous to the mutual indwelling of the divine persons. This mutuality need not be a compromise of her mission nor of her identity, but rather one that is an authentic

[4] See John Dadosky, 'Who/What is/are the Church(es)?' *Heythrop Journal* 52/5 (2011): 785–801.

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imitation and participation in the divine community of the persons within the Triune God with one another.

This notion of mutuality as a principle to guide ecclesial relations *ad extra* is radically different from those of ages prior to Vatican II which tended to focus more on a one-way relationship than on a two-way relationship with the other. Nevertheless, the principle of mutuality is implicit in one of the most significant documents of the Church, *Gaudium et Spes*, as well as in other key places.[5] Vatican II reflects a maturing in the Church's self-understanding to such an extent that it can now mutually engage the other. In previous work, I have spoke of the Church's self-mediating and mutually self-mediating dimensions and the differentiation of these that comes to the fore with the documents of Vatican II. Thomas Merton demonstrates this principle of mutuality in the following comment: 'I think we have now reached a stage of religious maturity at which it may be possible for someone to remain perfectly faithful to a Christian or Western monastic commitment, and yet learn in depth from . . . a Buddhist or Hindu discipline and experience.'[6]

The mission of the Triune God extends its love to the created order, so to speak, as the loving arms of the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit take human history into its embrace. This mission is twofold: 1) to affirm the nobility of human existence via the Incarnation[7] and 2) to redeem humanity from sin and death through the Paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. Allow me to explore these two elements further.

First, I would like to highlight an interpretation of the baptism of Jesus that is obvious but often overlooked for its possible fecundity. In terms of the visible earthly missions of the Son and the Spirit, and I stress here the words *visible earthly mission*, the Son comes first as the Word or Wisdom incarnate. The Spirit joins the Word in the earthly mission at its beginning which is Jesus' baptism.[8] It is clear in the baptismal accounts that something very unique occurs when

[5] For examples from other documents of Vatican II, see John Dadosky, 'The Church and the Other: Mediation and Friendship in Post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Ecclesiology', *Pacifica* 18 (October, 2005), pp. 306–308.

[6] Thomas Merton, *Asian Journal* (NY: New Directions, 1973), 313.

[7] His philosophical problems aside, I am sympathetic to Duns Scotus when he speculates that the Word would have incarnated even if sin had not entered the created order. While to some extent it is frivolous to speculate what God could or would have done, and certainly there are no divine afterthoughts, still, it is important to keep in mind that part of the significance of the Incarnation is that God joins the human race—it is divine affirmation of God's creation.

[8] I am prescinding for the time being from speaking of the invisible missions, and so do not mean to contradict the profound insight of Fred Crowe's article on the topic of the missions of the Son and the Spirit in relation to the World's Religions— Frederick Crowe has developed this idea in his 'Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions,' in *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea* (Washington, D.C., CUA Press, 1989): 324–343.

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Jesus approaches John at the banks of the Jordan. It is a starting point, an inauguration, if you will, of the visible earthly mission of the Son. However, Jesus is not alone during his earthly mission. He is joined by the Holy Spirit at the point of the heavenly affirmation: 'This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased' (Matt. 13:17 NRSV). In Mark's gospel, following the baptism 'the Spirit immediately drove [Jesus] out into the wilderness' (Mk 1: 12 NRSV). I believe this suggests that the baptism represents the conjoining of the Son and the Spirit in their earthly mission together. This aspect of the mission will last for the duration of Jesus' earthly life.

The provocative nature of this interpretation comes to light with its significance for resolving some theological difficulties that have arisen due to recent biblical scholarship. Scholars and the faithful alike have been puzzled as to why Jesus would undergo a baptism for the forgiveness of sins when normative Christian claims historically affirm that Jesus, as God, cannot sin. In the interpretation I am exploring, the point of Jesus's baptism is not first and foremost for the forgiveness of sins (although it is quite plausible he is setting an imitative example for others to follow) but rather, it is about the inauguration of his earthly mission, conjoint with that of the Holy Spirit. In this way, there is a sense in which one is correct in saying that it is a baptism of the Holy Spirit, but in this case it represents the fusion and coordination of the *two visible earthly missions* of the Son and the Spirit.

While this provides an alternate interpretation to address the issue of Jesus' baptism, it also offers a challenge to the Church to rethink its baptismal theology. I will not go into that here, but it seems to me that the Church has historically emphasized the need for baptism in terms of sanctifying grace—to wash away the stain of original sin. This belief is owed in part to Augustine, who believed, contra the Pelagians, that unbaptized infants were damned.

However, given that the Church now recognizes that there is the possibility of sanctifying grace (i.e. an invisible or universal mission of the Spirit) outside of its explicit presence (*Lumen Gentium* II, 16), and given that it recognizes in the documents of Vatican II that membership and participation in the creed, life and liturgy of the Church is de facto not a guarantor of salvation (the guarantor being the habit of charity—the sign of the presence of sanctifying grace),[9] then there is a precedent for revisiting and clarifying the sacrament of baptism in its relationship to the mission and membership in the Church. I am not a sacramental theologian, and so I will leave it to others to engage that question further.

[9] See *Lumen Gentium* II, 14.

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C. The Incarnation and the Redemption

In recent years the work of René Girard has come into prominence for its recovery of the importance of the Gospel message for humanity. Some theologians, such as Robert Doran, Robert Daly, and Raymond Schwager, have interpreted this contribution in light of the theology of redemption.[10]

Girard's interpretation of the events of the death and resurrection of Jesus emphasize that Jesus represents the ultimate scapegoat, the effects of whose victimhood ripple down throughout the rest of history as the beginning of the end of violence.[11] The point I want to emphasize here is the significance of imitation and mimetic appropriation in the creation, fall and redemption narratives and their implications for understanding the mission of the Church.

Acquisitive mimesis propels us to envy things that other people possess, and this sets up a triangular dynamic between the two parties competing for the mutually desired object. Violence erupts after the mimetic build up and the parties take their stress out on an innocent, often defenseless, victim. More recently, however, Girard and others have sought to highlight the positive mimesis that is part and parcel of the imitation and participation in the life of the Triune God.

Imitation becomes one of the chief ways by which human beings learn to appropriate things. In the life of St. Ignatius, for example, we see his discernment between the life of chivalry and his emerging desire to be a knight for Christ when, while convalescing, he asks himself, 'What if I were to be like Francis? What if I were to be like Dominic?'

In the divine act of creation in the Genesis account, God creates human beings in God's own image and likeness. This is not to say that by creating human beings God creates 'little gods'. Rather, there is an element of imitativeness at the very inception of the creation of human beings. For example, when an artist creates an image of a lake, the artist 'imitates', that is, provides an interpretive image which *re*-presents or imitates the original lake which the artist depicts. Similarly, there is a sense in which by virtue of their creation, Adam and Eve imitate or reflect God, by the fact of the *imago Dei*, which reflects God's intelligence and goodness.

[10] Raymond Schwager, *Jesus and the Drama of Salvation* (New York: Crossroads, 1999); Robert Daly, S.J. *Sacrifice Unveiled: The True Meaning of Christian Sacrifice* (London: T&T Clark, 2009); Michael Kirwan, *Girard and Theology* (New York, T&T Clark, 2009); Robert M. Doran, 'The Non-violent Cross: Girard on Redemption,' *Theological Studies*, 71/1(2010): 46–61.

[11] René Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightening*, (tr.) J. G. Williams (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2001).

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Ironically, their act of rebellion in the Garden occurs out of an attempt to imitate God in the negative sense of the term; they succumb to the temptation to be 'like God', to possess the same knowledge as God—of good and evil. They succumb to a vertical mimetic appropriation, attempting to be more than their nature, to possess something that it is not in their nature to possess. This vertical mimetic appropriation (the attempt to be like God) has its consequences: the expulsion. The serpent has not exactly been transparent with Adam and Eve. While it is true they do achieve knowledge of good and evil, as the serpent promises, the knowledge they receive is part and parcel of a post-Edenic existence, their participation in a life wherein human beings confront the intermingling of good and evil in themselves and in the world around them.

In the next sequence of the Genesis account, the story of Cain and Abel, we see the original act of rebellion of the first parents erupt into the originating act of violence in which Cain kills his brother out of envy for God's preference for Abel's sacrifice. In their hermeneutics of Genesis, Girard and James Alison interpret these events as allegories for the originating acts of envy and violence in the created order. I have highlighted the need to incorporate the role of pride (vertical acquisitive mimesis) in such interpretations as well.[12] Vertical and Horizontal mimesis as manifested in pride and envy respectively are contagious, and the Genesis account of the Fall is an allegory for understanding the post-lapsarian historical and pervasive spread of this contagion in its sinful aspects of which *the ingrate* and *the brute* are its persistent legacy.

If we consider these allegories of the Fall and the originating spread of violence, we can glean some wisdom in the divine plan of salvation. Whereas in the Genesis account, human beings are created in God's image, in the Incarnation God assumes a full human nature. Among other things, this assumed humanity restores the integrity of the 'original' Adam and Eve, who in their attempt to 'be like gods' in the prideful sense, contradicted and denigrated the *imago Dei*, an image, to invoke the words of Yves Congar, 'whose likeness had faded'.[13] Consequently, there was needed a renewal of that image, a re-affirmation and restoration of the dignity of that image—a New Adam who would enter the created order through a New Eve. In the words of one ancient Church authority: 'God became [a human

[12] See John Dadosky, 'Woman Without Envy: Toward Re-conceiving the Immaculate Conception,' *Theological Studies*, 72/1 March (2011): 15–40; ''Naming the Demon': The 'Structure' of Evil in Lonergan and Girard.' *Irish Theological Quarterly*. 2010 75/4 (November): 355–72.

[13] Yves Congar, *This Church That I Love*, tr. Lucien Delafuente (Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1969), 23.

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being] to regenerate the image of [humanity] destroyed by sin, thus giving [them] back [their] original icon [image]'[14].

With this in mind, I want to make a point concerning the intelligibility of the method in the divine plan of salvation. In a previous work on Girard and Lonergan, I defined evil as a *mimicked distortion of the good* by arguing from the primordial first sin and its irruption into the mimetic rivalry between brothers in the Genesis account.

By contrast, I would argue that God's response in the divine plan of salvation to evil functions as a *mimicked RE-storation of the good*. That is, whereas in the Genesis account Eve is derived from the side of Adam, in the Incarnation Jesus as the New Adam is created through (and with the consent of) Mary, the New Eve. As a colleague of mine, Monty Williams, once suggested in a homily, 'Jesus has Mary's DNA.'

We are aware of the traditional interpretations of the incarnation of Jesus as re-creator and re-generator. Whereas in the Genesis account, God creates human beings in God's own image, in the mystery of the Incarnation the Word assumes a human nature—that to which Lonergan refers to as the substantial act or *secondary act of existence*.[15] In other words, the ultimate re-validation of human beings as created in God's image occurs in the incarnation of the Word as Jesus of Nazareth. To put this in less technical language, God so loves human beings that God becomes a human being in order to share more fully in every aspect of human life except sin. The full humanity of Jesus re-establishes and reaffirms the creation of human beings in God's image.

A Note on the Role of Mary in the Divine Plan of Salvation

The visible mission of the Holy Spirit is inextricably involved with the mission of the Son. It is the Spirit who descends upon Mary, implanting the seed of the Word. This is the basis of the spiritual tradition in the Church that interprets Mary as the spouse of the Holy Spirit.[16] In the divine wisdom of God's plan of salvation, Mary's 'yes' is the graced mimicked restoration to humanity's 'no' to God. God's respect for Mary's freedom means that it is with her fiat that Heaven's gates begin to open. Mary functions as an *anima ecclesiastica*, an ecclesial soul, speaking not only for the Church

[14] Alfredo Tradigo, *Icons and Saints of the Eastern Orthodox Church*, (tr.) Stephen Sartarelli (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Museum, 2006), 235; source not cited.

[15] Bernard Lonergan, *The Ontological and Psychological Constitution of Christ*, CWL, 7. F. E, Crowe and R. M. Doran. (eds); M. Shields (trans.). (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 147 ff.

[16] See Louis de Montfort, *True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*, F. Faber (tr.) (TAN Books and Publishers, Inc : 2007).

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in its potency but for all humanity in the promise of eschatological fulfillment.

Her role in the divine plan should not be equated with Jesus' role nor should it be excluded or diminished. Karl Barth once suggested the latter when he lightheartedly quipped to Von Balthasar that we can 'get along without her.' But Barth needs a mother too, and if he had realized the full theological implications of her fiat—that her 'yes' is inextricably bound up with God's 'yes' in the Incarnation—then he might not have been so flippant on the matter. In other words, Mary is the historical flash point for our cooperation in the divine plan of salvation. Through her, the Word, Wisdom incarnate, will walk the Earth as anticipated in the passage of Baruch (3:37). After his passion and resurrection, Mary's mission is transformed; now she must be mother of all.

In John's account, John and Mary remain at the foot of the cross, remaining with Jesus while all others have abandoned him. Mary has already been told that this sword will pierce her heart (Lk 2:35). As a mother watches the brutal torture and violent death of her son and the Beloved disciple watches the death of his close friend, the early Christians see something constitutive of the Church in this moment. Jesus entrusts John to his mother, and his mother to John. At this point, Mary's mission as Theotokos, God-bearer, is transformed into the adoptive mother of the 'little Christs' that John represents. At the same time, Mary receives a special place in the faith of the Christian; this is symbolized by John taking Mary into his home. There is also a sense that John and Mary have formed the first religious community. Just as the Egyptian monks will eventually seek spiritual martyrdom, their quest has already been prefigured by the spiritual martyrdom of Mary and John in their faithful witness to the crucified Christ. Subsequently, they not only establish a contemplative dimension in the Church, but one with a social dimension to be present to the crucified wherever the latter is to be found, especially in the marginalized or, the term I prefer, the Hidden.[17]

D. The Death, Resurrection and Redemption

I have spoken of the redemptive role of the Incarnation as a re-creation and reaffirmation of the dignity of human existence. It counters the distorted mimesis in the original act of rebellion 'to

[17] John Dadosky, 'The Official Church and the Church of Love in Balthasar's Reading of John: An Exploration in Post-Vatican II Ecclesiology.' *Studia Canonica*, 41 (2007), pp. 468–471.

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be like God' by offering a mimicked restoration by God who incarnates as the person of Jesus. But the bad seed of rebellion as it gives rise to mimetic rivalry, violence and the scapegoating of innocent victims needed to be addressed in the divine plan of redemption as well. This occurs in the earthly ministry of Jesus (conjointly with the Holy Spirit) as it culminates in the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus—the paschal sacrifice that reverses the distorted cycle of human rivalrous relations and violence.

There is a body of literature concerning the redemptive aspect of the death and resurrection in terms of Girardian hermeneutics. It is not necessary to go into detail here about them.[18] In short, Jesus' three year ministry of healing, teaching, prophecy, and preaching the Reign of God constantly runs up against the religious authorities of his day. These leaders are envious of Jesus' unofficial authority, his followers, his increasing fame, his miraculous power, and his witty retorts to skeptical inquirers (Matt. 27: 10).[19] Some of these leaders participate in a mimetic rivalry that in this case, instead of being unleashed on an innocent third party, is released upon Jesus himself. This culminates in the plotting against, the betrayal, trial, scourging, condemnation and death of Jesus.

For Girard and his interpreters, Jesus assumes the role of the innocent victim in order to reverse the violent cycle of mimetic envy and violence. The overcoming of this cycle, the vindication of the victim, occurs in the Resurrection. It also resides in a promise of the coming Reign of God, a Reign in which 'the last will be first' and one that is to be built on the rejected cornerstone.

In the biblical accounts of the post-resurrection appearances, Jesus returns to his disciples and beckons them to form a community. He promises to send them an advocate, the Holy Spirit, to assist them. The Holy Spirit descends upon them at Pentecost. This descent corresponds analogously to the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus at his baptism. Hence, just as the Holy Spirit unites with and inaugurates the visible mission of the earthly Jesus, Pentecost represents the Holy Spirit uniting with the community of Jesus' disciples and inaugurating their mission; they will in turn become the body of Christ. At Pentecost, the disciples immediately begin speaking in other languages. This signifies that the form of the Gospel message will be mediated through particular cultural expressions throughout the coming ages. The Spirit joins the community in their earthly

[18] Raymond Schwager, *Jesus and the Drama of Salvation* (New York: Crossroads, 1999); Robert Daly, S.J. *Sacrifice Unveiled: The True Meaning of Christian Sacrifice* (London: T&T Clark, 2009); Michael Kirwan, *Girard and Theology* (New York, T&T Clark, 2009); Robert M. Doran, 'The Non-violent Cross: Girard on Redemption,' *TS*, 71/1(2010): pp. 46–61;

[19] The passage reads: 'For he knew that it was out of envy that they had handed him over.' (NAB translation).

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mission until the *eschaton*, when the earthly visible mission of the Spirit re-converges with the culmination of Jesus' earthly mission in the Parousia.

Following the Pentecost, the context of persecution in early Christianity, although painful and violent, provided the opportunity for certain followers to conform to the life of Christ in an exemplary way. To be sure, not everyone is called to martyrdom (Origen never reconciled with the fact that his father was called to martyrdom and he was not), but every Christian reveres the martyrs and their special witness conforming to and imitating the sacrifice of Jesus. The dictum ascribed to Tertullian, 'The blood of the martyrs is the seeds of the Church,' is well known. Martyrdom becomes the highest example of the imitation of Christ, or in the language of Girard, of positive mimesis. Physical martyrdom is just one form; there is also a tradition of spiritual martyrdom, to which I alluded briefly in the previous section. There are those, many of them women, who conform their lives so intimately to Christ that they receive the stigmata. In such cases, it is almost as if the stigmata represent a divine seal of approval—*imitatio Christi*. Of these, St. Francis of Assisi and Catherine of Siena are perhaps the most famous.

Finally, we can find the principal models of physical and spiritual martyrdom in the New Testament. Peter and Paul undergo physical martyrdom; John and Mary undergo spiritual martyrdom as witnesses at the foot of the Cross. Of this much more could be said, but I now turn to the concluding topic of the expansion of the missions.

E. Expanding the Notion of the Missions

The Church, as we have stated, is the *Ecclesia de Trinitate*, the extension of the visible missions of the Son and the Spirit in history. These visible missions establish the Church in its authentic self-mediation to proclaim the truth of the Word and the love of the Spirit.

In this pluralistic age, the Church must defend its claims about the uniqueness of Jesus in the face of competing claims from other religions and by increasing secularized attitudes. This challenge includes the explication of the nature and mission of the Church in the wake of the unprecedented explicit recognition of the dual aspects of sanctifying grace in *Lumen Gentium*.

Vatican II was significant in many ways, but I would highlight the following as very significant, if not paradigmatic: the Church admitted the possibility of sanctifying grace outside of the explicit Church and affirmed that God wills the salvation of all. *Lumen Gentium* states:

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> Nor is God far distant from those who in shadows and images seek the unknown God, for it is He who gives to all [human beings] life and breath and all things, (127) and as Saviour wills that all . . . be saved (128). Those also can attain to salvation who . . . sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience (19∗). Nor does Divine Providence deny the helps necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life.[20]

Also, contrary to the misconception of previous ages reflected in the Latin tag, *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, the Church at Vatican II affirmed that the necessary condition for full communion in the Church lies in the habit of charity as the signifier of sanctifying grace. *Lumen Gentium* states that one 'is not saved, however, who, though part of the body of the Church, *does not persevere in charity*. [One] remains indeed in the bosom of the Church, but, as it were, only in a 'bodily' manner and not 'in [one's] heart' (12*).[21] The irony about these developments is that, while the Church never actually preached 'outside the Church no salvation', in fact, such a teaching has been the basis of excommunication in the past; it does officially acknowledge at Vatican II that it is possible, if I may put it glibly, 'inside the Church, some damnation.' Albeit, it is more important to focus on the wideness of God's mercy and to hope with Balthasar who follows Origen that 'all shall be saved.'

[20] 'But the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator. In the first place amongst these there are the Mohammedans, who, professing to hold the faith of Abraham, along with us adore the one and merciful God, who on the last day will judge mankind. Nor is God far distant from those who in shadows and images seek the unknown God, for it is He who gives to all men life and breath and all things,(127) and as Saviour wills that all men be saved.(128) Those also can attain to salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and moved by grace strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience.(19∗) Nor does Divine Providence deny the helps necessary for salvation to those who, without blame on their part, have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God and with His grace strive to live a good life. Whatever good or truth is found amongst them is looked upon by the Church as a preparation for the Gospel.(20∗) She knows that it is given by Him who enlightens all men so that they may finally have life' (*Lumen Gentium*, II, 16).

[21] They are fully incorporated in the society of the Church who, possessing *the Spirit of Christ* accept her entire system and all the means of salvation given to her, and are united with her as part of her visible bodily structure and through her with Christ, who rules her through the Supreme Pontiff and the bishops. *The bonds which bind [us] to the Church in a visible way are profession of faith, the sacraments, and ecclesiastical government and communion. [One]* is not saved, however, who, though part of the body of the Church, *does not persevere in charity*. [One] remains indeed in the bosom of the Church, but, as it were, only in a 'bodily' manner and not 'in [one's] heart.'(12*) (*Lumen Gentium*, II, 14; emphasis added).

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Theologically, the Church must engage the question of redemption and salvation in a radically new context. Describing this post-conciliar expansion of the notion of salvation, Congar states: 'Salvation is not merely the rescue of some survivors, but the consummation in God of all his visible creation, together with [humankind] who is the crowning and the immanent goal'.[22]

Harking back to the first section of this paper, that in loving each other the divine Persons wish to share this love with the entire created order—their love overflows, not only into the creation, but into an offer to the entire created order to share and participate in this supernatural reality. This offer is ordered explicitly in the dual missions of the Son and the Spirit towards the created order. The two are not competing missions, nor do they preclude each other—an aspect which may be further understood in part by the analogy of the mutual indwelling of the three divine persons.

In light of this mystery we can conceive of mission in terms of a fourfold distinction: 1) The visible missions of the Son and the Spirit that give birth to the Church and its mission in history, and 2) the invisible missions of the Son and the Spirit that are operative outside of the explicit Church.[23]

Doran hypothesizes about the universal mission of the Holy Spirit: God's offer of sanctifying grace to everyone. Following Lonergan, he argues that charity is the fruit of sanctifying grace and, by way of the psychological analogy, the habit of charity is a participation in the passive spiration of the Father and the Son breathing the Holy Spirit. The consequent created contingent term of this breathing constitutes the indwelling of the Holy Spirit inside and outside of the explicit Church. This comprises in part what Doran calls the universal mission of the Holy Spirit. The fruits of the Spirit outside of explicit Christianity can be discerned in the interreligious encounter as suggested by Paul (Gal. 5:22–23).

I use the language of visibility and invisibility of the missions to further clarify how the missions can be universally conceived as invisible (outside the explicit Church) and as visible (inside the Church grounding its nature and directing its mission). To be more precise, I would prefer to differentiate the universal mission of the Holy Spirit into its visible and invisible aspects. The visible mission of the Holy Spirit pertains to the one bound up with the earthly mission of the Son, the incarnate Word. This begins with the role of Holy Spirit in conceiving the Word in Mary, the conjoint earthly mission of the Spirit and the Son from the baptism up to the death

[22] Yves Congar, *This Church That I Love*, (tr.) Lucien Delafuente (Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1969), p. 44–5.

[23] I am not applying these distinctions as Aquinas does in Question 43, *Prima Pars* of the *Summa*, but the language is inspired by him.

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of Jesus, and to the Spirit's explicit re-emergence at Pentecost to inaugurate the mission of the Church and abide with her until the Parousia.

By contrast, the invisible mission of the Spirit, as Frederick Crowe has so ingeniously argued, was present prior to mission of the Son, preparing creation for the uttering of the Word.[24]

F. Concluding Comments

I would like to conclude by illustrating two anecdotes from Buddhism and finally to raise a question as to an invisible mission of the Son.

In 1998 in the Chancellor's Lecture at Regis College in Toronto, Louis Dupré made an interesting comparison between Buddhism and Christianity when he referred to the Buddha as the silence before the uttering of the Word. That phrase stuck with me as a possible analogy about how the visible mission of the Son can be related to invisible mission of the Spirit.

Second, while lecturing in South Korea in the summer of 2008, I had the opportunity to visit the ancient city of Gyeongju. There are ancient burial mounds, a major tourist attraction, parceled throughout the city. These mounds contain the bodies of previous generations of tribal leaders and dignitaries. The rituals surrounding these mounds pre-dated the arrival of Buddhism in the area. The indigenous Korean practices surrounding the mounds included live accompaniment, wherein the servants of the deceased would be literally buried alive with the remains of their dead masters. Eventually, as Buddhist proselytizing efforts came to dominate the area, the practice of live accompaniment ceased due to Buddhist influence. In pondering these historical facts in Gyeongju I thought that the claim Girard was making for Christianity—that it moves a society beyond the mythology of violent sacrifice—seemed to apply to Buddhism in this example as well. In other words, as Buddhism moved into this region of ancient Korea it elevated the society beyond what Lonergan would call mythic consciousness—the consciousness often imbued with myths of sacrifice that are either ritually, or in more violent contexts, literally acted out. Was I discerning the fruits of the Spirit as invisibly present in Buddhism?

Finally, if there is an invisible mission of the Spirit, in what way can we also speak of an invisible mission of the Son? While my thoughts on these are preliminary, it seems there are some grounds for positing such a mission. There is an aspect of the mission of the Son that is operative in the world and present to the marginalized in

[24] Crowe 'Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions.'

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a preferential yet invisible way. The words of the Gospel ascribed to Jesus seem to imply this: 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me' (Matt. 25:45, NRSV). Yet this principle of giving to the needy and service to the marginalized is inextricably linked to the visible mission of the Son, especially as the social mission of the Church functions as an extension of that visible mission. Still, just as Crowe argues that we need to discern the fruits of the Spirit in the dialogue with other religions,[25] it seems to follow that we must discern the presence of Christ, the one who has suffered, in all of those who suffer. Mary and John, the faithful disciples at the foot of the Cross, provide the image for this aspect of the Church to suffer with all of those who suffer.

Following the historic Paschal sacrifice, Jesus is present in a hidden and preferential way to the suffering and the rejected, such as those who dwell in the enormous slums of Nairobi, the abandoned Chinese infant rejected on the basis of her sex, and the Guatemalan victims of 'femicide.' These realities of our time direct us to the invisible mission of the Son and the further challenge of the Church to discern the presence of the Hidden in its social mission. For in discerning the latter are we not identifying the cornerstone upon which the advancing Reign of God is to be built?

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[25] Crowe, 'Son of God, Holy Spirit, and World Religions,' 335.

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