

booklets

NEW FRONTIERS, THE SAME COMMITMENT

**Current Challenges
in the Faith-Justice
Dialogue**



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IN THE FAITH-JUSTICE DIALOGUE

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PROLOGUE

«It all depends on the pain with which it is seen.»
MARIO BENEDETTI

After 35 years of labors, *Cristianisme i Justícia* has reached this 200th issue in its principal collection of bookletsⁱ. In the course of all these years, during which our world has undergone inconceivable changes, our intention has always been to journey along with all men and women of «good will» and to provide them with a hopeful narrative that nourishes their aspirations for a more just and more fraternal world.

A quick review of the open wounds we see in our world today certainly leaves us with a bittersweet sensation. There have been great advances in the fight against poverty, and the means now exist to eliminate hunger and many diseases, but there is still far too much suffering in the world. We should remember that every day some 10,000 children die of curable diseases and that more than 60 million people –the highest number since the Second World War– are fleeing from war and terror in search of a safe refuge, which they often fail to find.ⁱⁱ Inequality has become a severe affliction that is undermining our society: the world's 62 richest persons have increased their wealth by 44% over the last five years and now possess as much wealth as the poorer half of the world's population, whose wealth has decreased by 41%.ⁱⁱⁱ

Despite the hope inspired by newly emerging economic alternatives and the nearly global reawakening of political consciousness, we still feel bereft of an alternative narrative as we face a clear crisis of our liberation ideals. The narrow mindset which declares, «there is no alternative,» rides high on a globalizing dominance that forces everything into the Western (consumerist, predatory, and individualist) lifestyle as the only real possibility for the majority of humankind.

Financial power has taken hold of the political reins of our world. In the places where democracies exist, they have evolved toward simply procedural formalities. Even though we choose our representatives, they have no real control or influence over the future of our societies. At the same time, we see endless cases of political and economic corruption, shady economic agreements, fraudulent business practices, and tax evasion. All of these give rise to profound disillusionment among citizens.

The digital revolution has so reduced distances that the world has become effectively smaller. We can no longer ignore the fact that we live in a common world

where everything we do, each gesture we make, has a great repercussion on the lives of thousands of other persons. We are most definitely more interdependent. Despite this, the level of material welfare to which we aspire does not appear to be universalizable. The tendency toward exclusion is intrinsic to the system, leaving the lives of millions of human being in a precarious state.^{IV} We find it impossible to see any kindness in the face of a system which is essentially dominated by the impersonal forces of business and finance.

Society has become more sensitive to questions of ecology and environment, and it condemns discrimination by reason of sex, race, or religion. However, our reaction to injustice tends to be one of anxiety. We lack the real conviction needed to activate the energies needed to change direction. These energies can be found only through personal change and a firm commitment to a more serious, coherent life that is dedicated to helping the least and the last.

At the level of Church, after several wintry seasons we joyfully welcome the arrival of Francis with his winds of change. The Church is faced once again with the need for *aggiornamento*.^V As Pope Francis says, the Church should be a «field hospital» that heals wounds, not a rigid institution that produces greater exclusion by expelling people from her bosom because they fail to conform to the required standards of purity.

Our reality summons us to work on each new frontier that opens up before us; it cries out to us to humanize structures that are causing great suffering. If in the past we stressed the socioeconomic reasons for injustice in the world, today we want to broaden our horizon and analyze injustice from new perspectives. If in our 100th issue we conducted a review of the past, in this issue we want consider how we should open ourselves up to new challenges without forgetting the basic commitments that define us.

This booklet is also a clear reflection of the teamwork that characterizes our center. It arose from an initial consultation carried out with all the volunteer scholars of CJ. More than 30 persons responded to a questionnaire in which we set out the challenges which faith presents to justice in our days, as well as those which justice presents to faith. The responses gave rise to a preliminary outline, which was subsequently filled in by the persons who authored the various pieces in this booklet.

The result is a reflection that seeks to present new debates –though, for reasons of space, not all the ones we would like to include– and also to remind us of those imponderable elements that should not be forgotten in any updating of the concept of justice. The present book strives to be not only a useful guide for our future reflection within CJ but also an invitation to collaborate, which we extend to all those persons who desire to engage earnestly in the dialogue about faith and the struggle for a more just world.

Xavier Casanovas
Director of Cristianisme i Justícia

NEW DEBATES THAT UPDATE THE CLASSICAL CONCEPT OF JUSTICE

Since the very first booklet published by *Cristianisme i Justicia*, the purpose of these reflections has been to engage faith and justice in dialogue so that they can provide one with another mutual nourishment. In the last few decades, however, the concept of justice, originally understood only as socioeconomic justice, has been enriched with new dimensions. It is not a matter of diluting the concept of justice but of incorporating into the faith-justice debate realities that had been mistakenly marginalized: cultural diversity, the perspective of gender, environmental justice, etc. Behind each of these dimensions we find portions of suffering humanity that have until now not been taken sufficiently into account.

1. IN THE FACE OF SERIOUS SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS, THE URGENT NEED FOR A PLANETARY ETHIC

Oscar Mateos

Our globalized world and its consumerist model are like a huge trans-Atlantic liner heading straight for disaster. Such a statement is neither dystopian nor exaggerated: our ecological footprint has reached extraordinary dimensions, to the point where the planet is no longer capable of regenerating a large part of what we consume. Ex-

perts warn that if we maintain the present rate of consumption, by the year 2050 we will need the equivalent of at least three earth-sized planets to provide for our needs and dispose of our waste. The consequences of this economic model are well known by all: global warming, climatic change, environmental refugees, etc.

The almost anecdotal treatment which climatic change was receiving just a few years ago has been replaced by a great sense of urgency in the face of this serious threat.¹ Environmental justice has thus become an intrinsic, inescapable part of the broader debate on justice in the 21st century. From great international organizations to the principal world leaders, from multinational corporations to leading scientists, almost everybody today recognizes what is undeniable and what has been repeatedly denounced by some persons for years now: the current model of Western life is not universalizable. The rapid economic growth of the so-called emergent countries, following the capitalist model of development, has not been good news, for it has become evident that development is something more than economic growth and that our present progress has been achieved at the expense of environmental degradation and the consolidation of unsustainable consumption. It was only when hundreds of millions of people in the global South (especially in China and India) embraced this model, which previously had been available to only 15% of the planet's population, that we realized that progress and development need to be defined by criteria and values other than merely economic wealth and the capacity to consume.

We are heading down what appears to be a dead-dead street; we are at a critical crossroads; we are faced with a countdown to which humankind must respond with great urgency and diligence. «Climate change is a global problem with grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political, and for the distribution of goods. It rep-

resents one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day» (*Laudato Si'*, no. 25). «A cry arising from humanity and from the Earth itself, one that must be heard by the international community,» was the exhortation Francis addressed to the Paris Conference on Climate Change (COP21), held in December 2015. There is no doubt that COP21 was a first step in broadcasting the urgency of the present situation, but the conference also once again made manifest the lack of instruments and alternatives for transcending the current model of production, consumption, and development. The flywheel of capitalism needs to keep spinning... In the words of Pere Casaldàliga: «Who will block their radios, and how and when will they do it?»

1.1. Regulating from above: a terrestrial community with a common destiny

The situation is complex. There exist instruments and initiatives that deal with some of the collateral effects of environmental devastation. These constitute a form of «fragmented governance,» but we are still lacking binding instruments that establish a truly global form of governance. This situation highlights one of the great dilemmas of this 21st century: while our problems have been globalized, our mechanism for resolving them have remained trapped in the nation-state framework.

This disquieting context offers us at least one bit of good news: there seems to exist a growing awareness that the ecological question is not something fictitious or theoretical; it does not pro-

ceed from a small group of scientists but arises from an increasing sensation that we are dealing with a problem of great moment. Even the World Economic Forum, which meets annually in Davos, and large intelligence networks like the CIA include this matter in their agendas, even calling it the principal threat to world security. This increased consciousness is something positive –provided it is not too late.

However that may be, the lack of a planetary ethics and the dominance of a highly individualistic social, economic, and cultural model make it difficult to confront the problem by seeking a global solution.

As is stated in the prologue of the Letter of the Earth, «we are one single human family and one single terrestrial community with a common destiny.» This destiny involves not only present-day humans but also other species and the generations that will come after us. A sense of interdependence is today much more important that it has been in any other historical moment: we are interdependent with the biosphere, and we are interdependent with future generations.

We must not blunt in ourselves this sense of urgency. We need a great global pact which goes beyond the paradigm of national security and embraces the paradigm of planetary security. We need a pact which involves, commits, and obliges everyone (individuals, nations, organizations, businesses,...) to produce, consume, and live on the planet in a way that guarantees the future of all. Such global governance is difficult and almost unimaginable in a context where national and private interests take priority over the common

good, but it has to become a reality if we want the planet to continue to support human life.

1.2. Overwhelming from below: toward a civilization of shared frugality and poverty

Besides regulating this model from above, we need a style of life that is able to spread and to overwhelm the system from below, by promoting cultural transformation and by repoliticizing and reeducating our consciences and our habits. As Jorge Riechmann advises, we need to replace a «culture of hubris with a culture of moderation.»

Overwhelming capitalism from below requires restoring power to politics and applying a model of civilization based on shared frugality and poverty. There are many grassroots initiatives that work for change by networking in ways that are much more democratic and participatory than traditional politics. Fresh initiatives are emerging that make people aware that another social and cultural model is needed.

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This cultural model should also be overwhelmed as regards the identity it has constructed around consumption,

understanding consumption as the type of social relationship that has historically generated social stratification and hierarchy. Everybody consumes, but not everybody consumes well. Moving beyond the political, governmental dimension, we need to deconstruct this cultural dimension in order to meet the challenge of avoiding homogenization. Encouraging dialogue among civilizations and recovering the practices and wisdom of the planet's diverse cultures are important challenges that need to be undertaken.

Such are the challenges before us. As Francis says in his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, we are more conscious than ever of the current diagnosis, the alternatives available to us, and our responsibility for the lives of future generations. But now the countdown has begun; we can wait no longer. A model based on frugality and poverty is not only desirable but is possible and necessary. And it can be enabled and reinforced through a spirituality which includes interreligious and intercultural dialogue.

2. JUSTICE, EQUALITY, AND THE RIGHT TO BE DIFFERENT

Joan Carrera

Since behind every theory of justice we find an ethical and anthropological model that gives priority to certain definite values, the viewpoint of Christian anthropology should allow us to feel closer to one ethico-anthropological model than to another.

While focusing on the root concept of justice, from which flow the second-generation social rights, we must also include other aspects, which allow for a complex theory of justice that takes into account the present reality and responds to the complexity of modern-day society.

One plausible contribution from both the Christian tradition and socialism has been the notion of equality, which naturally inspires us to be concerned about persons who may be deprived of the ability to develop their

full potential because they lack certain social rights. At first, the ability to exercise these social rights depended on the charity extended to disadvantaged persons. Later on, it was recognized that these basic rights are inherent in all persons, so that obligations are imposed on the state and society to guarantee their free exercise.

When in some societies these rights gradually became consolidated, they produced freedoms that were no longer the exclusive patrimony of the social classes that possessed the effective means for exercising them. But people soon realized that different accents had to be incorporated into the notion of justice so that not everything was reduced to the question of economic equality. It must be said that this broadening of the notion of justice was

not always viewed positively by social and political movements. In fact, some movements were at times opposed to such broadening.

2.1. From inequality to the acknowledgement of differences

The central point of the debate concerns our definition of the ways in which we are equal and of the differences that are acceptable. At the same time, we need to harmonize social and economic equality with the right to have cultural differences acknowledged. These two factors have often been presented as opposed to one another and difficult to bring together, the assumption being that economic growth implies the loss of a more tribal identity.

True justice requires that we consider the different types of aid needed by different collectives

We can affirm that the right to have differences acknowledged, like the right to equality, has a universal foundation: everyone has a right to be recognized in his or her unique identity.² When we place the accent on equality, we do so on the premise that *everybody* has an identical package of universal rights. On the other hand, when we place the accent on the acknowledgement of differences, what we are doing is recognizing that *everybody* has the right to have his or her identity acknowledged.

Differentiation has been frequently ignored, submerged, or assimilated in favor of a mainstream or dominant identity.³

In a society as complex as ours, true justice requires that we consider the different types of aid needed by different collectives. In other words, we would not be just if we were to apply the same treatment to everyone without taking differences into account. Thus, distributive justice—or rather, redistributive justice—requires differentiated policies of redistribution.

2.2. From *solely* socioeconomic injustice to justice that is *also* cultural

In contemporary society we see evidence that economic injustice and symbolic or cultural injustice are interrelated, even though many persons tend to sacrifice one or the other of these aspects when they present their solutions for injustices. There are therefore two types of injustice.

The first type of injustice is socioeconomic, which is rooted in the very structure of our society: exploitation of labor, low wages, job insecurity, lack of health coverage, etc. The second type of injustice is symbolic or cultural; it is perhaps not so evident at first, but it is just as devastating as socioeconomic injustice or even more so. A clear example of this type of injustice would be cultural domination, that is, subjecting people to models of interpretation and communication that are associated with a foreign culture and are therefore strange to them. Another example would be the failure to acknowledge differences, which makes

people invisible in terms of the dominant models of interpretation, communication, and representation. Still another would be the lack of respect evident in stereotypes which consistently despise and devalue people and yet are often found in public cultural representations or everyday interactions.

Both socioeconomic injustice and symbolic injustice have become widespread in our society. Solutions for the former require socioeconomic changes while solutions for the latter require cultural changes. For some authors, the liberal solutions provided by the welfare state and multiculturalism (understood more as a cultural mosaic with a common juridical framework) are superficial solutions that may even have negative consequences in the long run. In the case of the welfare state, it is true that it works to improve economic and political redistribution, but it does not really confront socioeconomic injustice since it leaves intact the very structures that are at the base of this injustice. The same can be said of the multiculturalist solutions: they assume a superficial mutual respect among already existing identities, but they do not go deeper or try to change their contents.

2.3. From basic equality to the right to be different (without disturbing equality)

The most radical solution involves carrying out a profound restructuring of both the relations of production and the relations of acknowledgement. In the sphere of identity, this means a certain deconstruction of identities in order to generate a new structuring which

would increase the self-esteem of all members of the society, whoever they be or wherever they come from. People have to appreciate the identities of others on the basis of their own identity, thus making the society into a dynamic mosaic in which the different identities truly feel the need for mutual relationships with one another. A very good example can be found in the matter of gender equality, which represents both the aspiration for economic justice and the aspiration for acknowledgement of the differences denied by sexism. It is impossible to satisfy one aspect while sacrificing the other. The ideal solution requires not only profound restructuring in the economic sphere but also deconstruction of identity.

This more complex notion of equality obliges us to broaden the liberal vision of the «citizen» (an individual with rights) and move toward a more communitarian vision, one in which the citizen is a member of a concrete community with a concrete vision of the world. Acknowledgement has to come for a specific cultural identity, for this is essential for the development of individuals as social beings.

Equality understood in this complex way recognizes that men and women need a community context in order to reach their full psychological development and to be able to relate to others without complexes or pathologies. This context is basically a culture in the widest sense of the term. This communitarian sphere is where our duties (the forces that bind us to others) most spontaneously arise. It is this cultural context, therefore, that makes it possible for us to learn to respect the identities of other persons. It is impor-

tant that the inclusion of the right to be different in the individual and the collective spheres be founded on a notion of basic equality. The right to cultural difference cannot violate the aspiration to basic equality, especially in the political and socioeconomic sphere.

2.4. Toward greater respect and acknowledgement of cultural differences

Identity and the cultural dimension are constitutive components of the human being. This is true even though entire peoples and cultures have been exterminated in the name of freedom and equality. Indeed, the ideal of «universal freedom and equality» has some-

times been used for the sole purpose of imposing a particular culture or ideology on others. We must move beyond this perspective with the help of more complex conceptions which allow us to include respect for difference within the notion of equality and to find a middle path between an egalitarian conception that is homogenizing and relapse into ethnocentric norms.

To be sure, that path is not easy to find; it requires continual discernment. We need to discern between 1) the affirmation that one's own traditional culture deserves acknowledgement and 2) the recognition that every culture needs interior purification and revitalization in order to surpass those values and practices in it that may be considered inhumane.

3. AGAINST FEMINICIDE, THE CULTURAL REVOLT

Sonia Herrera

Concepción Arenal used to say that «society cannot in justice forbid half the human race the honest exercise of their faculties.» That is precisely what we are speaking about when we address the issue of gender inequality, one of the most flagrant injustices of all time. It is what Ivone Gebara would call a «radical evil» that has oppressed half of humankind for thousands of years.

Traditionally we women have been described as «the other»: we are the particular, the strange, the anecdotal variant of the universalizable model of the white, western, affluent, heterosexual male, whose identity should ap-

parently be the paradigm for all human beings. Even though we women are the majority, we have been constantly demeaned; we have been treated as a collectivity with no respect paid to our rights, our demands, or our needs.

The inequalities we experience as women are as manifold and diverse as the forms of violence we suffer for being women. We experience discrimination and violence in different spheres, such as the worlds of work, justice, politics, the environment, sexuality, culture, health, and social relations. That is why it important to approach these spheres from a perspective of gender

—which is feminist, of course— and also from an intersectional perspective, in order to make visible the links between gender discrimination and other types of discrimination, based for example on social class, ethnicity, race, religion, age, or sexual orientation.

3.1. From the tip of the iceberg to the multiple forms of violence

The forms of violence that are exercised against our bodies and our lives are of many kinds. Years ago Amnesty International designed and published a tool that has served to reveal that diversity and to treat the phenomenon of macho violence in a more complex way. The tool is called the Iceberg of Gender Violence.

When we speak of gender violence, the first things that come to mind are the physical beatings and the feminicides, which are simply the tip of the iceberg. Then we think of the sexual violence, the threats, the insults —but even those assaults represent only a part of the problem, the most visible part. Below the tip we find all kinds of more or less subtle, hidden forms of violence: contempt, control, symbolic violence in the media, systematic disregard, street harassment, sexual division of labor, etc. These types of violence form the perfect breeding ground for rendering the most baneful consequences of patriarchal culture something «normal» and socially acceptable.

The dramatist Humberto Robles captured the feminicides in Ciudad Juárez in the phrase, «Female body: danger of death.» Reality makes it clear to us that this is the truth. In

Spain 1,083 women have been killed by their partners or ex-partners just since 1999.⁴ But official statistics do not take into account all those gender-motivated murders of women that were committed by aggressors who had no intimate relationship with the victim, because Spanish legislation has still not incorporated the much broader, more inclusive concept of «feminicide» into its codes.

3.2. From the evidence to the deconstruction

Femicide is without a doubt a global phenomenon with nuances specific to the context of each country. Every year it takes the lives of some 65,000 women around the world, according to data of the United Nations.⁵

Besides this deprivation of life itself, there is much more evidence demonstrating the situation of discrimination that we women face on a daily basis:

- Some 35% of women in the world have suffered physical and/or sexual violence at the hands of their partner, or sexual violence at the hands of a non-partner. In some places the percentage can reach 70%.
- Some 98% of the persons exploited sexually are women. They total 4.5 million around the world.
- Every year two million girls are submitted to genital cutting, these being added to the 100 million women who have been genitally mutilated in the past.
- Some 700 million women around the world were married before they were 18 years old. Of these

250 million were married before they were 15.

- In the European Union between 40 and 50% of women have suffered sexual harassment, physical contact, or unwanted sexual insinuations in their workplaces.
- Some 99% of farmland on the planet belong to men, even though women produce 70% of the basic foodstuffs.
- Two-thirds of the illiterate persons in the world are women and girls.
- Although women make up 65% of persons with degrees in Spain, they represent only 45% of the labor market.
- Seven of every ten women have suffered some type of street harassment.
- In Spain, the difference in salaries between men and women is 19.3% (three percentage points above the European average).
- Some 84% of the parliamentarians in the world are men, even though women represent more than half the electorate.
- In secondary-school textbooks women are the great absentees: they are represented in only 7.5% of them.
- Only 10% of the films we see have women as protagonists.

We could keep piling up figures that reveal that Victoria Camps was perhaps much too optimistic when she stated that the 21st century would be the «century of women.» We must confront many challenges before «the whole social order perceives that it is just for us women to have half of everything» because of equality of

rights, as the philosopher Amelia Valcárcel has argued. To reach that point, the greatest challenge lies in incorporating the perspective of gender in all fields of knowledge, in all human activities (including the «faith-justice» commitment), and in the deconstruction of the hegemonic discourse, which continues to be principally androcentric.

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This deconstruction has to do with our personal identity; it forces us to question how the patriarchy shapes us as persons; it makes us think about the role played in our lives by different socializing factors, such as our education, the books we've read, the movies we've seen, our intimate friendships, etc. That whole process requires us to dethrone our idols and rid ourselves of certainties so that we can be filled with doubts and view ourselves from other perspectives.

The task will not be easy for it requires us to confront, at a personal and local level, cultural symbols and dominant epistemological models that are very deeply rooted. As Sayak Valencia argues, however, the problems and the forms of resistance and resilience must nowadays be viewed in two dimensions: we need to reflect on them

and act up on them in both their local and their global dimensions (abridged as «glocal»).

3.3. Toward a Church of women and for women

Religions and religious institutions have an important role to play in this «glocal» way of acting. We are aware that the Catholic Church has in the course of history, either by action or omission, discriminated against women and violated their rights consistently. The Church has adopted the same patriarchal discourse that, even from the times of Plato and Aristotle, proclaimed women to be inferior to men. In doing so, the Church betrayed its own tradition, which unequivocally affirms that «there is no longer male or female because all of you are one in Christ Jesus» (Gal 3,28). We know that the official theology has still not resolved many questions related to the body, sexuality, and reproduction. We know also that the church hierarchy has maintained –and still maintains– a complicit and hurtful silence regarding violence against women and continues to look the other way.

We are well aware of that, but we need to open our doors and windows because, as Higinio Alas wrote in 1983, «there is no resurrection without insurrection against evil.» If already in the 3rd century Saint Hippolytus of Rome was calling Mary Magdalene the «apostle to the apostles,» and if we women also are the «people of God,» then we should make good use of the word and reclaim the «half of everything» that is owed us, including in matters of our faith. We can ground this claim by studying the contributions that have been made to this transformation by feminist movements as well as by liberation theology, feminist theology, and other critical theologies.

A social reality becomes a social problem when people become conscious of it. In all justice, the Church can –and should– contribute to making the incontestable reality of gender inequality plainly visible, it should defend the subjectivity of women, and it should promote universal respect for the dignity of women. Ending the silence will certainly be a first stop and a prophetic sign, and it may help to keep Victoria Camps's dream for this century from being a barren hope.

4. COMPASSION, CARING, MERCY

Lucía Ramón

Caring is an indispensable dimension of justice. Eco-feminist thought and practice and various social movements urge us to rethink economics, politics,

subjectivity, and social relations in terms of caring. In this way we will help to reverse the crisis of environment and civilization in which we are

immersed. We must broaden our work for justice by drawing on the contributions of the social struggles for *caringness*,⁶ as well as on our own experiences of caring and being cared for.

The idea of *caringness* expresses an alternative stance that goes beyond the traditional concept of *citizenship*, a term which gives markets a central place and imposes an impossible model of atomized autonomy; such a model excludes not only persons working outside the market sphere but nature itself. *Caringness* is opposed to this logic which devalues and obscures the processes that make life possible and sustain us when we are fragile and dependent. In contrast to this logic which masks our constitutive interdependence and vulnerability, *caringness* places caring for life at the center of economics, politics, social analysis, and both personal and community life.

In this new perspective, every person without exception forms part of a broad horizontal network of caring. This affirmation of *caringness* requires us to struggle against relations of domination in which only some persons are caring and others are cared for. Our goal must be mutual caring, without hierarchy and without privilege, and it must include care for the earth, our home.⁷

The *caringness* places caring for life at the center of economics, politics, social analysis, and both personal and community life

4.1. From invisibility to the revolution of caring

We propose a revolution of caring as an alternative to the growing commercialization; we want caring to be universalized instead of being *feminized* and made invisible. That is to say, everyone (both men and women and the public authorities as well) should accept that caring is a shared human responsibility and a political question of vital importance. If we want a society and culture that is truly human and economically sustainable, if we truly respect the dignity of the most vulnerable persons, and if realize the urgent need to care for our common home, then we cannot confine the question of caring to the exclusively private spheres of the personal or the familial or the informal economy, nor can we make caring the exclusive responsibility of women, as if they were «by nature» more responsible for caring for life than men are.⁸

4.2. From a «judgmental» justice to a justice rooted in mercy

This vision, which proclaims the centrality of caring, emerges from the heart of the Gospel as Good News. At the center of the Judeo-Christian tradition and our faith is the God who is revealed in history as creative, generous, compassionate, tender, and liberating Love. God is just and loves justice, but any justice that is not rooted in mercy ends up becoming «judgmental.» That is why those who pray the psalms, aware of the limitations deriving from their own sins, invoke the just God but trust in his mercy, for it is God's mer-

cy that transforms God's justice into grace and salvation. But how does the biblical tradition understand love? We must draw on theology and experience to delve deeply into this question and so develop a truly Christian ethic and praxis of caring as an essential dimension in the struggle for justice.

In the Bible Yahweh reveals himself as unfathomable mercy. The divine *hesed* (mercy) reveals itself in palpable actions and concrete acts of kindness, but at the same time it expresses something more than just activity. It is an interior quality that is manifested as loving benevolence toward the other; it is generous donation of self that surpasses the limits of justice; its culmination is forgiveness; and it is a bountiful fount of contemplative joy and delight. Divine *hesed* is an invitation to belong to a community of life and dedicated love—the Covenant—which does not neglect the basic needs of its most vulnerable members, for without their well-being and flourishing there is no salvation.

In an oracle of the prophet Hosea, Yahweh complains to the priests because they are depriving the people of knowledge of God: they are not instructing the people in *hesed* (loyalty, mercy, goodness) and in *emeth* (fidelity, truth). A lack of such loyalty and knowledge of God leads human beings, who are created by love and for love, into a situation in which they become wolves to one another: «There is no faithfulness or loyalty, and no knowledge of God in the land. Swearing, lying, and murder, and stealing and adultery break out, bloodshed follows bloodshed. Therefore the land mourns, and who live in it languish» (Hosea 4,1-3).

It is precisely here that we discover the profound connection between the wrath of God and the mercy of God, for God's wrath is nothing else but his ethical indignation at the crushing of the poor. Yahweh is angry because the people are unfaithful to their commitment to love: «Your *hesed* is like a morning mist, like dew that disappears at dawn» (Hosea 6,4). God is angry at the people's hardness of heart and their refusal to do what is most important: «mercy rather than sacrifices; knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings» (Hosea 6,6). «Render true judgments; show kindness and mercy to one another; do not oppress the orphan, the widow, the alien, or the poor; do not devise evil in your hearts against one another» (Zech 7,9-10).

4.3. From a judging God to a loving God

Love is the very image of God in us. As the Cuban poet says, «Only love gains what will last; only love makes clay into a miracle.» As Christians we are called to live and grow in Love and to be deeply rooted in it. This is the distinctive sign of Christians and their basic way of life. Following Jesus means loving as he loved: «This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you» (John 15,12ff.).

Knowledge of God and his salvation is available only to those who love freely, liberated from all fear. Such love is not born of fear and submission; it arises from the experience of profound friendship, from being loved unconditionally, and from realizing that one is in the hands of Love. Knowledge of

God and his salvation is available only to those who express an incarnate love that begets brotherhood and *sisterhood* and that attends to the needs of the least and the last. «If some say that they love God while they hate their brothers and sisters, then they lie. For if they do not love those whom they see, they cannot love God, whom they do not see» (cf. 1 John 4,7-21). «If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this, to care for orphans and widows in their distress» (James 1,26-27).

4.4. Recovering and renewing a spirituality of caring

Finally, we are convinced that compassion and mercy provide vital nourishment for the struggle on behalf of justice. If well understood, spiritual education in compassion and caring for self is fundamental for a person's development and for the mobilization and perseverance needed in social

struggles. We cannot live without loving, but neither can we live without being loved. How can we truly love our neighbor if we do not know how to love ourselves?

Care of oneself, which was an important element in ancient Christian spirituality, is a value that needs to be recovered and renewed, for it can remedy a spirituality which conceives of work for justice in excessively ascetical and sacrificial terms. Such a spirituality, focused on short-term activism, has little awareness of the profound needs of human beings and their essential vulnerability; it is in need of an incarnate, holistic perspective. True care of self integrates the emotions into our intellectual, physical, and psychological development; it integrates the communal with our ability to savor, enjoy, and celebrate the basic pleasures of life in harmony with the earth –and to do so without consumerist voracity. This means discovering and accepting limits and resisting the predatory logic of a capitalism which places the accumulation of capital at the center of life and society.

THE IMPONDERABLES IN THE PRESENT DEBATE ON FAITH AND JUSTICE

This booklet is also a manifesto. It is concerned with renewal of our commitment to the least and the last. It is an expression of our sense of fidelity, responsibility, and mission. Today there is a lot of talk about «red lines.» Here, in these pages, we prefer to speak of imponderables, the things that have always been our reason for being and our constant concern. These are a way of being in the world, a clear-eyed spirituality, and a critical mysticism, even when such mysticism is alienating and disquieting.

5. INVESTING THE NEW FACE OF THE POOR WITH CENTRALITY AND AUTHORITY

F. Javier Vitoria

In recent decades the world has changed in many ways for the better. New realities and perspectives have been incorporated into our analysis of faith and justice. Despite these positive changes, however, one reality still remains that cries out to heaven: the existence of countless millions of impoverished human beings. Without being accused of catastrophic thinking, we can affirm that Auschwitz has

become the parable of our world, as Etty Hillesum foresaw years ago, or that «the world is a concentration camp,» as Giorgio Agamben claims today.

5.1. From a first-magnitude challenge to centrality

This reality is a major fact of life whose centrality in the present and in

the future is something that cannot be ignored. If it were to become a peripheral matter, many of our labors and reflections around faith and justice would become meaningless and would reasonably be considered cynical. On the one hand, the suffering, injustice, and meaninglessness that characterize the lives of the poor constitute a first-magnitude challenge for our way of life and for our reflection about our faith in God's salvation that has taken place in Jesus Christ and his Spirit. On the other hand, this demand for centrality does not arise from either a moral imperative or an academic requirement. Rather, the centrality of the poor is due to the revelation of divine authority that they provide for Christian tradition and Church institutions.⁹ The God of Jesus Christ has made the poor his «vicars» in the world (cf. Matt 25,31-45), and he has deposited in them «the immense weight of eternal glory» (cf. 2 Cor 4,16).

Considered in the light of the faith-justice ideal, our «option for the poor» is a theological category more than a cultural, sociological, political, or philosophical one. This option is implicit in our christological faith in the crucified God who became poor for our sake in order to enrich us with his poverty (cf. EG 198). We therefore speak of the Christian God in our times with fear and trembling and with «the inaudible sighs of those who no longer hope for anything from anybody» (Jaime Gil de Biedma). How can we not speak of God if we have heard in those sighs the weeping of God as he beholds the poor crying out in desperation? As Gustavo Gutiérrez has written, «If we view reality from the world of inhuman insignificance and exclu-

sion in which the poor live, we cannot fail to perceive that the proclamation of the Good News is a message which liberates and humanizes and which therefore issues a demand for the practice of justice as a response to the gift of the Kingdom.»

5.2. From the centrality of the poorest to the option for the poorest

This centrality of the poorest, which takes on substance in the «option for the poor,» indicates two tasks for the future: redefining the historical face of the poor and being the voice of those who have no voice.

5.2.1. Redefining the historical face of the poor

There have always been poor people, but their historical face and their biographical and human characteristics keep changing. At the present time the black holes of globalization are leaving many people on the margins of the system, even apart from the traditional borders that separate the North from the South. Massive numbers of the world's people are finding themselves excluded and marginalized: without work, without hope, without escape. They are no longer victims of exploitation and oppression; they are now victims of the «throwaway» culture. Their exclusion deeply affects their sense of belong to the society in which they live. They no longer just powerless, living at the bottom or on the edges; they are now *outside*. The poorest people have gone from being «exploited» to being «dis-

carded»; they have become «disposable population» (cf EG 53). And among these poorest of people, we must know how to identify and attend to those who are doubly excluded because they are women, or belong to a cultural minority, or profess persecuted religious identities, or for whatever reason.

5.2.2. Being the voice of those who have no voice

It is vital to amplify the cries of the poor, which are the voice of God in our society. It must be made as clear as the noonday sun that nobody –no person and no power of any sort, whether economic, political, religious, or criminal– has the right to decide who lives and who dies in our society, or what lives are worthy of being wept over and which are not (Judith Butler). From the European Christian church perspective, the faith-justice dialogue should take responsibility for being the voice of the poor. It should organically link the discourse of those impoverished by history (the poor, the discarded, the disposable,...) to the discourse of those impoverished by choice (the poor with spirit, as Ignacio Ellacuría calls them).

5.3. From orthodoxy and orthopathy to orthopraxis

There is an unavoidable need to give the histories and narratives of the poor priority over our own discourses. In this way they will become vehicles not only of the orthodoxy and orthopraxis of the faith-justice ideal but also of the orthopathy that helps us to resist and defeat the globalized indifference

of societies whose citizens refuse to see the suffering of those who are excluded.

The divine utopia
of fraternity has real validity
in our world

At this historical moment, when political actors capable of transforming the system's order are weakened or non-existent, the narratives of empowerment of the poor are very important. One good example of this is the campaign to help those affected by unpayable mortgages. Histories of this sort describe the ways in which the very poor become political subjects capable of confronting the financial system and weakening it by causing fissures within it. By counteracting the noxious patterns of neoliberalism, such experiences of social integration and therapy provide arguments for a new political narrative that helps us to understand why they have ended up in their present situation. These histories bolster our faith that the divine utopia of fraternity has real validity in our world, despite being a utopia.

We must also make visible the histories and narratives of the «poor with spirit.» These «felicitous histories of solidarity» have given rise to rumors about the God of life, and they continue to do so. They portray exemplary lives worthy of faith because they show how spiritual poverty leads to solidarity with the materially poor and the maltreated. These histories confirm the second-level discourse of the the-

ologians who are at the service of the faith-justice ideal.

5.4. From the strength of conviction to the accompaniment of the poorest

The processes of empowerment and liberation of the poor must be accompanied by a strong conviction that the service of faith and the promotion of justice constitute a single mission. But this must be done with the humility of those who know that they are only the «slingshot» of David. The gargantuan power of the modern idol of Capital is undeniable. Trusting in the strength of the Spirit, Christians must commit themselves to a radical questioning of an economic system that has produced so many victims. It is this universe of suffering, not the economic balance, that determines the truth and goodness of the neoliberal system.

Drawing on Christian tradition, we must accompany this crucial struggle being waged by people with different cultural and religious identities. Our task is to contribute «spirit,» that is, provide inner inspiration that enliv-

ens, encourages, and gives meaning to personal and community action which favors the empowerment and the liberation of the poor (cf EG 261). This task cannot be undertaken only with doctrines; it requires a mystique that moves us and sustains us in the long run.

5.5. Letting ourselves be ever more evangelized by the poor

In parsing the meaning of the faith-justice ideal, we recognize our need to be evangelized by the poor, and we want to show how that happens: «They have much to teach us. Not only do they share in the *sensus fidei*, but in their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them. The new evangelization is an invitation to acknowledge the saving power at work in their lives and to put them at the center of the Church's pilgrim way. We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them» (EG 198).

6. COHERENCE OF LIFE AND COMMUNITY IN THE FACE OF SOCIAL ATOMIZATION

Jesús Sanz

In recent decades we have witnessed the steady growth of neoliberalism, to the point where it has become the dominant form of thought. Its program can

be summed up in a very few words: individualism, free market, and minimal government. Apart from economics, the neoliberal narrative has also taken

up a dominant position in the cultural sphere. Even though alternative narratives do exist, which allow people to think of «other possible worlds» and other forms of governance, these can make little headway in an interpretative framework where politics is subordinated to the economics, individualism, exaltation of consumerism, etc.¹⁰

Even as neoliberalism has gained in strength, we have witnessed the undermining of organized collective responses such the social movements and other forms of organization that attempt to put up resistance to this perverse social logic.

6.1. From «there is no alternative» to the reconstruction of alternatives

Given this situation, there is an urgent need to elaborate a broader view that will challenge the TINA thesis («there is no alternative») popularized by Margaret Thatcher. Such a view would include the possibility of implementing at the collective level projects of social emancipation that would both anticipate the hoped-for reality and make manifest the interdependent, community-oriented nature of life.

A first step in this process would consist of rebuilding the social and communal fabric and establishing mechanisms of solidarity in the collective sphere. In the face of social atomization, we need to create new forms of community organization that take up the challenge in such spheres as the social economy, the world of work, and associative structures.

Fortunately, in recent years civil society has given rise to many projects

which have demonstrated a strong creative spirit as well as a desire for community. These projects point in the right direction in their search for collective solutions suitable to community needs. Some of the most relevant social initiatives are of a local character, such as time banks, food dispensaries, and zero-cost stores. Movements have also appeared which try to guarantee basic social rights, such as «Yo Sí Health,» which struggles to help people deprived of health care, or the Platform for the Mortgage-Impaired, which fights evictions and purely speculative housing policies. These are only a few examples of the many initiatives in the sphere of the social economy and cooperative movements.

One fruit of the communitarian spirit is the increasing experimentation with so-called «common goods.» This paradigm proposes that some recourse (or some other good) be managed collectively through concrete institutions and rules established by the community itself. This paradigm can be a fertile line of action in the future.

Finally, as we are reminded by some movements, among them eco-feminism, we are interdependent and eco-dependent beings. We must therefore stand up for those principles for managing resources and the economy which give priority to the logic of life as opposed to the logic of accumulation.

6.2. From individualism and atomization to pre-political, communitarian socialization

At the same time, while these initiatives truly help to resolve collective prob-

lems, there are at least two other reasons why the generation of these spaces and practices has a fundamental value.

First, they exercise an important pedagogical role since their concrete practices demonstrate that alternatives exist which can be developed from everyday reality.¹¹ This is an essential lesson, given the preponderance of arguments that negate the possibility of «another possible world,» not to speak of the lack of actions which help us to believe that another way of life is possible.

There is a need
for the generation of spaces
that appeal to communitarian
logics of solidarity

Second, this type of space allows people to consider values and ideas that are different from the predominant ones. They therefore become places for pre-political socialization, by which we mean all those spaces of socialization which give rise to some type of consciousness of the communitarian dimension. This consciousness consists simply in opening our eyes and discovering that we are affected not only by what is most immediate and close to us, not only by what involves us in some personal struggle. Rather, we are affected by a struggle that goes beyond any individual claim: it is a struggle that builds community.

In this sense there is a fundamental need for something more than the framework of institutional politics.

There is a need for the generation of spaces that appeal to communitarian logics of solidarity that are centered on the dimension of care. We must also promote initiatives based on inclusion or hospitality, initiatives which give priority to the recently arrived, starting with concrete actions and day-to-day work.¹²

6.3. Christian communities as alternatives spaces of fraternity

This reflection on social atomization and the creative actions arising in civil society is something that should appeal to the Church. There is no question that the Gospel and Christian spirituality have a strong communitarian character and inspire people to make a radical commitment to the struggle for social justice. But it is also true that many Christian communities have in recent decades lost their dynamism and vitality.

Given this situation, we can ask about the role Christian communities should play today in the creation of spaces of fraternity and mutual aid which are able to respond to a highly individualistic and isolated society.¹³

First of all, in the present context it is important to analyze what type of new and creative actions can originate from communities which, on the one hand, accompany other more traditional communities associated with the struggle against poverty and, on the other, incorporate new dimensions of justice that aim for a greater coherence of life.

The promotion of collective practices linked to responsible consump-

tion, a social economy of solidarity, or a more ecological lifestyle presents an interesting challenge for the Church as regards both action and consciousness raising. These concerns should motivate us to work in the sphere of everyday reality with the aim of living more coherently.

Second, the encounters and the bonds generated around such practices are a privileged space for joint work and for collaboration between believers and non-believers. Moreover, they represent an absolutely essential space for establishing interreligious encoun-

ter and dialogue, and this is an urgent matter since the society in which we live is every day more diverse, pluralist, and heterogeneous.

Finally but no less importantly, we must emphasize the joyful, celebratory dimension that should accompany any realization of these practices. Beyond intellectual analyses, the enthusiasm generated by collective labor which recreates and celebrates the communitarian dimension needs a powerful motor of creativity and life, and that motor must be sustained and cared for.

7. LUCIDITY, COMPASSION, AND UTOPIA: SPIRITUAL COMPETENCIES FOR A CHANGING WORLD

José Laguna

The educational world is being taken over by the methodology of competencies, which defines, articulates, and evaluates the practical knowledge that students are expected to acquire. According to this methodology, learning mathematics is not just reciting from memory the multiplication tables but being able to calculate how many Euros we have to hand over in a fruit store when we have filled our shopping bag with three and half kilos of oranges and two kilos of apples. One of the educational alerts periodically issued as a result of the famous PISA tests is that Spanish students know the multiplication tables perfectly well but don't know how much to pay for things in the supermarket. We offer this scant presentation of the method-

ology of competencies even though we recognize that there are critical voices that accuse it of making knowledge a mere mercantile tool and of degrading non-instrumental types of knowledge.

In our attempt to envision the challenges for a spirituality that is meaningful for the 21st century, we adopt the methodology of competencies in order to determine what kinds of spiritual learning we should consider «useful» for dealing with a complex, pluralist, globalized world. We seek to describe not so much meditative practices (prayer, silence, liturgy, asceticism, etc.) as their effect: what wisdom is needed for everyday life by men and women who today engage in the practice of spirituality? As has happened with education, we are aware of the

utilitarian orientation that neoliberalism seeks to impose on gratuitous and «useless» activities like spirituality. Still, our competency perspective is in accord with the pedagogy of the letter of James, which seeks to discern the faith that is not seen through the works that are visible (James 2,18).

7.1. From *fuga mundi* to spirituality in and for reality

We start with the definition of spirituality proposed by Jon Sobrino: it is the ability that every human being has to respond to the reality of the ultimate.¹⁴ Spirituality is not a *fuga mundi*, a flight from the world and from commitment to transform an often unjust reality; rather, it is transcendent relation to the world in which we live. It is in that relation to reality, which opens beyond the empirical realm, that lucidity, compassion, and utopia constitute, in our view, three essential competencies of a Christian spirituality.

Before analyzing each of these briefly, we want to point out that Christian spirituality defines its «ultimate» in terms of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are many spiritualities, but only one confronts the life, the crucifixion, and the resurrection of a victim whom we confess to be God. Christian spirituality is situated on the axis of coordinates on which the suffering of the crucified peoples of history flows into hope for the saving intervention of God on their behalf. Being spiritually competent means being inserted into the paschal dynamic (the death and resurrection) of reality.

7.2. From contemplative silence to personal and social lucidity

Persons who enter into the paths of interiority concur in affirming that the assiduous practice of silence, far from walling them into an autistic self-absorption, makes them much more conscious of their interior world and the surrounding reality. Like murky waters that become more transparent as the sediment in them settles, contemplative quiet silences noises, presumptions, and hegemonic discourses in order to reach the essence of reality and call things by their true name.¹⁵

Lucidity, which is the ability to relate to reality in a non-ideological way, is vital in transitional epochs like our own, when the absence of shared meta-stories is a breeding ground for biased epistemologies which reduce reality to self-defensive social contracts and mercantile relationships.

At the end of the second chapter of the book of Exodus, it says that God heard the cries of his people and understood what was happening (cf. 2,23-25). This divine «understanding» recognized the reality of the victims of the slavery imposed by the pharaoh. Recognizing the structural injustice that lies behind the cries of the victims is a spiritual competency that is especially necessary at a time when unrestrained capitalism is seeking to deny its direct responsibility for the suffering of vast numbers of impoverished people, who have culpably been made invisible.

In the context of a spirituality that is valid for an epoch that is still coming to birth, lucidity is related to the ability to discern the «spirits» that lie behind personal and social reality. This

is the competency that recognizes the presence of the dynamics of sin and of grace in history, the former to combat them and the latter to promote them.

7.3. From lucidity to compassion

If with spirituality we gain in lucidity, we necessarily become more compassionate. Spirituality nourishes a Samaritan vision that makes us respond with compassion to the victims who cross our path.¹⁶ Inspired by Levinas, we Christians affirm that the inner vision proper to spirituality reveals to us not only the «face of the Other» but also, and inseparably, the faces of those who are suffering, those whose lives make an appeal to us and hold us responsible.

At the dawn of the 21st century, compassion is a competency that should unite justice with care for others and care for the Earth. Spirituality sinks its roots into a radical hospitality which seeks to restore the spirit of solidarity which individualistic modernity has left badly wounded. Today caring for others must be set within an intergenerational horizon because a diachronic solidarity makes us responsible for the common home which we will leave as a heritage for our sons and daughters.

7.4. From sacralized globalization to sustainable utopia

What differentiates and defines us as a species is our effort to transform nature into culture.¹⁷ From the first human beings who tilled the earth to force it to

yield its fruit where they wanted, to the astronauts who defy the law of gravity which would anchor them to earth, the history of humankind is the constant effort to shape reality to match the horizon of our needs and our dreams. In the sphere of Christian spirituality, that horizon should be determined by the needs of the poorest (those who are hungry now, those who weep, the maltreated women, the refugees, etc.) and by the divine promise that this situation is reversible («Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh» (Luke 6,20-26).

The divine dream for humanity is called the Kingdom of God, and spiritual competency consists in working to bring reality closer to that dream. This competency lies between transformative activity and grateful passivity, caught in a tension that the Ignatian tradition sums up neatly: «Act as if everything depended on you, knowing that in reality everything depends on God.»

The utopia of the Kingdom
will have to dialogue
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globalization which presents
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«ultimate»

The Pauline «already but not yet» is not a consoling hermeneutics meant simply to explain the present but rather a spur that impels us to regionalize

hope: «Utopia, as the Great Absentee and the Great Potency, may be the best name for the nameless God. Utopia will always object to or protest against everything built by us human beings because it still lies far from our aspirations. At the same time it will motivate us in spite of all our disappointments, for even though the attitude of ‘yes, we can’ or ‘*sí se puede*’ is not the full truth –just look at the facts– it will still be much truer than ‘*algo se puede*’ [something can be done].»¹⁸

In our liquid modernity the utopia of the Kingdom will have to dialogue critically with a sacralized globalization which presents itself as an unquestionable «ultimate.» Spiritual competency warns us about the perverseness of a financial universality that is presented with messianic promises but is built upon homicidal social tariffs. Justice, the common good, and

sustainable development are the three utopian-spiritual requirements that no globalization can do without.

7.5. For a feminine mysticism

Lucidity, compassion, and utopia are in Spanish all feminine nouns. This is no accident; the choice of gender has been intentional. Paraphrasing Karl Rahner’s statement, that the Christians of the 21st century will be mystics or they will be nothing, I am absolutely convinced that the spirituality of the 21st century will be feminine (eco-feminine) or it will be nothing. It is time for the *Ruah* to express herself in her own language, which means that we men should exercise more often the competencies of silence and listening. That is ultimately what spirituality is about: keeping silence in order to hear the *Ruah*.

The Church is aware that it must be in a state of «permanent reformation» since it is a Church that is always on pilgrimage, in search of God, and composed of persons who do not yet fully follow in the footsteps of Christ. The selfishness and limitation and even the sins of each individual are projected onto the visible religious structures, alienating them for their originating spirit. At the same time, these flawed structures work to condition, hamper, and contaminate the persons integrated into them.

8. THE NEW FACE OF THE CHURCH... WITHOUT MAKE-UP

Jaume Flaquer

Often the Church moves forward in a stumbling manner. After a period of revolution or renewal of its relationship to the world (*aggiornamento*), there is period of consolidation that may last years, decades, or centuries. A certain regression may even take place. Meanwhile, the world keeps evolving so that the church's relation to the world gets once again out of kilter and another ecclesial renewal becomes necessary.

It is true that reform is always necessary, and it may even be quite urgent

when it is a question of helping people find sound foundations for their faith, which is the situation we find ourselves in today.

If we want to change the face of the Church, we must change the Church's way of seeing because that is the most important aspect of the face. We must also change the Church's way of hearing and tasting the world that it encounters. This renewed way of seeing can only be that of Jesus since it is through Jesus that God sees and sens-

es the world. Jesus does not view the world from a neutral perspective but from the abasement of the slave, from the hovel of the poor. Jesus views the world bowed down at the feet of others, looking up from below, looking toward the center from the margins. Certainly this is a way of viewing that is very different from the way the Church has accustomed us to: the arrogant look of judgment and control, looking down from above, looking out from the center. It is also different insofar as it recovers Jesus' own more feminine way of looking: it is the pacifying, caring, considerate look that is expressed in the miracles and the parables of the Gospel.

8.1. From the religion of the «perfect» to the mercy of God

The Church also needs to recover the indignation of Jesus and his mercy. It is not simply a matter of increasing the tone of indignation or the degree of mercy but of feeling prophetically indignant toward those who aroused indignation in Christ: the rich, the hypocrites, and the arrogant. Moreover, there is a need to express infinite mercy toward those to whom Jesus showed himself merciful. The affluent Church has been far too considerate of persons who are corrupt and fraudulent while at the same time excessively harsh toward homosexuals, divorced, persons, etc.

In the face of religious hypocrisy and the religiosity of the «perfect,» the Church should present itself as a community of persons who daily experience God's mercy rather than as

individuals who see themselves as superior to others. In reality, what lies behind the arguments about allowing divorced persons or even homosexuals to receive communion in the bosom of the Church is a struggle between two antagonistic and irreconcilable ways of understanding religion.¹⁹ We can understand the vehemence of these arguments only if we are able to perceive this struggle between 1) a Church of the perfect that looks over its shoulder at those who are not perfect and 2) a welcoming Church, like that of Jesus, which acknowledges itself to be full of simple folk, tax collectors, prostitutes, outcasts, the lame, and the blind. This is the same dichotomy that existed between the little group that followed Jesus and those like the Pharisees, who criticized him for eating «with publicans and sinners.»

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Pharisees live with dread of the refrain, «Tell me who you associate with, and I'll tell you who you are.» They think that if communion is given to someone whose marriage has failed, then other Church members and the very Body of Christ is defiled. Rather, what the Church of Jesus is called to do is to walk among the marginalized

in order to embrace them, accompany them, heal them, and give them hope.

8.2. From being self-referential to hearing the suffering

The Church must move away from the center and draw closer to those on the margins. Or, as Pope Francis says, the Church must let go of its tendency to be self-referential. It must cease speaking so much about itself (and increasingly only for itself), citing documents that are of interest to very few. The Church must become a living Word addressed to the people and their suffering. In becoming more concerned about suffering, the Church should painfully acknowledge the thousands of victims that it has itself produced and continues producing. The Church, founded on the blood of martyrs, became in turn an executioner. The victims of the Pharisaism denounced by Jesus –lepers, publicans, shepherds, menstruating women, etc.– are today the homosexuals, the divorced, and other who have been marginalized by the Church. The Church must hear their suffering.

8.3. From Christ the King to the figure of Jesus

The Church should cease being a reflection of «Christ, King of this world» and recover the image of Jesus the servant and care-giver who washed the feet of his disciples. By presenting itself in the image of Christ the King, the Church transmits a macho image of God as all-powerful emperor and patriarch. The Church must instead be trans-

formed into a community that is able to reflect the image of the God who integrates both masculine and feminine. Instead of a Church that preaches God to the world as the Being «than whom nothing more perfect can be thought,» we must move toward a Church that tries to reveal the God who reveals himself as weak in the figure of Jesus.

8.4. From hierarchy to listening: God in the people

Only when the Church sees and hears God «in all things» and in all persons will we have a solid theological base for the participation of everyone in the decisions that are made. It is the whole Church and not just the hierarchy that must listen. We have to revive the theological idea that the whole of the Church is prophetic and priestly. It is therefore the Church in its totality and not just the hierarchy that must see and hear God. And if God speaks in the people, then the hierarchy must listen to them. The broad survey carried out before the Synod on the Family was not just an opinion poll to sound out the thoughts of the people; it was an act of faith in the presence of God in the people. The Church must ground itself in this attitude in order to progress toward greater horizontality in the making of decisions and in the efforts to reduce clericalism in line with the Gospel.

8.5. From closed communion to open communion and dialogue

The Church should be a great community of communities, in which dia-

logue is an essential element. The Trinity is not a closed «community» but is constantly going forth from itself. For this reason, if the Church is called to be the image of the Trinity, it must continually be going forth from itself in dialogue with the world. The Church must therefore pronounce not only a Word of condemnation and a Word of salvation, but also a Word of blessing. The Church must denounce shameful economic inequalities, remind people of the common destiny of the earth's goods, and condemn all discrimination based on race, religion, and gender.

The Church should pronounce the Word of salvation not only through the sacraments but also through its social action. But the Church can never forget to pronounce a Word of blessing on all things, in the sense of «proclaiming them good.» Such was the creative Word of God when he saw that «all was good.» Likewise, the Church should be able to see and to acknowledge all the good that is done by both Christians and non-Christians. That is what Pope Francis meant when he said that the confessional «cannot be a tor-

ture chamber.» A Word of blessing is the exclamation of Saint Francis that has been recalled by the pope: «*Laudato Si'*,» with all the ecological dimensions that this phrase contains.

8.6. With a woman's face

This change of the Church's aspect should consequently be translated into ecclesiology and liturgy that 1) promote horizontality and consultation and 2) integrate women into the Church's decision making and liturgical celebration. In this Year of Mercy proposed by the Pope, there can be no true turn in this direction without a feminine turn. The term «mercy» in the Bible is a translation of the Hebrew root R-H-H (related to the Arabic *rahim*), which means the love that arises from the bosom –the maternal womb– of God (Hebrew *re-hem*). Unfortunately, patriarchal theology has historically gone hand in hand with religiously legitimized violence. A truly peacemaking, caring Church will come about only when women have assumed their rightful place in it.

- I. This item appears as number 200 in the series of booklets published in Catalan and Spanish, some of which (CJ Booklets) have also been translated into English. This one appears in English as number 161.
 - II. AGRELO, Santiago, Mons. (2015). *Fronteras contra los pobres, fronteras contra Cristo*. Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia, Papeles no. 230.
 - III. OXFAM-INTERMON, *Una economía al servicio del 1%*, January 2016.
 - IV. SEBASTIÁN, Luis (2005). *Problemas de la globalización*. Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia, Cuaderno no. 135.
 - V. VITORIA, Javier (2012). *Winds of change: the Church and the signs of the times*. Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia, Booklet no. 146.
1. [Editor's note] For further information, cf. CARRERA, Joan (2009). *El problema ecológico: una cuestión de justicia*. Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia, Cuaderno no. 161.
 2. [Editor's note] For further information, cf. CARRERA, Joan (2007). *Identities for the 21st century*. Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia, Booklet no. 127.
 3. TAYLOR, Charles (1995). «La política del reconeixement», in CASTIÑEIRA, Àngel (ed.), *Comunitat i nació*. Barcelona: Proa, p. 207.
 4. As of 27 May 2016.
 5. More than half the murders of women in the world are feminicides; that is, they are killed because they are women.
 6. There is a play on words in Spanish: the word *cuidadania* (= a caring attitude) is very similar to the more common term, *ciudadanía* (= citizenship).
 7. Cf. JUNCO, Carolina, PÉREZ OROZCO, Amaia, del Río, Sira (2004). «Hacia un derecho universal de ciudadanía (sí, de ciudadanía)». Grupo de Coeducación Zubiak Eraikitzen Hezkidetza Taldea, December 2004, (<http://zubiakeraikitzen.blogspot.com.es/2009/03/hacia-un-derecho-universal-de.html>).
 8. [Editor's note] For further information, cf. RAMÓN, Lucía (2012). *Women of care*. Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia, Booklet no. 145.
 9. [Editor's note] For further information, cf. CRISTIANISME I JUSTÍCIA (2015). *La causa de los pobres, causa de Dios*. Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia, Cuaderno no. 194. See also GONZÁLEZ FAUS, J. I. (2005), *Vicarios de Cristo: los pobres*. Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia.
 10. [Editor's note] For further information, cf. MATEOS, Oscar; SANZ, Jesús (2013). *Cambio de época. ¿Cambio de rumbo?*. Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia, Cuaderno no. 186.
 11. A good example of some of these alternatives can be found in the monograph «33 alternativas para vivir de otra manera», *Alternativas Económicas*, Extra no. 1, Barcelona, February 2014.
 12. [Editor's note] For further information, cf. GONZÁLEZ, Miguel (2016). *From hostility to hospitality*. Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia, Booklet no. 160.
 13. [Editor's note] For further information, cf. CARRERA, Joan (2015). *The revolution of every day: Christianity, Capitalism and Post-modernity*. Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia, Booklet no. 155.
 14. Cf. D'ORS, Pablo (2016). *Biografía del silencio*. Madrid: Siruela, p. 15.
 15. Cf. GRACIA, Diego (2013). *Valor y precio*. Madrid: Triacastela, p. 43.
 16. [Editor's note] For further information, cf. LAGUNA, José (2012). *Taking stock of reality, taking responsibility for reality, and taking charge of reality*. Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia, Booklet no. 143.
 17. GONZÁLEZ FAUS, José I. (2015). *Utopía y espiritualidad*. Bilbao: Mensajero, pp. 10-11.
 18. *Ibid.*
 19. [Editor's note] For further information, cf. ALEGRE, X.; GONZÁLEZ FAUS, J.I.; MARTÍNEZ GORDO, J.; TORRES QUEIRUGA, A. (2015). *Remaking Life. Divorce, Acceptance, and Communion*. Barcelona: Cristianisme i Justícia, Booklet no. 158.

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