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SUMMARIUM

- ANNE-MARIE BOS O.CARM., Carmelite Spirituality in Dutch schools of secondary education 11

In what way do Dutch schools of secondary education inculcate Carmelite spirituality? We give some insights in the historical processes and the way Stichting Carmelcollege adapted to it. Titus Brandsma o.carm. challenges us to see beyond the reality of language, images and other externalities, and to appreciate the values in our day to day reality. The values that were central to Titus Brandsma in 1929, can be recognized in the work of Stichting Carmelcollege nowadays. Carmelite schools choose for 'impassioned pedagogy' and describe this as nourished by Carmelite spirituality.

In che modo le scuole carmelitane secondarie presenti in Olanda riescono a mettere in dialogo la spiritualità carmelitana con la realtà sociale e culturale? Nel seguente articolo offriamo alcuni squarci sui processi storici e sul modo in cui la Fondazione Carmelcollege si è adattata ad essi. Il beato carmelitano Tito Brandsma ci sprona ad andare oltre la semplice concretezza del linguaggio, delle immagini e di altri dati esteriori, per poter apprezzare appieno i valori presenti nella nostra realtà di ogni giorno. È possibile riconoscere nell'opera che la Fondazione Carmelcollege porta avanti oggi que gli stessi valori che il nostro beato, già nel 1929, considerava come essenziali. Le scuole carmelitane seguono l'opzione fondamentale di una pedagogia appassionata e nutrita dalla spiritualità carmelitana.

- FRANÇOIS HUBERT MANGA O.CARM., Exploring the inculturation of the Carmelite Spirituality in Africa 33

Le Carmel, au regard des textes bibliques et historiques n'est pas si nouveau en terre africaine. Il portrait metre evident Que avant la Sainte Famille dans son séjour Egyptien (Mt 2,13-15), le Prophète Élie avait déjà rencontré le Dieu des Armées sur le Mont Horeb, en Afrique. (1R19,11-14) Cependant, il faut attendre la fin du Moyen-Age pour voir l'Ordre, dans sa forme juridique, prendre naissance sur le continent noir, c'était en 1584 dans le Royaume du Kongo, mais l'expérience sera brève. Le 20^{ème} siècle verra l'arrivée d'une nouvelle vague qui essaimera bien. Ainsi, comment cette spiritualité carmélitaine est-elle vécue et incarnée en Afrique ? Cette Afrique aux cultures si différentes et variées ? Pour donner une vision de la situation, nous avons choisis principalement trois axes : D'abord l'axe historique qui présente à partir de certains éléments, des perceptions bien souvent négatives de l'Afrique et qui inhibent ses valeurs. Puis vient l'axe de l'actualité qui expose ce qu'est le Carmel dans ces contrées, en mettant un point d'honneur sur le rapport entre les aspirations actuelles des peuples, notamment la soif de justice et les apports que l'Ordre offre à travers l'expérience édifiante du Prophète Élie. Enfin, il est question de se baser sur trois figures du Carmel, Thérèse d'Avila, Isidore Bakanja et Titus Brandsma, pour mener une réflexion sur les potentialités inspirationnelles dont dispose l'Ordre et qui seraient d'un grand apport pour l'Afrique.

Carmel, in the context of biblical and historical texts is not something new in the land of Africa. Even before the Egyptian sojourn of the Holy Family (Matt. 2, 13-15), the Prophet Elijah had already encountered the God of Hosts on Mount Horeb, in Africa. (1Kings 19,11-14) However, one must wait until the end of the Middle Ages to see the Order, in its juridical form, begin again on this dark continent and this was in 1594 in the Kingdom of the Congo, but the experience was short lived. The twentieth century would see a new wave which would do better. So, how would this Carmelite spirituality be experienced and incarnated in Africa? This Africa, with its cultures that were so different and varied? In order to give a perspective on the situation, we have chosen three axes: Firstly, the historical one present in certain aspects, which often are seen negatively regarding Africa, hindering its values. Then comes the axis of the reality which shows what Carmel is in these countries and giving prominence to the relationship of the actual aspirations of the peoples, notably the thirst for justice and the contribution that the Order offers through the uplifting experience of the Prophet Elijah. Finally, it addresses the figures of Teresa of Avila, Isidore Bakanja and Titus Brandsma as a foundation leading to a reflection on the potential inspiration given by the Order and would be of great benefit for Africa.

CONRAD MUTIZAMHEPO O.CARM., Fraternity Among the Shona and in Carmelite Tradition: An Assessment of its Meaning and Practice

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The Carmelite Order (O.Carm.) has spread to seven African countries, namely, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. The evangelization of the peoples of Africa raises issues of continuity and discontinuity, that is, what needs to endure in African conception, understanding and practice on the one hand and what needs to be changed or overhauled. This article looks at the concept, experience and practice of fraternity as understood in the Bantu culture of the Shona people of Zimbabwe and how this concept be given a revolutionary new life in its meeting with the Christian Carmelite concept and experience of brotherhood. The article begins by analysing the concept of fraternity among the Shona, its communication through socialization. It spells out the positive influence it has exerted on the Shona imagination but also points out that a myopic view of fraternity can be detrimental to the wellbeing of communities and nations. Drawing on the positive aspects of fraternity understood in an African culture, the concept and system of fraternity is given a new thrust when it is conceived through the lenses of the Regula of the Christian Carmelite spirituality. As the Order is projected to grow in Africa, it is important to reflect on African experiences in the context of the newfound African identity in the consecrated life. The article is an exercise in the inculturation of what is true and holy among African people's heritage as they seek to give expression to an African Christianity.

L'Ordine Carmelitano (O.Carm.) in Africa è presente in sette paesi: Burkina Faso, Camerun, Repubblica Democratica del Congo, Kenya, Mozambico, Tanzania e Zimbabwe. L'evangelizzazione dei popoli africani solleva questioni inerenti alla continuità e discontinuità, ovvero su

ciò che deve essere mantenuto nella concezione, nella comprensione e nella prassi africana da un lato e ciò che deve essere modificato o rivisto dall'altro. Il presente articolo esamina il concetto, l'esperienza e la pratica della fraternità, così come è intesa nella cultura bantu del popolo Shona dello Zimbabwe e come ciò ha contribuito a fornire una nuova visione del significato e dell'esperienza cristiana e carmelitana della fraternità. L'articolo inizia analizzando il concetto di fraternità tra gli Shona e la loro comunicazione attraverso la socializzazione. Spiega quindi l'influsso positivo esercitato sull'immaginazione degli Shona, ma sottolinea anche che una visione miope della fraternità può essere dannosa per il benessere delle comunità e delle nazioni. Attingendo agli aspetti positivi della comprensione della fraternità nell'orizzonte della cultura africana, essa riceve nuovo slancio se considerata alla luce della Regola Carmelitana. Tenendo presente la progressiva espansione dell'Ordine nel continente africano, è importante riflettere su tali esperienze nel contesto di un'identità africana di vita consacrata. L'articolo si presenta come un esercizio di inculturazione di ciò che è vero e santo nell'eredità dei popoli africani, che cercano di dare un'espressione ad un cristianesimo africano.

RICO PALACA PONCE O.CARM., Looking through the Eyes of the Poor and in Solidarity with them: Inculturation of Carmelite Spirituality in the Philippines

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This article reflects on the dynamic presence of the Carmelites in the Philippines, particularly in the area of inculturation. In the context of the notion of "Identity enacted" as introduced by Prof. Dr. Johannes van der Ven, an empirical theologian, inculturation of Carmelite Spirituality in the Philippines is defined here as the dynamic process of give and take between the ideals of Carmelite life and the rich cultural heritage of the Filipino people amidst the complex realities of their lives. The inculturation of Carmelite Spirituality in the Philippines can be discerned in the written documents, involvements and advocacies of the Carmelites in this country. Reflecting on such an inculturation, one can say that we have charted a life pattern that is coherent and anchored on the optic of the "Other" and of the poor, defenceless, downtrodden, marginalized and exploited. As such, one can rightly suggest that this life pattern is indeed an enactment of our "identity enacted".

En el presente artículo se lleva a cabo una reflexión acerca de la presencia dinámica de los carmelitas en Filipinas, especialmente en el ámbito de la inculturación. En el contexto de la noción de "Identity enacted" (introducida por el Profesor Dr. Johannes van der Ven, un teólogo empírico), la inculturación de la espiritualidad carmelita en las Filipinas se define como un proceso dinámico ("dar-recibir") que se establece entre el ideal de vida carmelita y la rica tradición cultural de las Filipinas en el marco de la complejidad de su realidad vital. Podemos evaluar la inculturación de la espiritualidad carmelitana en Filipinas en las últimas décadas a través de tres elementos: los documentos escritos, el compromiso y el apoyo a la población local. Tras una seria reflexión sobre el tema, se puede afirmar que se ha trazado un modelo de vida coherente y bien fundamentado en la óptica del "Otro", sobre todo del pobre, del indefenso, del oprimido, del marginado y del explotado. Por ello, se puede sugerir que este modelo de vida ciertamente es una pro-

mulgación (enactment) de nuestra "identidad promulgada" (identity enacted).

- STANISLAUS LIRMANJAYASASTRA O.CARM., The values of chinese new year celebration for catholics in the light of Saint Teresa's Spirituality 91

Every year, some countries in Asia celebrate Chinese New Year celebration. Among of them are Catholics. There are challenges for them to find it's values to strengthen their faith. So that, they can celebrate this celebration as a cultural tradition in the light of Catholic faith. For that purpose, this article offers the reflection of values of this celebration in Catholic's point of view and especially in the light of Teresa's spirituality. This article lifts up many aspects of Chinese New Year celebration that is compatible with Catholic faith. Hopefully, this reflection can be used as a consideration to create a celebration that is more in line with Catholic faith.

Cada año, se celebra en algunos países de Asia el llamado "nuevo año chino". Entre los que lo celebran se encuentran también católicos que ven en ello un reto para su fe. Estos católicos intentan vivir el valor cultural de esta celebración tradicional a la luz de su fe católica. Este es el propósito principal de este artículo: ofrecer una reflexión sobre los posibles valores de esta celebración desde un punto de vista católico y, sobre todo, a la luz de la espiritualidad de Santa Teresa. De este modo, el autor pone de manifiesto varios aspectos de la celebración del "nuevo año chino" que son compatibles con la fe católica. El objetivo final del artículo es que esta reflexión pueda ser utilizada para suscitar una celebración que, respetando los valores tradicionales, esté más en línea con la fe católica

- MIGUEL NORBERT UBARRI T.O.CARM., Coincidencias entre el comentario al "cantar de los cantares" yel cántico espiritual: hacia una revaloración de orígenes en San Juan de la Cruz 109

El Comentario al "Cantar de los cantares" de Orígenes de Alejandría ha sido sugerido recientemente como precedente de san Juan de la Cruz. Algunos críticos del siglo XX habían llamado la atención sobre la falta de precedentes literarios y teológicos, razón por la cual algunos buscaron fuentes en la tradición grecolatina y medieval y la tradición mística musulmana. Orígenes elaboró una tradición exegética que luego fue enriqueciéndose y ampliándose en la tradición cristiana. Su método exegético y el san Juan de la Cruz tienen rasgos comunes. En la obra que se examina en este artículo, Orígenes elabora tres niveles exegéticos: el histórico o literal, que comenta el aspecto dramático de la narración en el poema; el sentido espiritual-alegórico, que comprende la revelación de algo oculto en la Escritura siempre referente a Cristo; y el sentido espiritual-místico que describe estados interiores o psicológicos. En el comentario al Cántico espiritual, san Juan de la Cruz también desentraña el sentido literal de cada verso: sus versos describen la acción dramática de la amada que sale en pos del Amado, hasta que lo encuentra; en el comentario explica que la amada es el alma y el Amado

es Cristo; describe el camino espiritual en clave de amor al compás de su poema lírico. Su comentario se convierte en una alegoría que tiene como referente el poema de su propia creación (y que a su vez tiene como fuente temática y literaria el poema bíblico). Las coincidencias encontradas nos permiten afirmar que extrae el sentido doctrinal del poema con el método exegético similar que la patrística empleaba para interpretar la Sagrada Escritura. También se advierten diferencias. Orígenes divide el camino espiritual en dos etapas o estados de madurez; san Juan de la Cruz las divide en tres. En este artículo se consideran coincidencias y diferencias, y se sugiere incluir la metodología de Orígenes en la tradición de los Padres de la Iglesia y autores posteriores que influyeron en el pensamiento y arte literario de san Juan de la Cruz.

The Commentary on the "Song of Songs" by Origen of Alexandria has recently been suggested as precedent of Saint John of the Cross. Some critics of the 20th century had called attention to the lack of literary and theological precedents, reason why some sought sources in the Greco-Roman and Medieval tradition, and even further in the Muslim mystical tradition. Origen developed an exegetical tradition that was later enriched and expanded in Christian tradition. His exegetical method and St. John of the Cross have common grounds. In Origen's work examined in this article, he develops three exegetical levels: the literal, which comments on the dramatic aspect of the narrative in the poem; the spiritual-allegorical, that includes the revelation of something hidden in Scripture always referring to Christ; and the spiritual-mystic that describes inner or psychological states. In his Spiritual Canticle, John of the Cross describes a dramatic action of the enamoured soul who goes after the Beloved, until she finds him; in his commentary, he explains that the beloved is the soul, and the Beloved is Christ; he describes the spiritual way as a journey of love, in harmony with the rhythm of his lyrical poem. His commentary turns into an allegory of the poem of his own creation (that also has the biblical poem as thematic and literary fundament). It can be said that he extracts the doctrinal meaning of the poem with a similar exegetical method that the Fathers of the Church used to interpret Sacred Scripture. There are also differences. Origen divides the spiritual path into two stages or stages of spiritual maturity; Saint John of the Cross divides it into three. In this article, coincidences and differences are considered, and it is suggested that Origen's methodology be included in the tradition of the Fathers of the Church that influenced, directly or indirectly, thought and literary art of Saint John of the Cross.

CARMEN YEBRA-ROVIRA, El ciclo de Eliseo como fuente para una espiritualidad comprometida. Una pequeña sierva, dos desgraciadas mujeres y cuatro leprosos valientes (2Re 5-7,20)

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Las historias del ciclo de Eliseo contenidas en 2Re 5,1-27 y 2Re 6,24-7,20 tienen un enorme potencial como modelos de transformación social dentro de una sociedad cambiante, multicultural e interconectada. El artículo analiza los relatos de Naamán el Sirio y del sitio de Samaría centrándose fundamentalmente en sus personajes secundarios, en su relevancia para el desarrollo de la trama y en sus acciones transculturales. Con esto, pretende visibilizar aquellos sujetos y situacio-

nes que suelen pasar desapercibidos y, a partir de ellos, analizar situaciones similares del presente. Además, el estudio ofrece pautas sobre cómo abordar la violencia de estos relatos y extraer de ellos claves para la espiritualidad, para la pastoral y para la construcción social de nuestro propio contexto.

The stories of the prophet Elisha contained in 2Kings 5:1-27 and 6:24-7:20 have an enormous potential as models of social transformation for our changing, multicultural and interconnected society. The article analyses the units of Naaman the Aramean and the Samaria site, focusing mainly on the secondary characters, their relevance for the development of the plot and their countercultural actions. With this, it tries to signify characters and situations that usually go unnoticed and propose them as models for similar realities of today. In addition, the study offers guidelines on how to deal with the violence of these stories and extract from them keys for spirituality and for social construction.

GLEN ATTARD O.CARM., God, Teresa and Luther. Is there such a thing as passive faith?

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The fundamental theme of the love of God, understood here in both its dimensions from God to man and vice-versa, is an area of Christian Spirituality that has confounded generations upon generations of mystics. Through this study, we propose to analyse this very theme through the prisms of Teresa of Jesus and Martin Luther. Specifically, we are interested in seeing how the same perspective and, to some extent, the same idea – their both having been struck deeply by the love of God –, led them down two completely different paths. While both remained focused on the primacy of God's initiative as the ultimate measure of God's love for us, Teresa was to remain focused on the other as our guarantee of remaining active in divine love and compassion, while Luther was to close in on the primacy of passive faith, a dangerous quality, as holy as it may be, when overly emphasised.

Un tema fondamentale come lo è l'amore di Dio, inteso qui in ambedue le sue dimensioni (da Dio verso l'uomo e vice-versa), è un'ambito della spiritualità cristiana che ha fatto stupire generazioni di mistici. Attraverso questo studio, proponiamo di analizzare questo tema tramite i prismi che sono Teresa di Gesù e Martin Lutero. Ci interessa specificamente di vedere come la stessa prospettiva e, in un certo senso, la stessa idea – cioè quella di essere ambedue colpiti dall'amore profondo di Dio –, ha condotto loro verso due vie completamente diverse. Anche se ambedue sono rimasti concentrati sulla superiorità dell'iniziativa divina come lo scopo ultimo dell'amore di Dio verso di noi, Teresa ha ugualmente fatto enfasi sul proprio sguardo verso l'altro come la via che garantisce il rimanere attivi nell'amore di Dio. Lutero, d'altro canto, si è rafforzato nell'idea della superiorità della fede passiva che, pur fondamentale che sia, ha mostrato di essere una categoria pericolosa quando troppo accentuata o isolata a sé.

EDITORIALE

Inculturation, or better inter-culturation, is the main topic of the first five articles. They present several examples in history and in our times for the dialogue between Carmelite spirituality and the cultural context. This part of the volume was organized by Rico Palaca Ponce O.Carm., executive and academic director of the Institute of Spirituality in Asia (ISA) / Manila, and member of the Comitato Centrale of the Institutum.

The *Cántico Espiritual* of John of the Cross and the relations with Origen of Alexandria's commentary on the "Song of Songs" is the focus of an article from Miguel Norbert Ubarri T.O.Carm.

The figure of Elisha as successor of the Prophet Elija was and is important for Carmelite spirituality. Carmen Yebra Rovira draws attention to the fact that the stories of the prophet Elisha contained in 2Kings 5:1-27 and 6:24-7:20 have an enormous potential as models of social transformation for our changing, multicultural and inter-connected society.

Under the question: "Is there such a thing as passive faith?" Glen Attard O.Carm. offers an ecumenical reflection on Teresa of Avila and Martin Luther.

Some important news from the Institutum Carmelitanum: Michael Plattig O.Carm. resigned as Preside of the Institutum Carmelitanum because of health reasons. The Prior General, Fernando Millán Romeral O.Carm., accepted the retirement, thanked him for his work, and appointed Giovanni Grosso O.Carm. as Preside of the Institutum. May God bless the important work of the new Preside.

Michael Plattig will keep the responsibility for the redaction of Carmelus and will remain as member of the Comitato Centrale.

Again a final comment and an appeal. The Institutum Carmelitanum and the Carmelite Library kindly ask all Carmelite authors or

other authors dealing with Carmelite issues to send the bibliographical information to the Carmelite Library: bca.carmelus@gmail.com (a format for that is published at the end of this number) and if possible two copies of the article or the book.

We wish you a fruitful reading.

The editorial staff

CARMELITE SPIRITUALITY IN DUTCH SCHOOLS
OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

ANNE-MARIE BOS, O.CARM.

In the Netherlands, Carmelite schools are organized in *Stichting Carmelcollege* (Carmel College Foundation). In the 95 years of its existence, *Stichting Carmelcollege* experienced considerable growth and fundamental transformations. The Foundation started in 1923 with two secondary schools. Nowadays, it is the second largest cooperation of secondary schools of denominational education in the Netherlands, connecting thirteen (comprehensive) schools. Education is provided by more than 4.300 teachers for 38.000 students, at 54 school locations.

On the surface, these schools will hardly be identified as Carmelite: no Carmelites work at the schools anymore, and except for the administrative building, Carmelite spirituality is barely visualized in iconography or other externalities. The name 'Carmel' is first and foremost understood as a name that connects those schools and that names their corporate identity, without a clue of its relation to a religious order.

If we want to answer the question in what way Dutch Carmelite schools inculcate Carmelite Spirituality, we are challenged to see under or behind this surface of reality. A full answer to this question will be beyond the scope of this article, but we aim to provide some incentives to deepen our understanding of the subject. Therefore, we consult the insights of one of the founders and the first secretary of *Stichting Carmelcollege*, the Blessed Titus Brandsma, O.Carm. Titus Brandsma (1882-1942) had experience in teaching and also some experience in leading a secondary school, he also wrote articles, gave lectures and speeches on education, he lobbied for Carmelite and other Catholic schools and presided over the Federation of Roman Catholic schoolboards for secondary education. In 1929, in a speech to the Catholic Federation of Colleges of Education, Brandsma spoke about

idealism at school.¹ In this speech he explicitly refers to seeing behind the surface of reality:

Seeing beauty in reality, seeing the things of everyday life not so much in the ordinary image, that does not make any impression, but in a more complete view, including also what does not attract and delight. It is the discovery of and love for higher values than those usually attributed to the things, not as something fictional but as something that is genuinely inside it.²

In this speech, Titus Brandsma joins in with the approach of Aristotle, that reality is the basis in which or under which elements of beauty can be discovered. Brandsma speaks about a beauty that cannot be observed with the naked eye. He takes the real situation as the starting point to find the ideals that come to the fore. While observing the real situation and acting in it, reflection occurs and insights are gained.

In this article, I will describe some historical developments of *Stichting Carmelcollege* and reflect on them with the insights expressed in the speech of Titus Brandsma. I am aware of the fact that I combine two realities that will not fluently fit together, but in this way, I will try to provide some incentives to observe traces of Carmelite Spirituality in the reality of the schools that are beyond the obvious.

1. FOUNDATION

In 1922, *Stichting Carmelcollege* did not appear out of nowhere. Education is traditionally one of the activities of the Carmelite order, also in the Netherlands. For instance, in the 17th Century, the count of Boxmeer invited the Carmelites to come to his town, with the condition that they would start a Latin school. The Carmelites of Antwerp accepted the invitation and it meant the return of the Carmelites after they were expelled from the Dutch area by the Reformation. Yet, in the first half of the 19th Century, the Latin school closed after almost 175 years. One of the reasons for this closure was that from 1814, by Royal decree, religious orders were not allowed to accept new novices. All monasteries had to peter out. In 1840, when

¹ TITUS BRANDSMA, *Idealisme op de kweekschool*, in *School en Studie* 4 (1931), 54-55, 69-70.

² *Ibid.*, 54.

the decree was revoked, only three Carmelite friars had remained and the Latin school belonged to the past.

In the second half of the 19th Century, after the revocation of the Royal decree, the number of Carmelite friars multiplied quickly. Already in 1855 the Carmelites from Boxmeer founded a monastery in Zenderen and in 1890 another one in Oss. With the increase of Carmelites, the desire to undertake educational activities revived. However, national politics impeded those activities. As a result of the separation of State and religion, the government supported only public schools. Denominational schools were non-public and consequently more expensive for the people. As a result, denominational schools depended on prosperous people who could afford it to send their children to a non-public school. Therefore, many non-public schools disappeared and new schools were difficult to start.

Nevertheless, at the end of the 19th Century, the Carmelites started a small school in Zenderen (in the region Twente). Encouraged by petitions from people in the neighborhood that repeatedly requested a secondary school (for the 12-18 year age group) for the benefit of the Catholics in the region. It started informal. From 1885 onwards, some Carmelites of Zenderen offered private lessons to students from outside the convent and in 1889 the preparatory seminary 'Sancti Alberti' was founded, with a separate department of a Latin School.³

In 1917, a constitutional amendment, article 23 of the Dutch constitution, arranged the separation of School and State. This amendment arranged equal state financial support of all schools. Although the effectuation of the amendment took some years, it was the start of a golden age of Catholic education. In this period, the Carmelites also made some efforts to start secondary schools.

From different parts of the Netherlands, requests were sent to the Carmelites to start a secondary school, but for various reasons most requests were turned down or the negotiations did not succeed.⁴ The first school that was realized, was in Oss, the town with a Carmelite convent where Titus Brandsma was living. Already in 1913 the local bishop allowed to found this Catholic secondary school and the necessary money was collected, but World War I slowed down the process. When the Carmelites made no effort to start the school, the

³ ANTOINE JACOBS, *Kroniek van de Karmel in Nederland 1840-1970*, Hilversum, Verloren, 2017, 664-665.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 666-667.

municipal government became tired of waiting. In 1919 they started a commercial school (*Middelbare Handelsdagschool*) and asked the Carmelites to run it. The Carmelites accepted this task, with the intention to extend this commercial school with a high school (*Hogere Burgerschool*) as soon as possible.⁵

Because the Carmelites, as a religious order, had no proper juridical status, they could not take final responsibility for a school that needed state subsidy. Therefore, in 1922, they set up a foundation: *Stichting Carmelcollege*. The Provincial Board of the Carmelites was *qualitate qua* the Board of this Foundation. In 1923 the Foundation was able to take over the commercial school in Oss and transformed it into a high school. At the same time, a grammar school was started in Oldenzaal (in the region of Twente). The regional schools of Oss and Oldenzaal are situated about 150 kilometers apart from each other, which is quite a distance and influences the way the foundation was run. It explains why, from the very beginning, *Stichting Carmelcollege* was an educational association.

Although the constitutional amendment of 1917 enabled non-public schools to receive subsidy, for several years it was not granted. The new grammar school in Oldenzaal was, for instance, paid for by the Catholic community of Twente. Together with the Carmelites, six other religious orders were asked to start the requested Catholic grammar school in this region, but the Carmelites were the only order that eventually dared to take the risk. In that region of the Netherlands, the Carmelites were well-known for the friars of Zenderen and the Carmelite nuns in the same village. Nevertheless, the project had to conquer a lot of scepticism and distrust by the people. Primary schools were fine, but secondary schools teaching sciences were considered a threat for the Catholic youth. As a result, in this region, secondary education stayed behind.⁶

In 1923, after years of preparation, the school in Oldenzaal started with two classes first grade students: 50 children were accepted

⁵ MATHIAS ARTS and JOHANNES VAN ROOY, *Vijf en twintig jaar middelbaar en voorbereidend hoger onderwijs door de p.p. Carmelieten in Nederland 1923-1948: Geschiedenis van het Carmelcollege te Oss en van het Twents Carmellyceum te Oldenzaal*, s.l., s.n., 1948, 21-36.

⁶ P.H.F. BAKELS – WHAT ARE THE NAMES?, *De betekenis van de karmelieten voor het middelbaar onderwijs in Twente*, in G.J. RIBBERT, J.TH.M. HODES, B.J. THÜSS, editors, *De Karmel in Twente 1855-1995: 140 Jaar zielzorg en middelbaar onderwijs*, s.l., Stichting De karmelieten in Twente, 1995, 117-118.

after an entrance exam: 43 boys and 7 girls.⁷ That the school educated both boys and girls was not a matter-of-course. It was a help to get more pupils, and therefore to improve the financial base of the school. The archbishop of Utrecht approved this co-education in Oldenzaal, while the diocesan bishop of Den Bosch refused the same in Oss. The Carmelites were not happy with the mixed school. Titus Brandsma called it 'a difficult case'. It was considered a necessity and at length, the Carmelites tried to open a separate school for girls, that should be led by nuns.⁸

Both schools asked for brave decisions by the Provincial Chapter: It was a time that the Dutch Province did not have a wealth of available, educated friars; state support was not granted yet, which was an enormous financial risk; and the amount of parents that would send their children to this school was uncertain. Success was not granted and a lot of energy and money was involved.

Titus Brandsma was, as secretary of the Foundation, responsible for all the negotiations with the state officials and episcopacy.⁹ In 1924 the message came that state support was granted for the grammar school in Oldenzaal. That was a huge relief.

Perspective of future

To make these brave decisions, idealism was needed. The idealism was first of all triggered by the needs of local people. Parents wanted their children to receive proper education. This education is aimed at the future of their children. In his speech to the Catholic Federation of Colleges of Education, Titus Brandsma reminds educators that they have to keep in view this future:

A teacher's range of view should not be limited to the time the students are in school, it has to include those who are already at work. The training must be aimed at ensuring that the students are flourishing after graduation, working good in society, with a good mentality.¹⁰

According to Brandsma it is ideal when the lessons and the example of the educator bear full fruit much later. It is ideal when a teacher gives his pupils something that is a life-long treasure.¹¹ Well

⁷ G.A. BENNEKER – WHAT ARE THE NAMES?, *Twents Carmellyceum in Oldenzaal: 40 jaar*, s.l., s.n., 1963, 111.

⁸ JACOBS, *Kroniek*, 677.

⁹ *IBID.*, 669, 673, 683.

¹⁰ TITUS BRANDSMA, *Idealisme*, 54.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

aware of day-to-day reality, Brandsma acknowledges that the meaning of education is not noticeable everywhere and not every day. He calls it “the sum of small successes, too small for the moment to be seen and noticed, but visible when reviewing the whole.”¹² That’s why he advocates the perspective of the future as a widening of view. We have to look at the immediate visible results, and beyond.

Titus Brandsma is aware of the value of study, not just for the student’s future, but also for the teachers. He discerns ‘the vocation to guide the development of others’ as an educational value and combines this with ‘the enrichment of own knowledge and development’.¹³ Brandsma was, with his good friend Fr. Hubertus Driessen, a fiery promotor of the reassessment of study in the Carmelite order. Taking responsibility over schools stimulated the atmosphere of study in Carmel. Teachers were needed, and therefore, Carmelites had to obtain (academic) diplomas. However, Brandsma and Driessen disagreed on the scope of these studies. Driessen wanted to focus them on philosophy and theology, but Brandsma held the opinion that Carmelites could also teach other subjects, like classics or modern languages, history or science and mathematics. While Driessen disputed that lay people could educate these subjects, Brandsma stated that teaching these subjects was also a real chance to mould people religiously and morally.¹⁴ In line with the opinion of Brandsma, in 1920, eight student friars were sent to Tilburg to study mathematics, English, French or German.¹⁵ But Driessen’s opinion was realized on a larger scale. The schools in Oss and Oldenzaal had for the most part lay teachers and the members of management and teachers of religion were all Carmelite priests.¹⁶

Reflecting on these historical developments, we become aware of the role of idealism in this reality. Titus Brandsma opens our eyes for a vision, an ideal, a mission that is aimed at the future; the vocation to guide the development of others, aimed at a flourishing future for the present youth. A vocation that the Carmelites acknowledge for themselves and share with others.

¹² Ibid., 69.

¹³ Ibid., 55.

¹⁴ BROCARDUS MEIJER, *Titus Brandsma*, Bussum, Paul Brand, 1951, 47-48.

¹⁵ JACOBS, *Kroniek*, 292.

¹⁶ Ibid., 682.

2. EXPANSION

In the years after World War II, the number of students increased. In Oldenzaal, the building became too small. The Carmelites opted for a new school in the city of Hengelo. Starting this school in Hengelo was also motivated by the fear that others would jump in and start competing grammar school.¹⁷ The Carmelites opted for monopoly in education and pastoral care in the region and tried to protect it from competition with other religious orders. As a consequence, after the founding of Hengelo (1946/47) four other schools in the region followed: Deventer (1949), Enschede (1953), Almelo (1954) and Hengelo-Twicken (1966).¹⁸ In the same periode, the Carmelites accepted a request from the growing city of Emmen, when they asked for help. A Carmelite convent and school were opened in 1958.¹⁹

In this period, the Carmelites also planned a new convent in the western part of the Netherlands, in Dordrecht. They wanted to transfer the philosophical studies to this new convent, and they desired to take responsibility for pastoral work in the local parish, the caravan camp and the companies of industry. The diocesan bishop agreed, on the express condition that they would accept the high school. The Carmelites accepted and from 1958 until 2003, the school was part of *Stichting Carmelcollege*.²⁰

The Carmelites were approached from even more parts of the Netherlands, to start secondary schools, but those requests were either turned down by the Carmelites or the negotiations failed.²¹

In the Dutch Province, including the provincial board, the increase of schools was questioned. Many objections were made.²²

First of all, by the expansion of *Stichting Carmelcollege*, education became a dominant mission of the province, as important as pastoral work. This had a huge influence on community-life. The program at school and the program of the convent conflicted. Moreover, some Carmelites disputed the work at the schools as a proper priestly job.

¹⁷ Ibid., 697.

¹⁸ JACOBS, *Kroniek*, 696-712.

¹⁹ Ibid., 119, 713-714.

²⁰ Ibid., 117-118, 712-113.

²¹ Ibid., 693-696.

²² Ibid., 690-693.

Also financial objections were made, since the Province made up the deficit of the schools. However, this objection was countered by the finding that the salary of the Carmelite teachers was the main income of the Province, and the benefits far outweighed the costs. The perspective of the schools was that, if managed well, they would be able to support themselves within six years.

Another objection was the limited number of available (certified) Carmelite teachers. Already now, the amount of Carmelites that was engaged in education disturbed the balance in the provincial activities. In consideration of the schools, they preferred a proportion between Carmelite and lay teachers of one-to-two, but the increase of schools made it impossible to reach that goal. The schools in Oldenzaal and Oss hardly made new vocations, which was the low percentage of Carmelite teachers blamed for. In time, Carmelites just held the management positions and took care of education of religion. The opinion was that the Carmelite identity of the education failed.²³

Fourthly, the provincial board did not want to force young friars into a teaching job.

As a result, the provincial board pleaded for concentration of the activities and for the transfer of some schools to other school organizations. However, in real terms, *Stichting Carmelcollege* extended.

In this process, Fr. Raphael Gooijer, o.carm. played an important role. In 1941 he had become secretary of *Stichting Carmelcollege*, and over 35 years he stayed in its board. Besides, for thirty years he presided the Federation of Roman Catholic schoolboards secondary education (he succeeded Titus Brandsma). Gooijer gained great expertise in material, juridical and financial aspects of secondary education and was even called 'Minister of Catholic education in the Netherlands'.²⁴

One by one, the objections in the Dutch Carmelite Province were countered by Raphael Gooijer, and in 1965, the Province breathed a positive appreciation of the school activities. The province appreciated that youngsters and their parents were reached. Moreover, the Carmelites could provide an example for the lay teachers to be Christian educators. A majority of the Carmelites considered the work at schools as significant priestly activities, which met with the goal of Carmelite life. It enriched Carmelite life and stimulated study in the

²³ Ibid., 723.

²⁴ Ibid., 720-721.

convents. And last but not least, it was an appropriate source of income.²⁵

Formative education

In 1948, celebrating 25 years *Stichting Carmelcollege*, Rector Martinus Benneker o.carm. of Oldenzaal stated:

Secondary education includes, in addition to scientific education, formation in religious, cultural and social fields. All of this, however, is seen as a whole, as the education and formation of young people into full members of Church and society.²⁶

This vision on education seamlessly blends with the speech of Titus Brandsma in which he advocates that in education, people must have an eye for more than just knowledge. According to Brandsma, the focus on knowledge is good and commendable, but it is 'only half'.²⁷ Education should also imply the development of character and 'the human-religious moral formation of man as a whole, of man who is more than mere intellect or mentality'.²⁸

If we reflect for a moment on the present situation of the schools, I read this broad view on education in the course-document for 2020:

We equip students for the rest of their lives. For this, they need more than the basic subjects and learning cognitive skills: it's about 'the entire person', with all his talents. We want to help our students to develop into mature and responsible people, with a well-developed moral compass, who can independently find their way in their world and contribute to it.²⁹

In his speech, Titus Brandsma shows not just a broad view on education, he also speaks about the style of education. He for instance argues that teachers must allow flexibility in education.³⁰ Teachers who lack space for it, he titles as exam drillers: 'those who are only focused on the development of the intellect according to the established program'. But, according to Brandsma, it's not just about drilling lessons. No matter how good, there is more:

²⁵ Ibid., 690-693.

²⁶ BENNEKER, *Twents Carmellyceum*, 6.

²⁷ BRANDSMA, *Idealisme*, 69.

²⁸ Ibid., 55.

²⁹ *Koers 2020*, Hengelo, Stichting Carmelcollege, 2015, 6.

³⁰ BRANDSMA, *Idealisme*, 70.

Certainly the teacher must set many requirements for the development of the intellect, but they must not be a heartless disciplinary teacher. They must understand the child and be aware that the child is not a machine. Respect, true respect is related to 'spare', adapting to the demands and needs of the child. And for education, adaptation is necessary. No excessive rigidity. There is more to accomplish, than just drill lessons. Rousseau said the true word, that one can only raise a human being, by beholding him as a human being, a human being with manifold demands, that cannot just be entirely abstracted at school. The broader view of the task brings idealism into the life of the teacher, because then the fulfillment of the life task gives a lot of pleasure and satisfaction.³¹

Titus Brandsma issues the pedagogical relation between a teacher and a pupil, which cannot be narrowed down to the transfer of a package of knowledge. A teacher has to deal with the child as a human being, as a person, a person with manifold demands and needs. Brandsma emphasizes what he has said earlier on in his lecture, that knowledge and love must go hand in hand.³² The motives he mentions reveal his vision on the job of a teacher. Beyond the reality of developing the intellect, a child is raised. The raising of the child is not something that comes on top of the transfer of knowledge, or next to it, but as an essential condition for it. And even stronger it brings the teacher idealism, 'a lot of pleasure and satisfaction'.

This emphasis on formative education opens our eyes for what we just have seen with regard to the expansion of Stichting Carmelcollege and the discussions about it in the Carmelite Province. We can easily adapt Brandsma's plea for seeing the child as a human being with manifold demands to the way in which the Carmelites behold themselves and their fellow friars: as persons with demands that ask for respect and adaptation.

3. SEPARATION

From the Sixties onward, Carmelite schools underwent a transformation from schools with an obvious Catholic identity into schools that were – at least visibly – less clearly Catholic. The number

³¹ Ibid., 70.

³² Ibid., 55. Brandsma elaborated the role of love in education in an unpublished article *Meer liefde in de opvoeding*. Titus Brandsma Archives, Boxmeer.

of Carmelites that were involved in the schools decreased. Yet, the leading positions were still held by Carmelites and the teachers of religion were mostly Carmelites. The board of the Foundation was *ex officio* formed by the members of the Provincial board that were chosen at the Provincial Chapter. Some people started to criticize the board for their policy in leading the schools, for instance, that they appointed friars to teach without proper training in pedagogy, stuck to a rector that was regarded 'unprofessional', or transferred a rector that was doing an excellent job.³³ This criticism can be understood as an exponent of a changing culture. In that time, an emancipation of lay people with regard to the religious took place. And the casualness of the high position of the religious in society changed. In line with this development, the need to reorganize *Stichting Carmelcollege* was revealed. In 1968 this reorganization was carried out and the Carmelite order reduced its responsibility. With this reorganization, the Dutch Carmelite Province and *Stichting Carmelcollege* were formally disconnected. The foundation was no longer run under the flag of the Carmelites. However, in the board of *Stichting Carmelcollege* two seats (a minority) were still reserved for Carmelites and in the first years many Rectors were still (appreciated) Carmelite friars.

Some years after the re-organization, research revealed that the majority in the foundation preferred the Carmelite order to be represented in *Stichting Carmelcollege*, but without the minimum criterion of two board members and with the reservation of managerial competence.³⁴ The schools and of the foundation as a whole held on to a Carmelite-Catholic identity - not just to account for the outside world, but also as a principle within the foundation itself. It was chosen to keep the name Carmel. The board of the foundation regarded the maintenance of the 'identity (Catholicity)' as their responsibility.³⁵

Some decades later, in 1996-1997, to celebrate of the 75th anniversary of *Stichting Carmelcollege*, a study was conducted on the inspiration of teachers, entitled "What impassions us?". The researchers used a questionnaire asking about values, norms, denominational background, faith, etc. Remarkably, in the whole research the name

³³ JACOBS, *Kroniek*, 724-730.

³⁴ P. SMETS, N.J.J.M. BAKKER, *De organisatie van de Stichting Carmelcollege: een exemplarische studie naar het bestuur van een onderwijsorganisatie*, Nijmegen, Instituut voor Toegepaste Sociologie, 1979, 121.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 10, 13.

of Carmel or Carmelites does not occur! Not in the questions and not in the answers. A reflection takes place “on the reverification of the identity, and then, the mission and course that follow this reverification”.³⁶

Idealism of inspiration

Although the research method of the study in 1996-1997 was completely different from the study Titus Brandsma performed to give his speech, there is one similarity: both locate the idealism and identity of a school close to practice, namely with the teachers, their opinions, their actions, their inspiration and their enthusiasm. Brandsma emphasizes the role of passion: “Nothing more killing than uninspired students.”³⁷ For teachers, it demands creativity and study to reveal the sensitivity of these students. Brandsma pleads for a positive attitude:

We should not easily resign ourselves to the fact that a large group seems to be missing energy. The human heart is not insensitive, if only the beautiful and the good are made known in the right way. If this happens, then there will arouse passion in a lukewarm heart and a great blessing is gained. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that education is assigned to men and women who have the capacity, even for those who are passive and unenergetic, to bring things alive, to radiate higher values from it, that, in the long run, will certainly captivate the mind.³⁸

Titus Brandsma also warns against pessimism, as a threat to idealism at school. For instance, he mentions the idea that the school serves little more than to keep the children of the streets and that it has little to no use. According to Brandsma, pessimism shows a cloudy vision, a limited horizon, which gives away enthusiasm and idealism. Future teachers must be armed against pessimism. They have to learn to deal with disappointment and disillusionment, in order that it does not depress them and blot out higher values. “Next of shadow is light,” Brandsma says.³⁹ He asks for attention to bright spots that exist in this “superficially viewed, disappointing and disillusioning life”. He speaks about seeing reality, “in which the beautiful, the luminous, is always

³⁶ M. THEUNISSEN Hand others, *Wat bezielt ons? Een project over de inspiratie van de Carmeldocenten voor het onderwijs. Rapportage over de periode november 1996-november 1997*, Nijmegen, Universitair Instituut voor de Lerarenopleiding, 1998, 75.

³⁷ BRANDSMA, *Idealisme*, 55.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid., 69.

connected with the cast shadow of the unsatisfactory.” In his speech, Brandsma continuously recalls the idea that idealism is not located outside reality, and should not be chased out of that reality.

In the Carmelite Rule, the development of resilience is a crucial aspect: a Carmelite “shall use every care and diligence to put on the armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand the deceits of the enemy”.⁴⁰ The armor of God shows six parts, including the breastplate of justice and the shield of faith. And it is said “in silence and hope will be your strength ...”. Titus Brandsma himself is an example of someone who has picked up this resilience. The fruit of that is his defense against racism and his impressive attitude towards the camp bullies. Brandsma continually appealed to humanity in the inhumane situation of Dachau.

Resisting a pessimistic, fatalistic or cynical view of life demands exercises. At *Stichting Carmelcollege* an attitude is promoted that teachers look for the possibilities of students. This approach is called ‘using the green pencil’. While marking papers with a red pen emphasizes all the mistakes and shortcomings in the students’ work, a green pencil calls to a positive appreciation that shows students what they do well and encourage them to learn more. The result of such an approach may be that students not only get insights in what they can, but also learn to deal with mistakes and failures in a positive way. This applies not only to the students but also to the teachers themselves. An eye that exercises in seeing bright spots can make us resilient in dealing with disappointments, or as Brandsma says ‘the cast shadow of the unsatisfactory’.⁴¹

Titus Brandsma himself showed an incredible enthusiasm and passion. He is called “the new Elijah”,⁴² referring to the biblical prophet in whose tradition the Carmelites live. From their origin on Mount Carmel, Elijah is considered the father and leader of the Carmelites. He was a prophet with fierce zeal and with a sword of fire. That passionate inspiration stems from his relationship with God, and from his eye for people. The same is true of Titus Brandsma. He lived with God, and was socially very involved. He saw the people around and was committed to their needs and questions.

⁴⁰ Translation by John Vriend in KEES WAAIJMAN, *The Mystical Space of Carmel. A Commentary on the Carmelite Rule*, Leuven, Peeters, 1999, 34.

⁴¹ BRANDSMA, *Idealisme*, 70.

⁴² For instance, KILIAN HEALY, *Prophet of Fire*, Rome, Institutum Carmelitanum, 1990, 292-304.

A question for teachers, headmasters and others involved at school is: What are you passionate about? When are you deeply moved? And your colleague? Your students? These are questions that open up a space for idealism. In education, enthusiasm, passion, inspiration and motivation are important pillars for learning processes. How does a Carmelite school stimulate the enthusiasm of students and enhance the inspiration of employees?

Nowadays, the schools of *Stichting Carmelcollege* are increasingly developing into 'learning communities', in which not only the students are objects of the learning process, but the school as a whole is learning. By stimulating a learning attitude of the school as a whole, steps are taken to strengthen everyone's enthusiasm for the core tasks of the school. In the reality of the schools we have to be able to detect the success of this policy.

4. COMMUNION

In the last decades, the expansion of *Stichting Carmelcollege* continued with schools in different cities: Oldenzaal (1973), Raalte (1975), Almelo (1978), Oss – several schools (1994-95), Groenlo (1994-95), Eindhoven (1997), Gouda (1998) and Haren (2006).⁴³ One of the reasons for this expansion was that, by state regulations, the scope of *Stichting Carmelcollege* had to widen. In 1990, the Ministry of Education and Science started to labor for comprehensive schools, that offered secondary education in a variety of levels (instead of for instance separate grammar schools). When education was provided in a comprehensive school, students could more easily switch from one level to another. In some of these comprehensive schools also education for children with special needs was provided. Nowadays, special education has become integral part of regular education.

The widened scope of the schools was primarily realized by a fusion wave. For instance in the city of Oss and in Deventer, step by step almost all distinct schools joined each other and formed one comprehensive school under the board of *Stichting Carmelcollege*. In the same development, one Carmelite school (Dordrecht) joined with another local school and choose another coordinating schoolboard, so left *Stichting Carmelcollege*.

⁴³ *Carmel Magazine: Stichting Carmelcollege 90 jaar*, Hengelo, Stichting Carmelcollege, 2012.

Another reason for schools to opt for fusion, was that it became more difficult to facilitate separate schools. This convinced also schools from other parts of the country to knock on the door of *Stichting Carmelcollege*. Some of these schools were originally led by other religious traditions (Marists, Augustinians, Jesuits).

A remarkable development is that even schools without a Catholic identity joined in. Some of these schools were based on Protestant principles, others were not rooted in religion. To enable the participation of these schools (without denying or restraining their own identity), the articles of association of *Stichting Carmelcollege* had to be changed. Since 2001, the originally Catholic foundation became a foundation 'for particular schools of Catholic, interdenominational, Protestant and general particular education'. Nowadays, thirteen comprehensive schools (with over 50 locations) each have their own signature.

According to the articles of association:

Stichting Carmelcollege intends to promote and maintain all forms of secondary education, on the basis of values from the Jewish-Christian tradition, directed by the Catholic religious community from which the Carmelite orderfounded *Stichting Carmelcollege*.⁴⁴

On behalf of a multiform world of faith and culture, the teaching activities intent to contribute to the humanization of the world in a Christian perspective. A translation of this intended contribution is care for people: 'every human being, the whole human being, all human beings'. *Stichting Carmelcollege* regards it as its responsibility to exercise authority not just over Catholic schools but also over 'schools that, from another perspective, realize similar educational activities, especially in guiding students in confrontation with the meaning of life.'⁴⁵

The schools are largely autonomous and independent. At the same time, they form an alliance of solidarity. In the articles of association, the formal relation with the Carmelites is described; The Dutch Carmelite Province has the right to nominate somebody for one seat in the Supervisory Board. Up to now, a Carmelite friar holds that seat.

Idealism of community

In his speech on idealism, Titus Brandsma emphasizes the importance of community sense in education, by pointing at the threat of

⁴⁴ *Statuten*, Hengelo, Stichting Carmelcollege, 2011, art. 2.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

complacency. “It is very good to develop self-esteem at a college of education, but one must continue to keep in mind that one is limited in ones gifts.”⁴⁶ At school, educators complement each other, even beyond the direct colleagues. At school, Brandsma says, “one must strive for continuity, to build on the experience of others, to adapt to others.”⁴⁷ He stresses that one should even learn from “those who take a different route”.⁴⁸

Titus Brandsma regards complacency as an important danger to society. We have to acknowledge that we depend on each other. This is, as Brandsma says in another speech, “one of the first conditions for the restoration of the shattered order”.⁴⁹ He himself manifested this sense of community in his strong social commitment. In 2015, he was posthumously appointed as a honorary citizen of the city of Oss, because of the great merit he had for this city.

At *Stichting Carmelcollege* community sense is challenged in the collaboration of the thirteen schools with more than 50 distinct locations. And within those schools it is elaborated in its communal mission to “care for human beings - every human being, the entire person, and all people.”⁵⁰ In the Dutch multicultural and highly individualized society, schools and teachers are working in the tension between order (program, structure) and diversity (adaptation to the person). In the last decades, space for the person has become of paramount importance: ‘every human being counts’. The schools want to offer space to the diversity of students, the space to have their own opinion, to make their own choices, and to argue and express them. This also implies protecting the vulnerability of students to be unique. Not just the mind is supposed to be addressed at school, but also the emotional, social skills and creative skills should be developed. In other words, ‘the entire person’.

It is not surprising that in this era of diversity the conformation to the individual person is elaborated much more than Titus Brandsma accounts for. Yet, *Stichting Carmelcollege* counterbalances this attention on ‘individualization’ by the threefold-mission of the schools in which ‘every human being’ is always considered in the triad: ‘every human being, the entire person, all people’. This reveals the tension

⁴⁶ BRANDSMA, *Idealisme*, 70.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ TITUS BRANDSMA, *Godsbegrip*, Nijmegen, Dekker en van de Vegt, 1932, 33. English translation by Joachim Smet.

⁵⁰ Identiteit, missie, <https://www.carmel.nl/carmel/identiteit>, 25 October 2017.

between every human being and all people; between every individual and the great community where nobody is ruled out. Thus, the notion of ‘all people’ refers not only to everyone at school but also looks at the boundaries of the school. For example, each school has taken responsibility for one or more social projects, locally and abroad. The school is integral part of the world around.

In his speech, Titus Brandsma links our human interdependency with a need for development, a need to improve the education that is offered by teachers and schools:

When one is aware of his limitations, development will be a joyful future. This [awareness] generates the energy to accept new educative methods and to test new resources. In this perspective, education includes even higher values, which may not be traceable in the current phase of development.⁵¹

Brandsma is confident about the future: “Also here, love for education will prove to be inventive and will provide education with higher values, which are still undeveloped.”⁵²

5. IMPASSIONED PEDAGOGY

For about ten years now, step by step, *Stichting Carmelcollege* rediscovered the Carmelite order as a valuable partner, especially in formulating its identity. This rediscovery of a Carmelite identity was strongly stimulated by KeesWaaajmano.carm., who held a position in the Supervisory Board (2008-2017), and welcomed by the managers of the foundation. In 2013, another huge contribution was made by Ben Wolberso.carm., the then prior-provincial, who was invited to give a lecture for ‘the convent of headmasters’. Wolbers described some values that connect the Carmelite order and the Carmelite schools. This speech was warmly received. As a follow-up, one by one, Carmelites are invited to one of the schools, and have a meeting over one of those values with a small group of students, teachers and/or headmasters. About each of these meetings, an article is published in the school magazine of *Stichting Carmelcollege*.⁵³

⁵¹ BRANDSMA, *Idealisme*, 70.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ CARMEL MAGAZINE, Hengelo, Stichting Carmelcollege, 2015 – 2017.

As a result of the rediscovered connection with the Carmelite order, *Stichting Carmelcollege* now formulates its vision on pedagogy as nourished by – among others – Carmelite spirituality. The Foundation formulates its ‘impassioned pedagogy’ by itself.⁵⁴ It is all but vague or unworldly:

The spiritual ground of our pedagogy should for instance be visible in the way a teacher talks with students about the study results; the way in which teachers speak to each other about the development of students; that students are stimulated to learn and to develop talents; that students are ordered to keep the building clean; and that students receive the attention that they ask for. These events are small in time and space, but have great significance, and can have life-long and formative value. So concrete is impassioned pedagogy. This concrete, impassioned pedagogy is in the hands of everyone who works at school and everyone who is involved in school. No-one can pass the buck to someone else. And everyone can claim this responsibility.⁵⁵

Stichting Carmelcollege is aware of the fact that the formal organization of a school has to facilitate this pedagogy. The Foundation stimulates its employees to see their school as a pedagogical value-based community:

Pedagogy is aimed at the development of young people: the development of their personality; the development of their knowledge and competences; the development of the qualities that make them in their personal life dignified and valuable, and enable them to face their environment valuing.⁵⁶

Valuation is the ability to make a difference between attractive and not attractive, between right and wrong, between doing the right thing and making mistakes, between sense and nonsense. Through this ability, people can stand up in the world in which they live, distinguish, choose and act independently. For the personality of students, the ability to appreciate is decisive.⁵⁷

Education is impossible without hope. Otherwise, what could one offer to the development of students? Pedagogy stands for development. And development is fueled by hope. How do schools keep this hope up? What

⁵⁴ Scholen met een bezielde pedagogie, in *Bezielde professionaliteit: Aandacht*, Hengelo, Titus Brandsma Instituut & Stichting Carmelcollege, 2016, 11-14.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

is hope, if the future should be different from what we can see from today's perspective?⁵⁸

That *Stichting Carmelcollege* rediscovered its Carmelite roots and rekindled the ties with the Carmelite order, is shown in the description of impassioned pedagogy. In this description, Carmelite spirituality is explicitly described by the values that are recognized in it:

Carmelite spirituality calls for a sense of modesty from the understanding that everyone is doing part of the work. Everyone has to share in the work of the community.⁵⁹

- Carmelite spirituality keeps time open: future is coming, a new world that will come to us and that will be more than what we expect of it and make of it. We are working in the present, but not for the benefit of the present.
- Carmelite spirituality keeps the person open: the person is not a malleable and repeatable individual, not a product of educational mechanisms. Ultimately, a person is an open mystery, irreplaceable, and not dividable or adaptable to fixed idea's or roles. As a consequence we have to approach each person with respect; respect the other as he or she is. We have to support the other to discover and show the best of oneself (and withhold our own projections and interests).
- Carmelite spirituality opens the ambition: the ambition of people is not the same as the ambition of an individual who is self-satisfied and who focusses on possessing instead of being. Carmelite spirituality maintains the pedagogical ambition of people who live with each other, appeal to each other, give life to each other.
- Carmelite spirituality keeps life open: when life is concealed by things that are just fun and that lead the attention away from suffering which demands care. Compassion arouses relationships of people who are not self-sufficient. Impassioned pedagogy exists because of this compassion: being attentive and focused, and be present with your head and your heart. It is practicable, also in schools. Are there limits to compassion?
- Carmelite spirituality lives from the Mystery that lives in every person, the Mystery in which everyone shares, the Mystery we cannot own. This Mystery supports us and cares for us like a person. Carmelites call this Mystery God. They give attention to this Mystery and let it turn their lives around for the sake of compassion, from the appreciation that the future is coming, for the sake of trust in life and openness for each other, for the sake of setting free, values that belong to pedagogy.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ Ibid., 13.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 13.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 14.

With the help of this concept of impassioned pedagogy, and in some other initiatives, the distance that has grown in the last decennia of the 20th century between the Carmelite schools and the Carmelite order is being slowly and carefully bridged. The heritage of Titus Brandsma, for instance his sayings on 'knowledge is only half', is a huge contribution to this renewed interest and mutual inspiration.

Idealism of paired values

Although the statement 'knowledge is only half' is easily adapted in the current discussions on values at schools, it is 'only half' of what Titus Brandsma argues for. Even more characteristic for Brandsma, and probably more challenging, is that he pleads for discernment. Not without reason, he recalls at the end of his speech the values that he has mentioned in pairs:

Next of material values there are spiritual values,
besides the intellect love,
in addition to action, consciousness and satisfaction.
Along with school there is family and society.
Next to providing knowledge there is the formation of the heart, the
direction of effort.
Along with shadow light shines,
Apart from disappointment there is reason for trust,
next to ungratefulness there is the gratitude of the community as well as
of the individual
if not by words it is anyway by deeds that show its fruits.
Along with rigidity there is the possibility of development,
Next to insufficiency the ever-enriching torrent of all kinds of devices.⁶¹

With this enumeration of values, two by two, Titus Brandsma indicates the aspect of discernment. Not in order to reject the one and choose the other, but in valuing both. According to Brandsma, idealism stands for making space for discovering and loving what is truly present in reality. In other words, to see them and to appreciate them in day to day reality. He ends his list of values with phrasing the religious layer of these values:

Finally, along with the temporary there is the eternal.
Besides the execution of earthly work the accomplishment of the duty
that is imposed by Providence.

⁶¹ BRANDSMA, *Idealisme*, 70.

Next to the work of man is the work of God, who gives full development.⁶²

There is more than the work of man. In education, we must be aware that the development of students (and teachers) is not just the result of human effort. There is more. Titus Brandsma refers to a reality that Carmelite spirituality cannot and will not omit. As a Carmelite, living in the tradition of Elijah, the fiery prophet, Brandsma could not but testify of God's presence among the people. Also in his thought about God, he is Aristotelian – beholding God in reality, “as the deepest ground of our being, hidden in the profoundest depths of our nature, yet able to be seen and contemplated.”⁶³

For *Stichting Carmelcollege* this explicitly religious aspect of the philosophy of life is not widely shared in the organization. In their own description of impassioned pedagogy they call it ‘the Mystery that lives in every person’. Sometimes this seems to be a matter of language, sometimes the objection against an explicitly religious expressions is more fundamental. Nevertheless, within the mission of the schools to care for human beings, there is the notion of care for ‘the entire person’, which includes dealing with a philosophy of life. And, as we saw described in the articles of association, the foundation supports ‘educational activities, especially in guiding students in confrontation with the meaning of life.’⁶⁴ In this respect it is not without meaning that *Stichting Carmelcollege* gives notice of the idea of openness in Carmelite spirituality. This openness implies the openness to speak about what matters to one another, and to withstand the idea to have – and express – certainty about the constitution of this Mystery of life, one way or the other.

To my opinion, Titus Brandsma would have been proud reading that the schools are so well-aware of their formative task, and search for contemporary language to formulate ‘what is more than knowledge’.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ BRANDSMA, *Godsbegrip*, 33.

⁶⁴ *Statuten*, art. 2.

EXPLORING THE INCULTURATION
OF THE CARMELITE SPIRITUALITY IN AFRICA

FRANÇOIS HUBERT MANGA, O.CARM.

INTRODUCTION

An exploration of the African Carmelite Heritage may be relevant unless some acknowledgements are done. The first could be that word culture itself goes beyond the folkloric orientation of dances, exotic masks, and tourism, but on the contrary, *“the word “culture” in its general sense indicates everything whereby man develops and perfects his many bodily and spiritual qualities; he strives by his knowledge and his labor, to bring the world itself under his control. He renders social life more human both in the family and the civic community, through improvement of customs and institutions. Throughout the time he expresses, communicates and conserves in his works, great spiritual experiences, and desires, that they might be of advantage to the progress of many, even of the whole human family.”*¹ With regard to this, a huge number of questions, opinions, and orientations could be raised when talking of the inculturation of the Carmelite spirituality in Africa. Among the major ones is the variety of cultures available in the continent. Furthermore, the “Inculturation includes two dimensions: on the one hand, *“the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity”* and, on the other, *“the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures.”*² Nevertheless, an attempt is possible to read throughout the history and the reality, the aspects of the presence of the Carmelite spirituality in the African area where the Order is present.

¹ VATICAN II, Pastoral Constitution On The Church In The Modern World, *Gaudium Et Spes*, 53. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html, 4 September 2017.

² Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia In Africa*, 59. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_14091995_ecclesia-in-africa.html, 4 September 2017.

The opening point focusses on historical data, then gives an account of collective illustration and the possibilities in Africa. The following argument will be an extensive narration of the Carmel manifestations in Africa nowadays. Two specific dimensions will be presented namely the Prophet Elijah in the field of social justice in Zimbabwe, and the Scapular and its uses in the juridical affiliation to the Order in Cameroon. A description of the link between Our Lady of Mount Carmel and some African values will prepare a reflexion sustained by three figures, Theresa of Avila, Isidore Bakanja and Titus Brandsma, for an inspirational growing of the Carmelite spirituality in Africa.

1. HISTORICAL BLOOMING

The rising from the Middle Ages

The Middle Ages is a very active period in the history of the Carmelite tradition, although the earliest Carmelite spirit could be found in Africa since the times of Elijah the prophet when he came to the Horeb Mountain in Egypt-land.³ The presence of the Holy family, Jesus, Mary and Joseph in the same Egypt may be an additional historical witness of the Carmelite sign, in a sense, the Virgin Mary is one of the inspirational figures of the Carmelite Order.⁴ In the early Modern Times, the hint of the Carmelite presence in connection with Africa is to be noticed in the past. In fact, Theresa of Avila and her missionary spirit extended beyond the borders of the Spaniard counterpart. Therefore, she became very delighted that some volunteers Spanish Friars were to be sent to the African continent to spread the Carmelite tradition and to widen it. In the meantime, with the agreement, the encouragements and the whole practical planning of the Father Provincial, Jerome Gracian, the foundation of Lisboa in Portugal was set up. Due to some historical circumstances, the King of Spain became the Sovereign of the Kingdom of Portugal.⁵ Thus, the

³ "So Elijah got up. He ate and drank and felt secure. Then Elijah walked for 40 days and nights to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God" (1Kings19:8)

⁴ "When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up! he said. "Take the Child and his mother and flee to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill Him." (Matthew 2:13)

⁵ HARRY S. ASHMORE et al., *Encyclopaedia Britannica: A New Survey of Universal Knowledge*, Volume 18, Chicago, London, Toronto, Encyclopaedia Britannica LTD, 1961, 276.

Carmelite of Spain could act in Portugal. This initial success of the first Carmelite missionary experience helped to extend to Africa.

On the ship called São Antonio, Father Anthony of the Mother of God and few Friars were sent from Lisboa to the Kongo Kingdom on 5th April 1582.⁶ This very first Carmelite missionary's journey will not reach the target because of an accident. About one year later, a second group of five Friars will leave from the same Lisboa harbour for the Congolese Kingdom, once more they will never come to the goal for they were caught by English pirates near the Capo Verde Islands. Finally, on 10th April 1584, a third attempt which departs from the same place, will be the good one. The friars arrived at São Tome on July and cruised on the Kongo river up to Luanda, and then, they joined the locality of Mbanza Kongo, by foot, in November of the same year. Unfortunately, they didn't dwell for a long time. But these pioneers, Father Diego of the Holy Sacrament, Father Diego of the Incarnation and Brother Francis of Jesus spread the seeds of the African Carmel in the Modern Times.

The Carmel had been re-founded in 1934 in Black Africa at Kabwé in the Kasai region, before being transferred to Kananga-Malole.⁷ Today, the Carmelite of the Ancient Observance (O.Carm.) is settled in seven countries in Africa, namely Zimbabwe since 1946, founded by the Irish Province, then in the Democratic Republic of Congo from 1973 came under the Italian Province. The Province of Pernambuco started a foundation in Mozambique as from 1988, the same year for the Tanzania, while Burkina-Faso welcomed the Carmel through the Arago-Valence Province in 2000, Cameroon the next year that is 2001 with the support of the former Lower-German Province and the collaboration of Italy and Congo. Then came Kenya in 2002 as a General Delegation. In addition, it could be important to underline the presence of Carmelite Nuns at Machakos in Kenya, as well as at least four Institutes affiliated to the Order such as The Handmaids of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, founded by the late Bishop Donald R. Lamont in Zimbabwe; the Hermanas Carmelitas del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús in Mozambique and Kenya; the Hermanas de la Virgen Maria del Monte Carmelo in Rwanda and Burundi; the Suore Carmelitane Missionarie di Santa Teresa del Bambino Gesù in

⁶ JOACHIM SMET, *De geschiedenis van de Karmel, Tweede deel, De Post-Tridentijnse Periode (1550-1600)*, Almelo, Provinciaal Nederlands Karmelieten, 1990, 173.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 173.

Tanzania and the Donum Dei Family in Burkina-Faso, Kenya and Cameroon.⁸

An approach of people and their History

The arrival of the Carmelite Order in Africa could be seen as the historical beginning of an enhancing encounter. For the African cultural landscape could fetch incredible possibility to meet a broad range of people and traditions. With regard to that, it is worthy to quote the joyful happiness which characterises the continent. Since the Middle Ages, the Carmelite Order gets in touch with a poetical people as Léopold Sédar-Senghor certifies that “*it is not for nothing that the Breton takes its examples in Black Africa, where he stayed and worked for a couple of years, precisely among the Peuls of Fouledou, who remained close to their origins because, with poetry, they kept their civilisation.*”⁹ Therefore, the meeting point between Africa and the Carmelite Order is the contact with a communicating group. The culture of gathering for discussion, a culture of a rich and original oral and non-verbal style which involves body’s expressions, dances, sounds, colours and emotions. The place and importance of the consultation of the elder are additional enlightening aspects. The Carmelite Rule on a number of occasions talks about listening to or following the opinion of the wisest and the oldest. This approach could be one of the most appreciated and used in Africa, to show the importance of the aged people who are considered like libraries and sources of wisdom. So to say the culture of life, the culture of a broad and extensive family relationships is at the core level of the African vision and identity.

More precisely, reviewing the African identity implies to come through the particular history of most of its people and places in twofold ways, like a coin shows two different aspects. One, the sorrowful is made of sufferings caused by slavery, colonialism, lack of peace, social instability, poverty and a heavy historical negative stigmatisation.

About slavery, for more than 200 years, thousands of people, mainly Black African have been in awful inhuman conditions violated in their dignity, caught like wild animals, sold like household goods,

⁸ SEE CURIA GENERALIS, SECRETARIATUS GENERALIS, *Status Ordinis Fratrum B. Mariae Virginis de Monte Carmelo, Die 31 Julii 2014*, Romae, Edizioni Carmelitane, 2015.

⁹ LÉOPOLD SEDAR-SENGHOR, *La poésie de Sainte Thérèse d’Avila, in Carmelus*, vol 31, Roma, *Institutum Carmelitanum*, (1984), 24.

parked in dirty ships and forced to work like beasts in farms or other ways in Europa and mostly in the American continent. Thousands of them died of illness, neglected wounds, thirst, and hunger or thrown into the sea during demonstrations or fear of anti-slavery ships.¹⁰ Such a point in the history of people is an eternal moral suffering which is not manageable even with money because the human dignity is priceless and never on sold. This is forever engraved in the memories and the history of Black people all over the world.

The colonial organization that followed the slavery is another unfortunate issue in the history of Africa. Without any respect and using all kinds of lies, corruption and violence many European countries came to Africa. The official reason of civilizing is in itself a clear negation of the African cultural originality and difference. Since these times, Europe is presented itself as the centre, or the example, thus everything different is seen as wrong, evil, savage, folkloric and has to be destroyed or converted into the European model or standard. This covers African languages, foods, social organisation, the way of dressing and the educational system usually performed throughout initiations. Therefore, the African people in other to be “civilized” had to abandon their languages and adopt European languages mainly English, French, Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and Italian. Most of their social structures had been changed, and above all, the so-called civilizing mission carried out a massive exploitation system of the natural resources of Africa. Gold, diamonds, petroleum oil, timber, wood, many minerals are systematically robbed. In other to reach and maintain this goal, the meeting of in 1884-1885 at Berlin in Germany divided the African continent between Colonial Rulers notwithstanding the people’s settlements.¹¹ Then, the political power installed and supported by the metropolitan governments were always serving the interests of the masters. Although many people lost a lot of their leaders during the independence wars, the system of exploitation of people and goods continues its inhuman task under the name of neo-colonialism.

Among the consequences of this situation is a permanent political and social instability. The “perestroika” movement and its democracy face a lot of difficulties to change things because the heavy hands of European interests are still mentoring political leaders by promoting the best students and sending away or just killing those who want

¹⁰ H. ASHMORE, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 20, 779-780.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, 338.

to restore justice. Thus, some methods to distract the International Community are creating and maintaining wars by providing weapons to the conflicting sides, corrupting the leaders by arranging them a better social standing life and power upon their peoples and eliminating by every means, the opponents to the system. That is how there is a general poverty context in potentially prosperous places like Sudan, Congo, Central African Republic, Ivory Coast and Mozambique for instance.¹²

The last and not the least dark point is on the intellectual field. Here, many Essays are committed in which African people are deprived of their positive past and their capacities. Several prominent scholars like Hegel described African as wild and unable to change. Others are negating the technological performances of African, its philosophical system, and religious constructions. Some just denied their humanity. The activity of persecution of African people is now ruining his image. On that level, the general stigmatizing process continues by spreading all over the very odd illustration of African. They are pictured as unable to govern themselves, with many addictions and poor morally as well as financially. Some Media actively contribute to that campaign by reducing the whole continent of 54 countries into one big poor and bizarre island in the world. They even remove from Africa some “developed places.” With regard to that, Africa becomes synonymous with black people, poverty, misery, wars, HIV/AIDS, Ebola, underdevelopment, violation of human rights, refugees, hunger, a place for Safari, drought and so on. The impact is real and quick. For example, African in the world are always seen as poor miserable people in need for some assistance, and unfortunately, this image is shared in many Institutions throughout flyers for funds raise campaigns. Evidently, the psychological, challenges are difficult to overcome but not impossible. Even though, this intellectual and general negative ambiance creates what is called by some as “*African self-doubt*,”¹³ there are many signs of hope shared by Christ in the Church.

Besides this iniquitous vision, there are nevertheless positive aspects which shaped the second side of the coin. Africa is a place to go and to better discover because of the vast ignorance of the reality and the history. The pyramids of Egypt will remain one unforgettable

¹² Ibid., Vol. 1, 304.

¹³ https://store.kobobooks.com/en-NL/ebook/a-history-of-catholic-moral-theology-in-the-twentieth-century?utm_campaign=TextQuotesIOS&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=App_Acq, note 54, from LaurentiMagesa, ‘Locating the Church among the Wretched of the Earth,’ CTEWC, 49-56, at 50, 3 September 2017.

technological height. The same with some famous Christian famous names like Saint Augustin of Hippo,¹⁴ Saint Cyprian of Cartage,¹⁵ whose influence in the theological development of the Catholic Church is rewarding. Again, in the same line are intellectual activities around the University of Timbuktu,¹⁶ the power and magnificence of Kingdoms like Congo, Mali, Monomotapa, Zulu, Songhai, Akan in the Middle Ages.¹⁷ Many of them at that time had diplomatic relations with other Kingdoms in Europe.¹⁸ The history of Africa today is an extensive full range of possibilities for business, for religious vocations, for hope at many levels. With a very young and dynamic population, Africa brights in the world and attracts new and positive energies for a real sustainable development in a full independence and mutual respect.

The Carmelite tradition in Africa in some sense can bring a lot of relevant and proficient human and spiritual expertise. With more than eight hundred years of experience, a solid tradition and open spaces for innovative ideas, the Carmelite Order which flows from the Church Tradition carries some beneficial elements to share. The spiritual richness focused on the personal encounter with God, the living-together experience¹⁹ with brothers and sisters and a life structured on awareness of God's presence,²⁰ work,²¹ worship,²² silence,²³ creativity²⁴ and some others are rooted in the Carmelite Rule.

¹⁴ Aurelius Augustinus (354-430), Bishop of Hippo in Algeria, see H. ASHMORE, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 2, 681.

¹⁵ Caecilius Cyprianus, (200-258), Bishop of Carthage in Algeria, see *Ibid.*, Vol. 6, 930.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, 333.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, 335.

¹⁸ See JEAN – PAUL MESSINA, *Culture, Christianisme et quête d'une identité africaine*, Coll. Eglises d'Afrique, Paris, Ed. L'Harmattan, 2007, 57.

¹⁹ "The first thing I lay down is that you shall have a prior, one of yourselves, chosen by the unanimous consent of all, or of the greater and more mature part. (...)" (Rule 4).

²⁰ "All are to remain in their cells or near them, meditating day and night on the law of the Lord and being vigilant in prayers, unless otherwise lawfully occupied." (Rule 10).

²¹ "You should do some work (...)" (Rule 20).

²² "Those who have learned to say the canonical hours with the clerics should do so according to the practice of the holy Fathers and the approved custom of the Church. Those who do not know the hours are to say the Our Father twenty-five times for the night office-except for Sunday and solemn feasts when this number is doubled so that the Our Father is said fifty times. It is to said seven times for the morning Lauds and for the other Hours, except for Vespers when it must be said fifteen times." (Rule 11).

²³ "(...) Silence, which is the promotion of justice, is to be diligently and carefully observed." (Rule 21).

²⁴ "If anyone does more the Lord himself when he comes again will repay him." (Rule 24).

The Carmelite tradition in the amidst the African cultural sphere.

The Carmelite Spirituality in Africa can be seen in various ways. The first is in the presence of the Carmelite in many African countries. The Ancient Observance is present in Cameroon, Burkina-Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. The Friars are involving in numerous activities like running parishes, schools, spiritual centres, and hospitals. Alongside with these social and spiritual commitments, they are taking care of their Convents and provide training to Novices and young religious. At that point, a significant effort is made to work together. For instance, the experience of a Pan African Novitiate is on the way since one decade in Cameroon. In fact, the Novitiate Saint Theresa of Lisieux at Ekali in Cameroon welcomes candidates from Burkina-Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo and Cameroon. The same with the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Studies house at Yaounde which has Young Carmelites from Burkina-Faso and Cameroon.

Another important thing can be noticed about the inculturation of the Carmelite Spirituality in Africa is in the languages. The name of Our Lady of Mount Carmel itself is translated into local dialects for a better understanding. For example, in Mooré, Holy Mary Queen of Carmel is translated "*Mariam Songo Karmel*." In San, the dialect of the Samo in Burkina-Faso, Mary Mother of the Carmel is "*Carmel n Dan Maria*." In Dioula, a commercial language available in some West African countries (Burkina-Faso, Ivory Coast, Mali, Conakry Guinea, Liberia), Holy Mary Mother of Carmel is given by "*Maria Senu Carmel Ba*". In Bissa, the dialect of the Bissa tribe, Mary, Mother of Carmel is given by "*Mariam ninga Carmel Da*." This original and efficient way to come to God through the Virgin Mary is opened to everyone, to family and individual as well. Other names from local languages like "*Nna Maria ya Nkol Karmel*" in Ewondo Language of Cameroon; "*Bustani ya Karmeli*" in Nkoroi dialect of Kenya, and with hymns like "*toko bonde layo ee*", a litany from Congo can be noticed as expression of the inculturation of the Carmel in Africa.

Moreover, many projects of an in-depth taking over the Carmelite Tradition are carrying out like the translation of the Carmelite Rule in Ewondo language in Cameroon. Some relevant reflexions and comments are also available as inculturation of the handing over the Carmelite Rule, like the analysis of Insun Joanne Lee.²⁵ The Friars are

²⁵ INSUN JOANNE LEE, *Carmelite heritage speaks across the cultures*, in *Carmel in the World*, n. 1, Vol. XLVIII, Roma, Edizioni Carmelitane, 2009.

also working very hard to print out Carmelite names in the mind and history of people with patronages and actions like pilgrimages to Marian shrines, with conferences on Our lady and the dedication of many Houses, Monasteries, Convents, Novitiatehouses: and parishes: Paroisse Notre Dame du Mont Carmel at Koumou-Cameroon; Mount Carmel Parish Harare-Zimbabwe; Paroisse Notre Dame du Mont Carmel de Mukuna-Butembo-Democratic Republic of Congo or the Scholasticat Notre Dame du Mont Carmel de Nkolbisson-Cameroon. We can also quote the Elijah Priory, at Nyazura-Zimbabwe; the Comunidade Santa Tereza d'Avila in Maputo-Mozambique; the Noviciate Sainte Therese de Lisieux of Efulan-Cameroon; the Mount Carmel Community in Harare-Zimbabwe; the Saint-Simon Stock Priory of Rusape-Zimbabwe; the Scholasticat Bienheureux Isidore Bakanja in Kinshasa-DR Congo or the Centre de Spiritualité Titus Brandsma of Butembo Democratic Republic of Congo.

As said above, the Carmelite Spirituality came through Missionaries. But, following the appeal of the Pope Paul VI when he said, "*by now, you Africans are missionaries to yourselves*,"²⁶ there are signs of responsibility and maturity in many places where things are entirely managed by African Carmelites themselves like in Burkina-Faso. Moreover, the Africa Continent has its own and African General Counsellor. The first was from DR Congo, the Very Reverend Father Desiré Unen Alimange and now it is the Very Reverend Father Conrad Mutizamhepo from Zimbabwe. Additionally, in the coming years, some African Carmelites Delegations could upgrade to Commissariates and why not to Provinces.

2. SOME CARMELITES FIGURES AND AFRICAN CHALLENGES OF TODAY

Elijah mentoring's example.

The Carmelite Order always sees in the Holy Prophet Elijah an inspirational figure of its Spirituality because the reference to the Well in Wadi-ain-en Siah, according to many scholars is about the Holy Man.²⁷

²⁶ PAUL VI, Homely during the eucharistic celebration at the conclusion of the symposium organized by the bishops of Africa, Kampala (Uganda), 31 July 1969, https://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/homilies/1969/documents/hf_p-vi_hom_19690731.html. 2 September 2017.

²⁷ See RICHARD COPSEY, (Ed), *The Ten Books on the Way of life and Great Deeds of the Carmelites*, Faversham, Roma, Saint Albert's Press and Edizioni Carmelitane, 2005, 45.

The Prophet Elijah, in fact, appears in the Bible as a great and genuine friend of God. In the name of God, he performed many wonderful things, and he is the herald of the monotheism. His name expresses his special character and function in biblical history: *Yahweh is God, Yahweh is my God*. He defends and preserves faith in one God within the people. His fierce struggle against all form of religious syncretism makes him the Prophet of Fire, whose word shines like a burning torch.²⁸

He experienced a serious confrontation with Jezebel and challenged the Baal prophets. On Mount Carmel, he made it clear to the people that there is only one true God.²⁹ Fed miraculously in the desert as he fled the furious Jezebel, he walked forty days and forty nights to the Horeb where he experienced the Presence of the living God in the silence and gentleness of a smooth breeze. From there he performed three great acts: he anointed Hazael as King of Damascus, Jehu as King of Israel and Elisha as a prophet.³⁰ His life ends as it had unfolded, that is, in a marvellous way, where God is omnipresent. He who closed the heaven three and a half years, who raised up the death son, who multiplied the flour and oil at Sarepta, Elijah, was taken up to heaven by a fire chariot leaving his cloak and shared the spirit to Elisha.³¹

With Moses, he is on the Tabor during the Transfiguration of Christ. Their presence in Tabor testifies in anticipation of Jesus' exaltation that the New Covenant is the crowning of the Old. Elijah is also presented by the Apostle Saint James in his Letter as the model of effective prayer.

Meanwhile, this knowledge of the life and the deeds of the Holy Prophet Elijah are not only celebrated in Africa. When reading the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* which stated

²⁸ "Then there arose the fiery prophet Elijah, whose words blazed like a torch." Sirach 48:1.

²⁹ "King Ahab told his wife Jezebel everything that Elijah had done and how he had put all the prophets of Baal to death. She sent a message to Elijah: "May the gods strike me dead if by this time tomorrow I don't do the same thing to you that you did to the prophets." Elijah was afraid and fled for his life; he took his servant and went to Beersheba in Judah." 1Kings 19:1-3.

³⁰ "Elijah left and found Elisha plowing with a team of oxen; there were eleven teams ahead of him, and he was plowing with the last one. Elijah took off his cloak and put it on Elisha." 1Kings 19:19.

³¹ "There, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me what you want me to do for you before I am taken away." "Let me receive the share of your power that will make me your successor," Elisha answered." 2Kings 2:9.

that *“The saints have been traditionally honoured in the Church and their authentic relics and images held in veneration. For the feasts of the saints proclaim the wonderful works of Christ in His servants, and display to the faithful fitting examples for their imitation,”*³² the Prophet Elijah is therefore to be imitated and used as a very inspirational standard for concrete actions. The example of the Carmel in Zimbabwe could then be mentioned.

With Elijah, fighting for Human Rights in Zimbabwe.

The exemplary attitude of Elijah brought the possibility to find in the Holy Scriptures a model in the denouncing bad and dangerous condition of human beings, and the engagement of fighting against the abuses of the Human Rights. *“Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, “Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who is in Samaria; behold, he is in the vineyard of Naboth, where he has gone to take possession.”*³³ So, by defending the Rights of the poor and weak Naboth, Elijah gives a vivid model to Carmelites. That is why in a certain way, his spirit helps to fight against injustice towards people and Human Dignity in Africa.

With regard to that, the Carmelite Family in Zimbabwe provides a very friendly African inculturation method of defending Human Rights from the example of the Prophet Elijah. In fact, since many years, the Carmelite Family in association with other Non-Governmental Organizations is highlighting on critical concerns. Xenophobia, murders, intimidations, human traffic and extraordinary abuses against women and girls. Thus, they make these situations known to the United Nations System and provide some reliable solutions, in the document entitled *“Women’s Statement On Zimbabwe.”*³⁴ For instance, about the Human trafficking, the Carmelites agree that *“Zimbabwe is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children trafficked for forced labor and sexual exploitation. Large scale migration of Zimbabweans to surrounding countries has increased – as they flee a progressively more desperate situation*

³² VATICAN II, *Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 111. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html, 2 September 2017.

³³ *“Then the Lord said to Elijah, the prophet from Tishbe, “Go to King Ahab of Samaria. You will find him in Naboth’s vineyard, about to take possession of it.”* 1Kings 21:17-18.

³⁴ Carmel NGO, http://carmelitengo.org/carm_special_issues/zimbabwe/zim.womens_statement.htm, 29 August 2017.

at home – and NGOs, international organizations, and governments in neighbouring countries report that some of these Zimbabweans face human trafficking.”³⁵ That is why Zimbabwean Carmelites engage themselves with victims and other volunteers to stop such an awful and shameful practice. They are more strengthened by spiritual means like a prayer they issued for Zimbabwe and its people:³⁶

Our Zimbabwe

This upheaval, this unrest, this time that has been sent to test, my faith, my love, my rational thought, if I let go, will sink to naught. So, Father, I ask by me you will stand, as I stand proud for my land. Let not race nor class nor colour decide, Let me stand in the gap of this divide. Help me to stand strong, when others fall, let me stand firm, let me stand tall. Let no man question my will, even when provoked, let me be still. Give me calm and peace of mind, uncover my eyes, and remove the blind. Father place your mighty hand, to cover the wounds of this broken land. Wash away the blood of war; Open the locked, closed door. Father stands by those who weep, and show us that colour is only skin deep. Let us stand for what is right, but not with anger nor with fight. Be with those brave enough to stand, for what they believe for this land. Be with those who fear, Show them your presence ever near. And even in our darkest hour, remind us of your ultimate power. Zimbabwe will be a shining light, not through power, nor through might, but with forgiveness, and without greed, Lord raise strong people to lead. A new Zimbabwe will rise again, without the anguish and the pain. And united, together we will stand, upon the ground of this our land. The will of God will not take you to where the grace of God will not protect you. Amen.

The Scapular as a juridical commitment in Cameroon.

Now it could be worthy to come to the Scapular which is still considered as one spiritual way to handle the Carmelite Spirituality. It is given at the beginning of the postulate in Cameroon for example, and to people who come to adopt this Spirituality in Carmelite Confraternities or other Christian Associations. The case of the Blessed Isidore Bakanja, the Martyr of the Brown Scapular, allows discovering of another typical African use of the Scapular, as a juridical connection with the Order, particularly because of the more sensitive tradition than an intellectual and abstract process.

³⁵ <http://gvnet.com/humantrafficking/Zimbabwe.htm>, 3 September 2017.

³⁶ http://carmelitengo.org/carm_special_issues/zimbabwe/zim.prayer.htm. 3 September 2017.

The Carmel bears the Marian history and fetches it a singular taste. The Carmelites actually are the only ones to be called "*Brothers of the Virgin Mary.*" They create a more intimate relationship between them and the Mother of God. That is why, as early as July 17, 1274, when the Second Council of Lyon confirmed the existence of the Carmelites, they began to celebrate each year that day the Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. The date of July 16 first appears in a Breviary in Venice in 1481.³⁷

Over the times, this celebration will carry various titles: Commemoration of Blessed Mary, Solemn Commemoration of Blessed Mary, Solemn Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and finally Solemn Commemoration of the Blessed Virgin Mary among others. The Scapular which is also celebrated on that day is seen and used in Africa and particularly in Cameroon as a juridical sign of belonging to the Carmelite Family. This comes out of the words said by the priest during the imposition of the Scapular. In the Book of Blessings, one can read that

"Then the priest sprinkles the scapular with holy water and imposes it upon the person (or upon each person), saying:

Receive this blessed Scapular and ask the holiest Virgin that, by her merits, it may be worn with no stain of sin and may protect you from all harm and bring you into everlasting life.

After this the priest adds:

*By the power granted to me, I admit you to a share in all the spiritual works performed with the merciful help of Jesus Christ by the religious of Mount Carmel. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."*³⁸

The Carmelites never felt alone, for in joy as well as in sorrows, she always showed them her presence, her participation, and her help. In the history of the Order, the Virgin Mary has always intervened in its favour, even at the highest level of the hierarchy. In a context of more oral tradition, the Scapular conveys very well the meaning of a proper commitment of someone to the Order. Thus, every 16th July or the nearest Saturday or Sunday, the Carmelites Friars, the Lay Carmelites and all the Church's Associations which share the

³⁷ See EMANUELE BOAGA, LUIGI BORRIELLO (Ed), *Dizionario Carmelitano*, Roma, Città Nuova, 2008, 541.

³⁸ CATHOLIC NEWS AGENCY, <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resources/prayers/devotions/to-the-blessed-virgin-mary/blessing-and-imposition-with-the-scapular-of-our-lady-of-mount-carmel/>, 29 August 2017.

spirituality of the Carmel use to gather at a single chosen place to meet and to welcome new members through the imposition of the Scapular during a Mass. This comes after two or three years' instruction's period. Succeeding the reception of the Scapular, their names are kept in a particular Register. Usually, a big joyful feast follows with a lot of food, drinks, and dances.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel and some African values

Leopold Sédar-Senghor said about women that: *"and now in the heart of the summer and midday, I discover you, the promise land, from the top of a burned hill (...) Your voice of Alto is the spiritual song of the Beloved (...) I praise your beauty whose flowing shape I keep to the Everlasting."*³⁹ With regard to this poetry piece, the place and the meaning of the woman and the mother in Africa are very relevant and even carry a spiritual sense. The figure of the Virgin Mary can be already seen in the Old Testament under various names and functions. Therefore, she is the Mother of the Redeemer;⁴⁰ The Virgin Mother of the Emmanuel;⁴¹ Mother of the Messiah;⁴² The Mother of the humble and the poor.⁴³ Additionally, in the New Testament, she is more intimately linked to the life of Christ in its three dimensions: private (hidden), public and the glorious.

In the hidden life of Jesus, she is his mother since the Annunciation.⁴⁴ She is seen going to Egypt, to save her child's life;⁴⁵ Mary

³⁹ LÉOPOLD SEDAR-SENGHOR, *Poèmes*, 16-17.

⁴⁰ "I will make you and the woman hate each other; her offspring and yours will always be enemies. Her offspring will crush your head, and you will bite her offspring's heel." Gn 3:15.

⁴¹ "Well then, the Lord himself will give you a sign: a young woman who is pregnant will have a son and will name him 'Immanuel.' By the time he is old enough to make his own decisions, people will be drinking milk and eating honey. Even before that time comes, the lands of those two kings who terrify you will be deserted." Is 7:14-16.

⁴² "The Lord says, "Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are one of the smallest towns in Judah, but out of you I will bring a ruler for Israel, whose family line goes back to ancient times." So the Lord will abandon his people to their enemies until the woman who is to give birth has her son. Then those Israelites who are in exile will be reunited with their own people." Mi 5:2-3.

⁴³ "I will leave there a humble and lowly people, who will come to me for help." Zep 3:12.

⁴⁴ "The angel came to her and said, "Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!" Lk 1:28.

⁴⁵ "After they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph and said, "Herod will be looking for the child in order to kill him. So get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you to leave." Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and left during the night for Egypt." Mt 2:13-14.

seeks and finds her beloved Son in the Temple after three days of anguish.⁴⁶ In the public life, she is acted at Cana where Christ performs his first miracle and fulfilled her request.⁴⁷ The glorious life is about the militant Church⁴⁸ and in the triumphant one.⁴⁹

In the patristic tradition, some names of those who wrote most about her until the 8th century like Saint Ignatius, Saint Irenaeus, Origen (who would have used for the first time the name Theotokos, Mother of God), Saint Hippolyta of Rome, Tertullian, Saint Ambrose, Saint Augustine of Hippo, gently quoted the Virgin Mary. In a broad Catholic doctrine, many aspects have emerged and proposed to the people likewise the Divine Motherhood;⁵⁰ The Virginité of Mary;⁵¹ The Immaculate Conception;⁵² The Assumption of the Virgin Mary.⁵³

According to the Carmelite spirituality, the Virgin Mary is one of the brightest figures. That is why, the devotion to the Apparitions of Fatima and the Rosary can more easily be joined to the Carmelite spirituality. Through her, in the Carmel, one can learn what is discipleship because Mary *“is the disciple who follows her Son, the Wisdom of the God.”*⁵⁴ And in the African Carmelite, she remains the eminent reference. Mary is very close to the Carmel, and she gives the particular spiritual color to those who intend to deal with the Carmelite spirituality. Concretely, Carmelite friars are promoting membership for Rosary Confraternities, special celebration on Saturdays are performed and in Cameroon for instance, the Hour of the Mother, a unique ritual which is celebrated only at noon, the Good Saturday. Until now in Africa, it is common in many parts of the Third Order for members to pray the Rosary on a daily basis, to wear the Brown Scapular and in some place the White Mantle.

⁴⁶ *“On the third day, they found him in the Temple, sitting with the Jewish teachers, listening to them and asking questions.”* Lk 2:46.

⁴⁷ *“Two days later there was a wedding in the town of Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine had given out, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They are out of wine.”* Jn 2:1-3.

⁴⁸ *“They gathered frequently to pray as a group, together with the women and with Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers.”* Acts 1:14.

⁴⁹ *“Then a great and mysterious sight appeared in the sky. There was a woman, whose dress was the sun and who had the moon under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on her head.”* Rev. 12:1.

⁵⁰ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, 103, *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 15, *Lumen Gentium*, 52.

⁵¹ *Lumen Gentium*, 57, 63, 69.

⁵² *Lumen Gentium*, 59.

⁵³ Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*, 46.

⁵⁴ JOHAN BERGSTRÖM – ALLEN (Ed), *Climbing the Mountain, The Carmelite Journey*, Faversham-Roma: Saint Albert Press and Edizioni Carmelitane, 2010, 86.

This is in the line of the Constitutions of 1995 where the Carmelite spirituality is “*the process of detachment which leads to union with God (...) in the expressions purity of heart and total availability to God.*”⁵⁵ When going more deeply, it could be noticed that the Virgin Mary, the Patroness, the Sister and the Queen of the Carmel fulfilled this perfectly and shared it with the Carmelite reality in Africa. That is why even in Africa, the “*Carmelites see in the Virgin Mary, Mother of God an archetype of the Church in perfect image of all that they want and hope to be.*”⁵⁶

Nevertheless, the devotional engagement doesn't push people far from the everyday concerns and does not “*consist of moral or ethical instructions that do not satisfy the hunger of human beings for spiritual food and that respect neither the maturity of believers nor their responsibility for their moral behavior.*”⁵⁷ But on the contrary, these elements guide on how the people can make their relationship with God a living one, how to pray and how they can live in the presence of God in everyday life. That's why in the Carmel, we consider that “*all that we desire and all that we wish to be today was fulfilled in the lives of the Prophet Elijah and of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*”⁵⁸

3. THE CARMELITE SPIRITUALITY, A PROD FOR AFRICA

Theresa of Avila: a fruitful and solid friendship with God.

Teresa of Cepeda y Ahumada was born on 28 March 1515 in Avila in Spain. In 1536, she received the habit of the Order in the Monastery of the Incarnation of Avila under the name of Sister Teresa of Jesus. Then, in 1557 after a meeting with the Suffering Christ, she experienced the second conversion. Therefore, began for her an intense spiritual period with visions, mystical graces, trans-verberation. She then desires to practice the Rule with a greater perfection. In agreement with her superiors and some nuns of her Monastery of the Incarnation, she embarked to the foundation of a new Monastery where the so-called “primitive” Rule will be lived perfectly. Thus, on 24 August 1562 the Monastery of Saint Joseph is inaugurated. She will

⁵⁵ Carmelite Constitutions 15.

⁵⁶ Carmelite Constitutions 27.

⁵⁷ MICHAEL PLATTIG. *Practical Examples of the Meaning of Carmelite Spirituality for the Church*, in *The Sword*, Vol. 72, n° 1, 201, 102.

⁵⁸ Constitutions 25.

found nearly 16 other monasteries. The year 1582 will be very active and the first three Missionary Carmelites are sent to Kongo with her support. On October 4th, 1582, she died at Alba de Tormes. She was canonized by Pope Gregory XV in 1622 and 1970 she was proclaimed a Doctor of the Church.⁵⁹

We also are foundations.

"I have sometimes heard it said concerning the beginning of Religious Orders, that because they were beginnings, our Lord bestowed greater favours on those saints who preceded us. And so indeed it is: but we should consider that we also are foundations for those who come after us; and if we who are now living had not fallen away from the fervour of our predecessors, and if those who succeed us should not do the like, the building would always continue firm and immovable."⁶⁰

These words of the Church's Doctor Theresa of Jesus sounds like a permanent recall to all Carmelite and especially those in Africa. There is still a lot to do. But the most notable achievement is to make God presence among his people. Then, empowered by him, the hard work will create a place where there is social equality, justice, respect for Human Rights, no discriminations and the promotion of Human Dignity. A place where poverty will be a remote and passed souvenir. Baba Simon, an African Missionary nourished by Theresa's ideal, will argue that it is illogical to say to people *"let them drink dirty water, it is not Jesus Christ! Because when God created, the water was clean. If we drink dirty water, it comes at this time very bad! Now we have the intelligence so that we can purify our water ..."*⁶¹ So to say there is no friendship between God and social poverty and it is a fake worship of God where people are sick, illiterate, don't have drinkable water, no food, no peace and so on. African Carmelite is in a massive session of Foundation, not only the one of the additional devotions, but also the one of better living conditions.

Isidore Bakanja: The courage among us.

Bakanja was born between 1880 and 1890 at Ikengo-Bokendela in the former Belgian Congo, nowadays Democratic Republic of

⁵⁹ E. BOAGA - L. BORRIELLO (Ed.), *Dizionario Carmelitano*, 932-935.

⁶⁰ THERESA OF AVILA, *The book of Foundations*, Chap. IV, n. 6.
<https://archive.org/details/TheBookOfTheFoundations>, 29 August 2017.

⁶¹ <http://babasimon.com/Télévision-Farin.htm>, 29 August 2017.

Congo. He settled in Coquilhatville also called Mbandaka, where he got a job in a Belgian company. There, he joined the Catholic religion and received the baptism under the name of Isidore, on May 6th, 1906. He was clothed by the Scapular of Carmel on the same occasion. After that, Isidore was recruited as a servant to one of the bosses of the company and moved to Ikiki in 1909. There, he faced the hostility of an agnostic atmosphere promoted by Van Cauter who disliked the Church because according to him, it reduces the authority of the Europeans by emancipating the natives. So, Isidore refuses to deny his faith and to remove the Scapular, because, for him, such a request is an abuse of authority. Hence, he will be whipped to the blood with rusty nails, then imprisoned and bound with heavy chains. Fortunately, the Manager of the company is informed and immediately ordered the release of the young Isidore, took care of his wounds and convicted the wicked Regent. Seriously hurt, Isidore will bear for six months the atrocious pains of the general infection which undermined him. Thus, on 15th August 1909, he surrendered his life to God while forgiving his executioner. In recognition of Isidore Bakanja's no-fault conduct and his attachment to the love of Christ and Our Lady by the Scapular, Pope John Paul II beatified him on 24th April 1994, in Rome.⁶²

The spirituality of the work.

The experience of Isidore is helpful because it gave a meaningful place to the sense of work which is sometimes described as a punishment given by God to the human. The work is, on the contrary, the collaborative participation of the human to the creation that is to be done continuously. Moreover, not to celebrate a cult of work, the man achieves his life by doing something, by working.⁶³ The salary is indeed significant, but, additionally, there is a great pleasure for somebody when he is doing his work as an artist. This is the position of Isidore who sees his job like the one of the artist. He expressed it when he answered to Van Cauter, his boss that: "*I always do very well all that I have to do, and what lacks*"? According to him, the salary is not the only goal. Hence, his attitude is a serious message against the ideology of the money. When the financial mind seems to bring

⁶² E. BOAGA, *Celebrating the Saints of Carmel*, Roma, Edizioni Carmelitane, 2010, 141.

⁶³ "*You should do some work so that the devil will always find you occupied and he may not through your idleness find some entrance to your souls.*" (Rule, 20).

everybody in the field of benefits without any questions of morality and conviction, Isidore is not ready to sacrifice his faith for his job.⁶⁴

Isidore's spirituality of work could, therefore, be like feeding the human work with spiritual elements or opening the human activities to spirituality. This is breaking the wall between the spirituality and the work. Isidore allows to acknowledge the bridge between the motivation and the occupation. For, at the end of every realization, for a Christian, it's evident that the satisfaction should be the one of God: *Everything that he has done is right!*⁶⁵ Some social deviations like corruption could be fought at its roots with such ideas. The spirituality of work is also to imitate God by giving to oneself the time to rest. In many countries, authorities are encouraging people to work more to gain more. This become a modern way of slavery. Working more is good, but likewise God, it is good also to have somerest.⁶⁶ The human life is to be respected, to be handled with care of and to be loved.

Titus Brandsma: A call to Innovation.

Born on 23 February 1881 at Ugoklooster in the Netherlands, Anno Sjoerd Brandsma enters the Carmel in 1899 under the name of Titus. He is ordained priest in 1905 and made his philosophical studies at the Gregorian Pontifical University of Rome. Then, for fifteen years, he taught this subject to his young Confreres at Oss where he also developed a pastorship interest by managing a journal of Marian devotion; engaging himself as Chief-Editor of a local newspaper; opening a Catholic library; setting a monument to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in a public square, organizing numerous exhibitions and a missionary congress, and finally translating the works of Teresa of Avila into Dutch. In 1923, he was appointed Professor of Philosophy and History of Mysticism at the Catholic University of Nijmegen, where he will later act as Rector Magnificus for two years. Besides the scientific activities, Titus dedicates himself to the unity of the churches, the conversion of non-Catholics, the development of the Frisian language and culture, the worship of Mary, the interest to the local Saints and those of the Order. Also, he

⁶⁴ See REDEMPTUS MARIA VALABEK, *Profiles in Holiness I*, Roma, Edizioni Carmelitane, 2004.

⁶⁵ "God looked at everything he had made and found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed—the sixth day." Gn 1:31.

⁶⁶ "On the seventh day God completed the work he had been doing; he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken." Gn 2:2.

wrote a Dutch Catholic Encyclopaedia and was the chaplain of the Catholic journalists.⁶⁷

Notwithstanding the numerous tasks, he was always in a good mood. In every activity, he remained a man of ardent faith and deep spirituality. After the occupation of the Netherlands by Germany in 1940, he defended the Catholic schools and refused to hand over the Jewish pupils. In 1942, he was arrested by the Gestapo and imprisoned in Scheveningen. The same year, in 26th July, in the Concentration Camp of Dachau, he is killed by a lethal injection and his body cremated. On 3rd November 1985, Titus Brandsma was beatified in Rome by Pope John Paul II.⁶⁸

Towards an extensive vision.

Titus Brandsma can be a very prophetic model he shows that in order to actually manage the human conditions, it could be worthy to have more than one possibility. Therefore, the life and deeds of Titus Brandsma appear as a great and original inspiration for African Carmelites. The need for new and innovative methods of implementing and actualizing the Carmelite Tradition in Africa require bold initiatives and a wide range of training. Thus, it could be beneficial and relevant to diversify the specialization of African Carmelite according to the reality of every country. Consequently, for a new brand of Carmelites, why not having medical Doctors, Architects, IT technicians, Journalists, Climate and Environment Specialists, Lawyers and other good and fitting occupations and specialisations available and useful, while living concretely as the Brothers of Mount Carmel according to the Rule, and the rich mystical tradition of Carmel, which are of great importance to give shape to the contemplative dimension of the Order.

CONCLUSION

The above itinerary couldn't be the only one nor the outcome of the analysis, but it intends to be one vision among many, and one contribution among others which are to come and which have been done. That is why it wholeheartedly agrees that:

⁶⁷ See LEOPOLD GLUECKERT, *Titus Brandsma, Friar against fascism*, Darien, IL, Carmelite Press.

⁶⁸ E. BOAGA, *Celebrating the Saints of Carmel*, 127.

“Throughout centuries, the Christian Mysticism will always follow the biblical quest of God. Therefore, the prayer will sometimes be the dialogue of the Psalmist, sometimes the dark pilgrimage through the eternal silence of spaces and elements. The answer to the voice of the Canticle could be the voices of Therese, of Saint John of the Cross or Saint Ignatius. At the end, it is the same way that will inflame the Rhineland Archangelism of Tauler or Master Eckart. Moreover, the Flemish realism of the Imitation of Jesus Christ (if it is the work of A Kempis), or of Gerard Groote joins the fervour of the Fathers who painted the Madonna seated like the great bourgeois ladies of their country. All this was individual and traditional prayers, because God not even disdain the temperament of peoples. Brigitte and Catherine of Siena have enriched the Christian piety with the contributions of their character. In the Netherlands, the Beguine Hadewych delivers all his mystical experience through a seasonal lyricism obviously depended on the moist and damp climate of the Flanders counterpart. Thus, it is sure that a matured African Christianity, must address God in a language that is its own. And that language does exist.”⁶⁹

That language is the testimony of the African Carmelite today, and at the same time, it still has to come out through original forms.

⁶⁹ ENGELBERT MVENG, *L'art d'Afrique Noire, Liturgie cosmique et langage religieux*, Yaoundé, Editions CLE, 1974, 44.

FRATERNITY AMONG THE SHONA AND
IN CARMELITE TRADITION:
AN ASSESSMENT OF ITS MEANING AND PRACTICE

CONRAD MUTIZAMHEPO, O.CARM.

There are multitudes of African cultures. In their multiplicity African cultures generally show some level of homogeneity when it comes to the conception of fraternity. Fraternity or brotherhood constitutes the life-blood of community. This quality of fraternity, especially among the Bantu peoples¹, is part of the essence of being human. Fraternity expresses a rich tapestry of kinship, family and clan relationships which extends to the greater society and nation. In Africa, fraternity is a double-edged sword when it is looked at myopically but has the potential to harness the energies needed for rallying people along the paths of enlightenment and development.

Fraternity or brotherhood is a complex and diverse experience of kinship globally with varying degrees of rights and obligations. In this essay we will try to make etymological presentations of the words for fraternity / brotherhood in some languages and then seek to set this discussion in the bigger context of African morality. We will further seek to discern some aspects of understanding fraternity that can be discarded and those that may be taken on board in the meeting between African consecrated persons and the Carmelite Rule. The presentation will rely mainly on the author's understanding of the Shona peoples of Zimbabwe with a few references to other regions in Africa.

The Shona word that translates fraternity / brotherhood is *ukama*. But this is a very wide concept that also points to any kind of kinship that would need to be distinguished by making reference to

¹ There are between 300-600 ethnic groups in Africa who speak Bantu languages stretching east and southward from Central Africa through the African Great Lakes region to southern Africa. See 'Bantu Peoples', Wikipedia; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bantu_peoples; accessed 11/2/2017.

the degree of relationship. Kinship in Africa is both natural and social. Natural kinship is determined by blood while the other social relationships largely revolve around marriage and any other types of association depending on the goals. Among the Shona, the relationship of fraternity is consanguine, that is, a relationship established through blood links by descent from a common ancestor. In a more general manner of speaking, the Shona see as brothers not only biological siblings issuing from the same father and mother but more widely first-cousins as well as age-mates² of the same clan and those who share the same totemic symbol (*mutupo*). This level of inclusivity of meaning extends to many other Bantu peoples throughout southern, central and East Africa. Among the Kiswahili speaking peoples the concept of brotherhood or fraternity is translated as *undugu*. Other variations of the same term are *wakfuwakitawa*, *umoja* or *ushirikiano*.

To appreciate the full meaning of fraternity in Bantu languages it is important to understand the concept of *hunhuorubuntu*. In the southern Africa region, the concept of *ubuntu* is generally understood to be a classical Bantu 'ethic or humanist philosophy focusing on people's allegiances and relations with each other'³. It was a concept upon which Zimbabwe's post-independence political ideology was constructed.⁴ The concept was more generally opened to the international audience with the pronouncements of Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. For Nelson Mandela, the iconic anti-apartheid leader and first President of independent South Africa, the concept encapsulates hospitality to strangers but most particularly in undertaking actions to enable the improvement of the community.⁵ The Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu popularized the concept in his *No Future Without Forgiveness*, in which the anti-apartheid activist leader and post-independence chairman of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission explained his understanding of the very rich meaning of *ubuntu*:

It speaks of the very essence of being human. When we want to give high praise to someone we say, 'Yu, u nobunto'; 'Hey so-and-so has *ubuntu*'.

² The Shona words for brother are qualified by seniority or inferiority: *mukoma* for an elder brother and *munin'ina* for younger brother.

³ <http://www.ubuntu.thiyagaraaj.com/Home/about-ubuntu/ubuntu-philosophy-meaning>. Accessed 11/2/2017.

⁴ STANLAKE SAMKANGE & TOMMIE MARIE SAMKANGE, *Hunhuism or Ubuntuism: A Zimbabwe Indigenous Political Philosophy*, Salisbury: Graham Pub, 1980.

⁵ Nelson Mandela quoted in <https://blog.ted.com/further-reading-on-ubuntu>; accessed 11/2/2017.

Then you are generous, you are hospitable, you are friendly and caring and compassionate. You share what you have. It is to say, 'My humanity is inextricably bound up in yours'. We belong in a bundle of life.⁶

This concept of *Ubuntu* does not stand on its own among Africans; rather it is powered by the vitality of African indigenous beliefs, practices and spiritualities of the various traditional religions or those adapted to missionary faiths such as Christianity and Islam. Difficult as it might be to generalize about African traditional religions because of the diversity of cultures, certain common characteristics are noticeable: belief in a supreme being, belief in spirits and other divinities, veneration of ancestors and appeal to traditional medicine for preservation of health as well as magic. We intend to explore the theme of fraternity within this broad concept of *ubuntu*.

SHONA COSMOLOGY AS CONTEXT TO UNDERSTAND FRATERNITY

To have an appreciation of the traditional understanding of fraternity in Africa, it is important to briefly paint the religio-moral backdrop of a representative group of Bantu, the Shona. The traditional cosmology of the Shona is made up of three realms: *denga*, the abode of the high God; *nyika-dzimu*, the dwelling place of the spirits, especially of the family spirits (*vadzimu*) and the clan or territorial spirits (*mhondoro*); and *nyika*, the world or land where human beings dwell. The Shona people believe 'in an impersonal, omnipotent or principal creator, called *Muwari*, *Musikavanhu*, or a Spirit which creates good and bad'⁷. Other names for the supreme being are: *Mwari*, *Dzivaguru*, *Sororenzou*, *Nyadenga*, *Musiki*⁸. Furthermore, the supreme being operates through lesser spirits of ancestors at family and clan levels. The *mhondoro* and *vadzimu*, the spirits of deceased ancestors, were and continue to be believed to have significant roles in the protection and formation of morals among their descendants. The *mhondoro* were believed to be more concerned with the affairs of the clan or extended lineages such as succession to the chieftainship, rain,

⁶ DESMOND TUTU, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, New York, Doubleday, 1999, p. 65.

⁷ MICHAEL GELFAND, 'UNHU –The Personality of the Shona', in *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Winter, 1970), p. 1.

⁸ K. CHIKUSE WHAT IS THE NAME?, 'NhakayevaShona>> Mwari', quoted from: <http://shona.website/2011/05/17/religion-of-the-Shona/>; accessed 11/2/2017.

drought, epidemic diseases and other acts of taboo, for example, incest. The *vadzimu* were more responsible for the protection of their particular family lineages. Violation of ritual days of rest (*chisi*) and other taboos (*zvirambidzwa*) in a particular chieftainship begot sanctions and penalties from the clan spirits through the sitting chief. Ancestral spirits or the spirits of the deceased grandfather, grandmother, father or mother were believed to continue their role of oversight and rearing of the family in a way that ensured good behavior and ethical conduct. Like good parents, ancestors supported the family living in peace (*kugarisana*), in good understanding (*kunzwana*), in healthy interdependence (*kubatsirana*), with respect for parents and each other according to seniority (*ruremekedzo*), with uprightness of life issuing from the heart (*tsika, unhu*). Key to Shona ethics is the golden rule: to do unto others what you would like done to you (*kuitiravamwezvaunodakuitirwawoiwepachako*).

Basically the Shona had a positive regard for human nature, allowing for *bona fide* failure or mistakes (*kutadzausingadi*) for which one needed to acknowledge, express remorse and ask for forgiveness. Shona people take grave exception to intentional wrong-doing (*kutadzamunhuachiziva* or *kutadzamaone*) and this is punishable by being dragged to the family court (*dare remusha*) or at the chief's court (*dare ramambo*). When violation of standard ethical practices persisted, the Shona believed that such a situation could only be brought about through other sinister agencies such as avenging spirits (*ngozi*) or foreign spirits (*mashave*). Avenging spirits were diverse; they could be the angry spirit of a deceased parent (s), an aggrieved laborer or one who would have been murdered. Among the Shona, reparation (*kuripira*) continues to be the only way to satisfy an avenging spirit through propitiation. In the case of an aggrieved mother's spirit, the delinquent's propitiation was achieved by the performance of the ritual ceremony of *kutandabotso*. The ritual ceremony consisted of a culprit having to brew beer with millet which he or she gathered by begging all over the village. As the culprit asked for assistance, s/he needed to state what his/her infringement was. Persons would offer what little millet they had after teaching him/her a lesson by humiliating him/her. The culprit would have to endure the humiliation or taunting and take it as part of the reparation. He would be obliged, at the performance of the ritual proper, to formally acknowledge his waywardness (*zviito*) and ask for forgiveness (*ruregerero*) from the mother addressing one of the mother's sisters or brothers. Only when the mother's relations accepted his propitiation was the culprit forgiven and reconciled with people making jokes of him and other situations.

This was performed as a deterrent lesson to everyone whoever contemplated dishonoring a mother (*kumhura/ kushora* or *kurovamai*). The anger of the mother against her disloyal and disrespectful children was particularly feared and there are Shona sayings that are still used in the language today to depict this fear such as: *mudzimuwamaiwadimburambereko*⁹ or *mai havatambwenayo*¹⁰.

Thus the principles of Shona people's sense of *ubuntu / unhu* were built on the religio-communal foundations of *ukama* both with the community of the 'living-dead'¹¹ and surviving members who constituted the enduring family and community. From this relational model of existence emerged the values of the 'sense of the sacred, respect for life and esteem for community and family, the view of existence as spiritual and sacred, and the rich symbolism in worship'¹². The ancestral cult and communal wellbeing were all geared towards the support of the whole person with definite ethical goals. Among the typically evil actions which aroused strong feelings were hatred (*kuvengana*), resentment (*pfunde-pfunde*), grudges (*mafi*) and bitterness (*daka*), adultery or despoiling an unmarried girl and stealing¹³. A person who engaged in these activities would be called a bad person (*munhuakaipa*) and often operated under the influence of some wicked spirit (*mweyawakaipa*) while a person who upheld the ethical code was the good person (*munhuchaiye*).

SOCIALIZATION AMONG THE SHONA

The Bantu people's socialization processes, like other peoples in the world were accomplished both informally and formally. Informal or soft formation was transmitted through observing, engaging in practices and entering the spiritual-religious milieu of the belief system of the people. Through particular rites of passage the young

⁹ This literally means that the mother's ancestral spirit breaks baby strap used to keep safe the child when mother carries it on her back with the implication that the mother will no longer protect her children.

¹⁰ The meaning is that one ought not play tricks with a mother with the implication that one has to always respect and honor her.

¹¹ JOHN S. MBITI, *African Religions and Philosophy*, Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 1969, p. 72-73.

¹² LAURENTI MAGESA, *What is Not Sacred: African Spirituality*, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013, p. 9.

¹³ MICHAEL GELFAND, 'Research Report: Towards an Analysis of Shona Religion and Ethics', in *Zambezia* (1975-6) 4 (i), p. 125.

entered periods of intense formal formation so much that when they emerged from the experiences, they were considered adults (*vanhuvabvezera*). Among persons of the same age-group, some of the significant characteristics were equality of dignity and freedom to air one's views. Stratification was often manifested during occasions of ritual ceremonies (*nhango* or *zvirango*) when persons played specific roles based on their unique positions in the family or clan. For example, the minister of the family ritual was reserved to the senior male member of the family or the son of the father's sister (*muzukuru*)¹⁴. Socialization's goal was fostering *ubuntu* whose thrust was the cultivation of the awareness of the absolute value of identifying with the community¹⁵. The content of this *Ubuntu* was and continues to be the mutual recognition and respect complemented by mutual care and sharing in the construction of human relations. Furthermore *Ubuntu* was and continues to be manifested in self-giving and readiness to cooperate and communicate with others. They were taught about good ethical behavior and specific roles. Girls were socialized into being submissive but hardworking wives and mothers keen to teach their offspring their culture and traditions. Boys were socialized into courageous and provident men and fathers who had the responsibility to transmit the traditions and beliefs of the family and ethnic group. Even though rites of passage ceremonies are on the decline in Africa because of urbanization, the effects of modernity, and the corrosive influence of missionary faiths like Christianity and Islam, peoples continue to try to transmit certain key values connected with African peoples' mentality by utilization of taboos. The socialization of children was also carried out by the community and not merely the nucleus family. One was socialized to recognize his place in the hierarchical and predominantly paternal structure of the society.

Fraternity is one of the fundamental spiritual and communal values among Africans. Sometimes the word fraternity may not be used but some other connected terms such as community, interdependence, mutuality and complementarity are used. From our brief view of Shona cosmology we can notice that the community means much more than simply a social grouping of people bound together by reasons of natural origins and deep common interests and values. For the

¹⁴ K. CHIKUSE, 'NhakayevaShona>> Religion of the Shona', See: <http://shona.website/2011/05/17/religion-of-the-Shona/> accessed 11/2/2017.

¹⁵ This concept is expressed various in Bantu languages: Shona: *Munhumunhunavanhu* meaning 'A person is a person only with other persons, alone one is an animal'. Ndebele/Nguni/Zulu: *Ngomuntungumuntungabantu*.

Shona and many other Africans as well, community means both society as well as 'unity of the visible and invisible worlds; the world of the physically living on the one hand, and the world of the ancestors, divinities and souls of children yet to be born to individual kin-groups'¹⁶.

AFRICAN SENSE OF BROTHERHOOD

We have established that among many Africans, and the Shona in particular, the sense of brotherhood or fraternity (*ukama*) runs deep into their psyche. Fraternity is a quality of relationship in various dimensions which Laurenti Magesa refers to as 'community of place or geographical location; community of collective/shared history; and psychological community of personal interaction'¹⁷. As we have already noted above, Shona ethics revolve around the concept of *ukama* (kith-and-kin relationship) following distinctively unique ways befitting of human rationality (*pfungwa*) and consideration worthy of *ubuntu* or *unhu*. In ancient Africa, members of the family lived in one geographical location, sharing a common ancestor and engaged in continual interaction. This triple bond strengthened the bonds between peoples. In many African societies, fraternity was not limited to biological paternity; it covered the extended family, the clan and totemic ties.

Laurenti Magesa states that the concept of *Ubuntu* has two broad categories of moral virtues which are relational in nature: interpersonal and intra-personal relationships. He points out that the expectation for interpersonal relationships is respect and care for others generally manifested by tolerance, patience, generosity, hospitality and readiness to cooperate. With regards to the intra-personal, that is, relating to the individual, *Ubuntu* calls for integrity, solidity or wholeness of character and spirit that is present in one's judgement, decisions and feelings.¹⁸

Among the Shona, this system of patri-lineal brothers had the right to support, be of assistance to their brothers in terms of giving counsel and other cooperative participatory activities in times of both

¹⁶ <http://afrikaworld.net/afrel/index> quoted in Laurenti Magesa, *What is not Sacred? African Spirituality*, Maryknoll, New York 2013, p. 34.

¹⁷ LAURENTI MAGESA, *What is not Sacred? African Spirituality*, p. 35.

¹⁸ LAURENTI MAGESA, *What is Not Sacred? African Spirituality*, p. 13.

joy, for example, preparation and celebration of marriage (*kuroora*) and sorrow, especially during times of death and bereavement. For example, brothers were expected to honor each other by attending the family court (*dare remusha*) or clan court (*dare remana*) where familial and social disputes were presented, debated, discussed and ultimately settled. Such assistance was extended too to someone who had been brought to a customary law court, got convicted and had not the resources nor capability to make restitution for his misdeeds. In the event of the death of a brother, one of the patri-lineal brothers could be chosen by the surviving wife of the deceased to be her husband. Where the wife did not wish to be remarried, the family court would appoint a surviving brother to be the figure head of the family (*babasarapavana*). This practice of wife inheritance (*kugaranhaka*) is akin to the biblical Hebrew practice of the *go'el*¹⁹. In the case of Africa, the practice has had to be de-campaigned in recent decades by Governments, lobby groups and women's empowerment groups because of the cultural practice's propensity to spread the HIV-AIDS pandemic as well as its capacity to undermine women's rights and so perpetuate their continued exploitation and oppression. After some years of fighting the pandemic it became clear that whole families were being wiped out through the persistence of the cultural practice. Other reasons for the increasing unpopularity of the cultural practice of wife inheritance (*kugaranhaka*) are the abuse of the system by greedy surviving relations who may be keen on inheriting the estate of the deceased and yet neglect his offspring, and the awakening of widows (*shirikadzi*) to women's rights through education and recourse to the legal process.

Notwithstanding the challenges in a globalized context, the African concept of fraternity served its positive role at a period of African social homogeneity. The practice endured during a time when society was less sophisticated. Yet in its milieu, wife inheritance was very much an honored practice which ensured that children of deceased relatives were cared for and educated while at the same time preserving the family wealth within the family.

While there are many positive elements of the African sense of fraternity, there are also significant weaknesses. Some of the positive elements were the following: strength in numbers; abundance of sincere and good counsel; the fostering of peace and harmony; commu-

¹⁹ Here it is used in the sense of a Levirate marriage; someone who played the function to protect and defend widows and orphans (cf. Pr 23:11; Lev 25:25,48 etc).

nal responsibility in oversight of children and communal support of each other in times of distress and disaster. Some sayings captured the wisdom of these dispositions, for example: *ukamaigasvahuno-zadziswanokudya* (relationships are strengthened by sharing food); *kutsvakwendebvutinodzimurana* (when in trouble, we assist each other); *kugarahunzwana* (living in community calls for peaceful coexistence); *mhosvainoripwa* (do not take the law into your hands, wait for due process); *zanondogaakasiyajirakumase* (to claim to know all leads to humiliation). All these sayings extol the virtues of a fully functional fraternity or community. Another very positive aspect of fraternity was its tendency to promote the value of listening and dialogue. At both the family or chief's courts (*dare* (singular; *matare* (plural)) all persons present had equal opportunities to speak; the family head or the chief generally spoke last in order to listen, assimilate and gather the thoughts of all. When he spoke the final word or verdict, it was a reflection of the wisdom of the whole *dare*; he was merely being the mouthpiece of the family or community.

But even with the positivity of African sense of fraternity (*ukama*), there were also negative elements which cast a heavy shadow on many contemporary African communities. The socialization into *Ubuntu/unhu* was designed in such a way that there would not be much change in society in the name of preservation of traditions and practices (*kuchengetedzatsikanemagariro*). Deviation from the norms and expected code of ethics was not tolerated. Writing on Shona peoples in the 1970s, Michael Gelfand observed that the good man 'should never change, never deviate and should be satisfied with his lot and in particular desire to conform'²⁰ to ancestral veneration and traditional practices. Conformity can be both a positive and negative trait. If it is merely about following beliefs and practices because they have been, then it is weak and unbecoming of human beings. Conformity ought to spring from one's discernment, assessment and judgement. Some of the topical issues in Africa have been issues concerning corruption (*huwori*) and unhealthy ethnocentrism that have led, in some countries, to fratricidal conflicts and genocide. Significant questions come to mind: If *Ubuntu* speaks of nobility of heart, what has been the root cause of African ethical malaise in the face of contested electoral processes that have led to fratricidal conflicts bor-

²⁰ See: http://www.studiesincomparativereligion.com/Public/articles/browse_g.aspx?ID=123, accessed 11/2/2017: MICHAEL GELFAND, 'UNHU - The Personality of the Shona', in *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Winter 1970).

dering on ethnic cleansing? How is it that the doctrine of *Ubuntu* did not help during the *Gukurahundi*²¹ massacres of post-Independent Zimbabwe? Other Bantu cultures have experienced ethnic cleansing and periods of brutal governance, for example, in countries such as Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda, whose majority populations are Bantu.

The answers to these questions lie, for me, in the fact that the African sense of *ukama* and *Ubuntu/unhu* are too limited to relationships of consanguinity, the clan and the tribe. During socialization processes Africans learn who their relatives are; relationships spiral outwards from a region of high concentration by way of familial blood ties (*ukamahweropa*) and weaken the further one moves out of the family bonds to the tribal and societal ties (*ukamahwerudzi*). Thus relationships appear to be strongest when people share common blood, common location and shared history from: the family, the clan, totemic bonds, the village, tribe, kingdom and country. Such an organization of societies then prioritizes as relatives people of common descent. This may be one of the root causes of nepotism (*chizivano*) and corrupt activities that seek to reward relationships rather than skills both in the operations of modern governmental structures as well as in the religious spheres. With our famed *Ubuntu/ unhu*, why is it that there is little progress in service delivery for the common good cutting across local authorities to governmental administration? Might this suggest that African ethical humanism based on *Ubuntu* cannot handle relationships beyond the ethnic grouping such as a diversified city, country, region or world? The same questions can be raised too in light of the continuing splintering of not only African Initiated Churches but also congregations of established churches and sometimes divisions that arise in communities of consecrated religious persons. My critique is this: while *Ubuntu* is a good philosophical basis to begin constructing our African morality whose values are solidarity, reciprocity and interdependence, there has been no attempt at establishing a standard course or school of *Ubuntu* let alone standard practice of *Ubuntu* at supra-ethnic lines so that Africans can have a common rather than a myopic ethnic perception of the concept. Where was *Ubuntu* in the *Gukurahundi* massacres in Zimbabwe?

²¹ In Shona the word refers to the spring rains that sweep away chaff. In Zimbabwe politics, the word is used to refer to the well-planned and systematic killings of some 20 000 civilians by Prime Minister R.G. Mugabe's feared Fifth Brigade in the Matebeleland and Midlands provinces of Zimbabwe on allegations that they were supporting dissidents.

Where was *Ubuntu* in the experience of the Rwandan genocide? Why did the African sense of brotherhood or solidarity not move African governments to intervene? Where is *Ubuntu* in the continued ethnic strife of African communities and governments? Where is the *Ubuntu* of African leaders in the face of the daily experiences of black Africans dying in the Mediterranean Sea as they attempt to flee unaccountable governance, unemployment and poverty to Europe? This then brings me to a consideration of the adoption of the positive aspects of *Ubuntu / unhu – ukama* into a religious community such as the Carmelites.

AFRICAN SENSE OF BROTHERHOOD ENRICHED BY CARMELITE SENSE OF BROTHERHOOD

Africa has been evangelized by Western Christian missionaries for more than a century now. Some of the central challenges of the African Church today concern the issues of evangelization and inculturation. Since the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) both themes have received significant attention. For example, in *Gaudium et Spes*, it was pointed out that the nature of the Gospel of Christ is not alien to any culture and so seeks to combat and remove the errors and evils resulting from the allurements of sin²². Furthermore, in *Nostra Aetate*, Council fathers expressed the Church's appreciation of everything that is true and holy in various non-Christian religions: 'The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions. She regards with sincere reverence those ways of conduct and of life, those precepts and teachings which, though differing in many aspects from the ones she holds and sets forth, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men'²³. The post Vatican II Popes have consistently pointed out in line with the Council the necessity of continuing the work of engaging in the work of inculturation. Pope Paul VI stated clearly that the African who became a Christian did not disown himself but took up from the age-old values of tradition 'in spirit and in truth'²⁴. On his first visit to Africa in 1969, Pope Paul VI challenged the African Church to be African:

²² Vatican II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 58.

²³ Vatican II, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, *Nostra Aetate*, October 28, 1965, no. 2.

²⁴ POPE PAUL VI, *Africae Terrarum*, October 29, 1967, no. 14.

...we now come to the second. The expression, that is, the language and mode of manifesting this one Faith, may be manifold; hence, it may be original, suited to the tongue, the style, the character, the genius, and the culture, of the one who professes this one Faith. From this point of view, a certain pluralism is not only legitimate, but desirable. An adaptation of the Christian life in the fields of pastoral, ritual, didactic and spiritual activities is not only possible, it is even favored by the Church. The liturgical renewal is a living example of this. And in this sense you may, and you must, have an African Christianity. Indeed, you possess human values and characteristic forms of culture which can rise up to perfection such as to find in Christianity, and for Christianity, a true superior fullness, and prove to be capable of a richness of expression all of its own, and genuinely African.²⁵

The phrase 'you may, and you must, have an African Christianity' fired up the imagination of Africans awakening in them pride and confident zeal to know more about their cultures and traditions. How these might be adapted to the universal Christian faith.

Both Popes John Paul II and Benedict VI called for the Synods of Bishops of Africa after whose proceedings they wrote post Apostolic exhortations which acknowledged the valuable contribution Africans and their cultures made to humanity.²⁶ The Popes have called for respect for the values of African culture, traditions and religion. Pope Benedict XVI was quite direct in stating that: 'A precious treasure is to be found in the soul of Africa, where I perceive a "spiritual 'lung' for a humanity that appears to be in a crisis of faith and hope".²⁷

It is in this context that I wish to consider points of continuity and discontinuity in African and Carmelite understanding of the concept of fraternity.

Clearly, the value of fraternity in both traditions is at the core of the experience of what it means to be human but they differ significantly in the sources and foundations and extent of that fraternity. Unlike the Shona value of fraternity which rests on connectivity based

²⁵ POPE PAUL VI, Homily at the Eucharistic Celebration at the Conclusion of the Symposium Organized by the Bishops of Africa, Kampala, Uganda, 31 July 1969, see: https://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/homilies/1969/documents/hf_p-vi_hom_1969_0731.html

²⁶ POPE JOHN PAUL II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa On the Church in Africa and its Evangelizing Mission Towards the Year 2000*, Nairobi: Paulines, 1995. Hereafter referred to as EA; POPE BENEDICT XVI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus On the Church In Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace*, Citta del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2011. Hereafter referred to as AM.

²⁷ AM,13.

on common descend from a common ancestor and hence the predominance of ancestral veneration and the attachment to traditions the Christian Carmelite value of fraternity derives from and is energized by belief in the *koinonia* of God which understanding cascades down to an understanding of the Church as a *communio* of which the Carmelite religious community participates and witnesses. The Carmelite fraternity is not founded on blood relations; rather it issues from a common calling from God to live according to the Carmelite charism. Those who respond to this vocation embrace a common ecclesial consecration in response to the call of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The juridical document that established the Carmelites, the Rule of St Albert, points out clearly that those who enter Carmel become *fratres*, brothers. This brotherhood is rooted in belief in the Triune God or confession of faith, in docility and response to the Holy Spirit, the common bond of religious consecration and dedication to living in a community. The Rule offers the way by which prospective candidates engage on the journey towards Carmelite brotherhood. The journey is a journey of transformation of individuals into brothers who genuinely care for each other out of charity. Carmelite fraternity is decidedly Christological and evangelical; it is inspired by the following of Christ and the proclamation of the Gospel. It is therefore a spiritual experience that moves adherents to communion of life, that is, embracing the same norms of life, taking part in common acts and engaging in collaboration in common service, for individuals from different backgrounds.

The Rule models the Carmelite community on the primitive Jerusalem community as it seeks to be 'an incarnation of God's gratuitous love, internalized through an ongoing process by which we empty ourselves of all egocentricity – which can affect groups as much as individuals – as we move towards authentic centering on God'.²⁸

The Rule establishes that each spiritual seeker 'must live in allegiance to Jesus Christ and serve him faithfully from a pure heart and a good conscience'.²⁹ The Rule offers what Kees Waaijman has called

²⁸ *Constitutions of the Order of the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel* Approved by the General Chapter of 1995, Middle Park Victoria: Carmelite Communications, 1996, no. 30. Hereafter reference will be abbreviated, for example: Const. 1995 ~30.

²⁹ *Regula Ordinis Fratrum Beatissimae Virgini sMariae de Monte Carmelo*, 800th Anniversary of the Carmelite Rule, Roma: Edizioni Carmelitane, 2007, no. 1. Hereafter, reference to the document will be abbreviated as: *Regula*, 2.

'the basic provisions' and proposes 'elementary exercises' in the construction of the brotherhood.³⁰ Thus, for the establishment of a viable fraternity, the Rule provides for having: a prior, a suitable place chosen by the prior and the brothers, separate individual cells, a common refectory, with prior's cell near the entrance to the place.³¹

In the Rule, the provisions are given to dispose Carmelites to certain exercises which are geared towards conversion of heart most fundamentally to Christ through the ways of purification, illumination and union. At the levels of purification and illumination, brotherhood is very significant. Thus the Rule prescribes some of the following exercises: remaining in the cells or near them meditating day and night on the Law of the Lord, saying the canonical hours, distribution to each by the hand of the prior, celebrating the Eucharist together, discussions about the preservation of order and the salvation of souls, observance of fasting, and abstinence.³²

From the above we can notice that the Carmelite fraternity is theological, Christocentric and pneumatological; it is also ecclesiological, anthropological and evangelical. What do I mean by these characterizations? First, the Carmelite fraternity is theological: it is inspired by and geared towards the love of God. God is the Father and initiator of the fraternity and so the fraternity is geared towards the honor and worship of God. Second, the Carmelite fraternity is Christocentric. Reference has already been made about this above. However, it is important to reiterate that the fraternity is formed around Christ, to follow in his steps. The Vatican II fathers decreed that 'all those called by God to the practice of the evangelical counsels and who, faithfully responding to the call, undertake to observe the same, bind themselves to the Lord in a special way, following Christ, who chaste and poor redeemed and sanctified men through obedience even to the death of the Cross'.³³ In decreeing the necessity and adaptation of religious life, the Vatican II bishops said that the first principle to be observed was 'following of Christ set forth in the Gospels, let this be held by all institutes as the highest rule'.³⁴

³⁰ KEES WAAIJMAN, *The Mystical Space of Carmel: A Commentary on the Carmelite Rule*, trans. John Vriend, Leuven: Peeters, 1999.

³¹ *Regula*, 4-9.

³² *Regula*, 10-17.

³³ Vatican II, *Decree on the Adaptation and Renewal of Religious Life, Perfectae-Caritatis*, October 28, 1965, no. 1., in *The Documents of Vatican II With Notes and Index*, Vatican Translation, Citta del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2009.

³⁴ PC, 2a.

Third, the Carmelite fraternity is pneumatological: it is the Holy Spirit who infuses in different persons the attraction to the Carmelite charism. A vocation is a mysterious experience that is guided and enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, the Carmelite fraternity is anthropological: it is part of the expression of the human desire for companionship, support and intimacy. In the fraternity are moments of sharing to fulfill not only spiritual desires but to satisfy the thirst for human friendship and communion.

Fifth, the Carmelite fraternity is evangelical: it is one response to the Gospel to become salt of the earth and light of the world. As evangelical, the Carmelite fraternity is inclusive; individuals are accepted into the fraternity on the understanding that they have had a vocational experience and so wish to explore their discipleship of Christ by following the Carmelite way of life.

These foundations for fraternity are quite at variance with Shona understanding. For the majority of African Bantu societies, fraternity properly so called is rooted in consanguinity. It however can be extended to the clan, the ethnic group and generally to all other black people but only in a loose sense. Such a conception of fraternity has not been able to hold its strength against the constant barrage of attacks from organized religions like Christianity, Islam and the modernizing trends of pluralism, relativism and globalization. The African sense of brotherhood has not adapted too well in the face of the pressures of urbanization and the burdensomeness of a cash economy. The massive drifting of Africans into towns and cities has been affecting the traditional family identities. Because of economic pressures on poorly remunerated working family members, the traditional ties are fast showing signs of strain or even disappearing. What seems to remain in the hearts of many, however, is a nostalgic and often romanticized fraternal communion. When persons ascend the economic ladder and acquire some influence, this African sense of 'fraternal communion' is often the cause of many tending towards practices such as nepotism and other forms of corruption. The political landscape in Africa has often been tainted by tribalism which has disastrous consequences. Political cronyism in many African countries first of all coalesces along lines of ethnicity. In these circumstances, *Ubuntu* as the core of African humanist ethics does not seem to propel many Africans beyond familial and ethnic identities. One would also hasten to point out that African values springing from *Ubuntu* such as family solidarity and support for relatives, respect for the elderly and hospitality are good in themselves. They however can be manipulated by

persons who have not yet acquired the meaning of equality of human beings and races on the face of the earth even in communities of consecrated persons. The downside of some of these culturally based values and virtues are that they may cover up for unhealthy motivations which may be rooted in ethnocentrism and defective obedience models. As we noted with value of respect (*ruremekedzo*), for the Shona, there can be attached to it an inordinate emphasis on conformity to traditions. Conformism undermines the individuality of persons and respect for conscience. This would certainly be unhelpful in a community of religious.

Unlike Bantu (Shona) values that are established on a limited understanding of fraternity and conformity, the Carmelite Rule and Constitutions actually direct and regulate the fraternity along the lines of inclusivity, reason, respect for conscience and a critical appreciation of authority whether human or religious. Within the Carmelite fraternity, leadership is not based on seniority (*ukuruhweukoma*) for its own sake; rather it is conferred by means of a choice (*utungamirihwesarudzo*) 'for this office by the unanimous assent of all, or of the greater and sounder part'.³⁵ The prior is entrusted with the responsibility of leadership and welfare of the brothers regardless of personal accidents of history such as ethnicity or consanguinity. The Rule dispels any possible confusion that might arise concerning the institution of the priorate. The prior is seen as the figure of the Christ³⁶ and so 'should always have in mind and observe in practice what the Lord says in the gospel: Whoever wishes to be the greater among you will be your servant, and whoever wishes to be the first among you will be your slave'.³⁷ Carmel is an adelphocracy in which the prior is the first brother among many yet he holds the authority to be the custodian and guarantor of community dialogue and its final decisions. In the *Regula* it is clear that the Carmelite fraternity is built through participation, dialogue, consultation and communal discernment of the will of God and the good of the fraternity.

The Carmelite Constitutions of 1995 address the theme of "Our Life as Brothers" drawing upon the rich heritage of Carmelites' post Vatican II reflections on brotherhood at fora such as Councils of Provinces, General Congregations, and General Chapters. Thus the Constitutions spell out the internal community dynamics that foster the flowering of viable fraternity:

³⁵ *Regula*, 4.

Communal life must tend towards deeper union, in mutual knowledge and love. To this end, our life in common has moments of particular intensity and importance: a) in the shared participation in the Eucharist, through which we become one body, and which is the source and summit of our lives, and therefore the sacrament of brotherhood; b) in communal celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours; c) in prayerful listening to the Word; d) in meetings to be held periodically, according to the Provincial Statutes, to discuss issues which concern the life of the community; e) in other community meetings, to be held periodically according to the Provincial Statutes, where – in a spirit of dialogue and discernment – we study the Rule, the writings of our mystics, and the official documents of the Church and the Order; we examine our faithfulness to the charism and to the mission of the Order; we share our experiences; we work out our community life plan (*progettocomunitario*); we learn to read the signs of the times; we make pastoral choices in the context of the local Church; f) in the common table and recreation together; g) in common work, manual and other, whether within the community or elsewhere on behalf of the community; h) in the sharing of joys, anxieties and friendships.³⁸

This article reveals the fraternal imperative built around the love of God expressed through adherence to Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. The goal of this adherence is not admiration of the Lord Jesus but configuration to his mind. As such those who constitute the Carmelite religious fraternity testify to the primacy of God in their individual lives as well as communally in the fraternity. Furthermore, the fraternity is powered by love for the brothers *ad intra* in its facilitation of the fraternal communion dynamics that include presence, dialogue, participation, respect for the individuality of each, individual and communal discernment that ensures that each member is prayerfully open to the guidance of the Lord Jesus and the authority of the Church exercised through legitimate leaders. Yet, because Carmel respects the identity and dignity of all brothers who join, she respects all those traditions that do not vitiate ‘the integrity of the Gospel and the Apostolic Tradition amidst the constant evolution of cultures’³⁹.

³⁶ *Regula*, 23.

³⁷ *Regula*, 22.

³⁸ *Constitutions* 1995, 31.

³⁹ POPE JOHN PAUL II, *Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation Ecclesia in Africa*, Nairobi: Paulines, 1995, no. 62.

CONCLUSION

There are lines of continuity and discontinuity between the African and Carmelite conceptions of fraternity. African cultures are rich and have preserved traditions of relationships that have stood the test of time. It is advantageous for Carmel in Africa to recognize, incorporate and inculturate some of the treasures of African traditions with respect to fraternity and community living. Two of the conceptual treasures we have discussed – *ukama* and *Ubuntu /unhu* – are worthy of further exploration so that a more comprehensive understanding of them can facilitate a deeper appreciation among African brothers of the Carmelite prophetic value of fraternity. We have explored the richness as well as the weaknesses inherent in the conceptual understanding of fraternity in Africa generally, and among the Shona of Zimbabwe in particular. Whatever appreciation of the African heritage would still need to be subjected to scrutiny in order to satisfy the discernment principle of inculturation bequeathed to the Church by Pope St John Paul II, namely, ‘compatibility with the Christian message and communion with the universal Church’.⁴⁰ The subjection to scrutiny in terms of Christian revelation is not applied arbitrarily but on the conviction that Christ, as the revelation of the will of the Father, is superior to cultures and traditions. It is from this perspective that I argue for the positive elements of African understanding of fraternity be taken up to enrich African brothers’ deeper appreciation of the more inclusive, God-directed, spirit led and Christocentric incarnation of the Carmelite fraternity which is ‘at both the beginning and the end of apostolate’⁴¹.

Within the African understanding of fraternity there is certainly a sense of belonging, acceptance, appreciation by the family and clan or even the ethnic group as well as a sense of affectivity that runs through the various groupings. This is both a positive and a negative thing. It is positive in that such a sense of fraternity actually provides solidarity, recognition, respect for one’s position in the hierarchy and security. Some of its weaknesses are certainly the inability to adapt to a community bigger than the family, clan and ethnic group. This failure of universalization of the principle of *ukama* (fraternity) and *Ubuntu* may be the reason for some African brothers’ conflicts in community

⁴⁰ EA, 62.

⁴¹ Congregation for the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, *Fraternal Life in Community, Congregavit no in unum Christi amor*, Nairobi: Paulines, 1994, no. 2d.

rooted in the non-acceptability of younger capable persons rising to leadership positions because the senior ones harbor a sense of entitlement to it by virtue of seniority. This may also account for some of the tensions even in the economic and political spheres where nepotism and ethnocentrism are rampant and constitute part of the reasons for Africa's retardation in development. In this scenario, the Carmelite stress on a fraternity that is inclusive, evangelical, Christocentric, theocentric and pneumatological with sufficient levels of care, intimacy and security based on humanity, confession of faith and fraternity of charism can certainly be prophetic at this time. Drawing on the best insights of African ethical humanism summed up by the concept of Ubuntu and the Christian Carmelite tradition, it is possible for Carmel to offer a viable pathway to communion and genuine fraternity in a world that has brought many people physically together without deepening their sense of community with one another.

LOOKING THROUGH THE EYES OF THE POOR
AND IN SOLIDARITY WITH THEM: INCULTURATION
OF CARMELITE SPIRITUALITY IN THE PHILIPPINES

RICO PALACA PONCE, O.CARM.

INTRODUCTION

This is an attempt to capture the dynamic presence of the Carmelites in the Philippines particularly in the area of inculturation. What I am going to present is not the entirety of the Carmelite spirituality but only bits and parcels of it. I will share Carmelite spirituality as it evolved in the Philippines from the perspective of a Filipino Carmelite. My way of coming up with this article is through my research and study of the historical records of the Carmelite Philippines found in our archives, interview with some senior friars and read other documents related with the Carmelites in the Philippines. Hopefully, I can achieve this task by presenting relevant documents from the Carmelite Order, selected writing of Carmelite Saints and from my own personal experience.

Inculturation is a widely discussed concept not only among theologians but even among anthropologists and sociologists. It has many interpretations. It is distinguished from the terms like: adaptation, accommodation, contextualization, indigenisation, acculturation and among others.¹

From a broader perspective, inculturation is a process that should lead to an intelligent reformulation of Christian faith.² It is a dynamic

¹ ARY ROEST CROLIUS, "Inculturation: Newness and Ongoing Process," in *Inculturation: Its Meaning and Urgency*, ed. J.M. Walliggo, A. Roest Crolius, S.J., T.N. Keramihigo, S.J., and J. Mutiso-Mbinda (Kampala-Uganda: St. Pauls Publications/Daughters of St Paul, 1986), 31-32.

² DENIS GIRA, "Inculturation of Buddhism in Traditionally Christian Regions," in Elaine Wainwright, Diego Irarrazaval and Dennis Gira, ed. *Oceania and Indigenous Theologies, Concilium* (2010/5), SCM Press, London, 110.

process by the which the Gospel message takes deep roots in the culture of a particular community and expresses itself in elements of the same culture and becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming and remaking it so as to bring about “a new creation”.³ THEKKUDAN ANTO P., pointed out that this term was first used in an official document of the Church at the IVth Synod of Bishops in 1977, in the context of the relationship between Christian message and human cultures.⁴ Its inspiration comes from the idea that God the Father chose to make Himself known and to do His work at a particular time and place (Jn 1:12). Even today, He is continuously revealing Himself to His people through the Church, thus making this “Incarnation” a dynamic encounter, as he speaks to us in and through our human needs and aspirations and through every event and reality of our lives.

Seen from this perspective, I would like to see inculturation of Carmelite Spirituality in the Philippines as the dynamic process of give and take between the ideals of Carmelite life and the rich cultural heritage of the Filipino people amidst the complex life realities.

The living out of Carmelite Spirituality in the Philippine context can be framed from the notion of “Identity enacted” as introduced by Prof. Jonnes van der Ven. According to this view, “*one’s individual and collective identity is not a phenomenon freely floating high above the daily, mundane life-world of ordinary people, but a process which has its roots and is embedded in the individual and collective activities people perform day by day, in both the short and long turn.*”⁵

This view means that one’s identity is enacted as praxis and identity come together. In and through such praxis, people’s individual-collective identity manifest itself and help people to come to understand themselves while giving other people the opportunity to observe and experience this identity, communicate about it and perhaps even participate in it. This view is expounded in the philosophical and theological works of Paul Ricoeur, particularly in

³ THEKKUDAN ANTO P., *Inculturation of Religious Formation Among the St. Thomas Christians, With Particular Reference to the Congregation of Carmelites of Mary Immaculate*; a dissertation to the Faculty of Theology, Institute of Spirituality, of the Pontifical Gregorian University for the doctorate in Theology, Rome, 1986, 370.

⁴ “Message of the Synod of Bishops to the People of God” in Oss. Rom, English Edition, 3.11.1977, No.5. The Latin text has used the term “inculturation”. The Christian message must find its roots in cultures and must also transform these cultures.

⁵ JOHANNES A. VAN DER VEN, *Identity Enacted: Hermeneutics of Religious Communication (Course Reader)* (Nijmegen: Nijmegen Graduate School of Theology, 2001-2002). 4-5.

Oneself as Another (1992).⁶ In his works, a hermeneutically-laden and communicatively-oriented action theory in relation to the theme of identity plays a central role.

Discerning Carmelites' identity and contributions in the Philippines can possibly be traced through written texts and through the actions, involvements, positions on social issues, and engagements of its members. But I do humbly acknowledge that Carmelite identity in the Philippines is more than the sum of the available written text and the continuing involvements and ministries in the present times. Indeed, I would be the first to point out that it is impossible to capture the entirety of Carmelite identity and how it is inculcated in the Filipino way. As pointed out by T. Singh, our language is limited,⁷ and as Josh Traynelis would say, there is something that in reality cannot be put into words, for words would take away the overall message.⁸

A BRIEF HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE PROVINCE OF BLESSED TITUS BRANDSMA IN THE PHILIPPINES

In 1957 the prior Provincial of the Netherlands, Fr. Brocard Meyer travelled to the Philippines looking for opportunities to establish the Carmelite Order in these islands. Eventually, the Dutch Province accepted an invitation from the bishop of Dumaguete City to take responsibility for the northern part of the diocese of Negros Island. Frs. Richard Vissers, Wierfried Viesters and Theodulph Vraaking founded the Carmelite presence in the Philippines on March 16, 1958.⁹ The Carmelite Order made rapid progress in these islands and by 1966 a seminary was established in Escalante, Negros Occidental and in the late 1960's friars were working also in the dioceses of Surigao, Manila and Iligan.

Although the 1970s marked a difficult period because of the martial law in the Philippines, the Carmelites continued to be active

⁶ PAUL RICOEUR, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992). 113-115.

⁷ THOMAS SINGH, "Limitation of Human Language," <https://www.gurbani.org/articles/webart183.htm>, 25 September 2017.

⁸ JOSH TRAYNELIS, "The Limitations of Language," <http://www.briancroxall.net/lit-tech/2012/10/08/the-limitations-of-language/>, 25 September 2017.

⁹ Letter of Epifanio B. Surban, D.D. Signed at Dumaguete City on the 15th day of January, 1958, Carmelite Archives # 0050, Quezon City.

not only in parish ministry, but also in schools, social action groups and workers' programs. During the dark period in the history of the Philippines, people were cowed in silence for fear of being arrested by the military and police. Human right violations were all over the country and no one was excused of being halted by the military not even the religious. Thus, for the cause of serving the victims of human rights violations, some Carmelites were arrested.

In the chapter of 1978, the Carmelites in the Philippines agreed to have a common conviction that they had no other choice but to be in solidarity with the Church of the Poor. Carmelites shed not only tears but also blood. Among those was Fr. Engelbert Van Visteren, a parish priest in San Francisco, Agusan del Sur who was ambushed and hacked to death by members of a lawless group in 1973. A decade later, Isagani Valle, a student friar was shot by military men in Agusan del Sur for being suspected as a communist sympathizer. His bullet-holed body was exhibited to the community in front of the municipal hall.¹⁰

The 1980s witnessed a great increase in the number of lay people who associated with the Order. By 1990s the main goal of the Commissariat was to work towards independence from the Mother province in the Netherlands and a series of strategies was put in place to consolidate and systematize existing structures. On July 16, 2004, the General Commissariat of the Carmelites in the Philippines was officially instituted. The General Commissariat is entrusted to the protection and patronage of Blessed Titus Brandsma. On July 16, 2013, the Order of Carmelites celebrated during a Solemn Mass the Canonical Erection of the new Province at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral in the Diocese of Cubao, Quezon City. The New Province was officially named the Carmelite Province of Blessed Titus Brandsma-Pilipinas.¹¹

At the moment of writing this article, there are 48 solemn-professed friars, 17 simple-professed friars, 12 novices, 7 postulants and a good number of aspirants. There are 21 active lay associates who have private commitment to the Order and to the Rule of St. Albert. They are fully integrated in the different communities nationwide.¹² It is also good to mention that there are many congregations

¹⁰ ANGELA URETA: documentor "In the Midst of the People" Youtube Video: <http://youtube/R5AsgF75pv0>. 5 minutes and 32 seconds, Order of Carmelites, 2012.

¹¹ RHEN S. CACULITAN, *The Origins and Developments of the Order of Carmelites in the Philippines (1955-2013)*, (Unpublished Manuscript, Roma, 2016, 83).

¹² An email from Normita Lacanilao, secretary of the Carmelite Philippine Province, dated November 27, 2017.

of nuns (both Active and Contemplative) who embraced the spirituality of Carmel and there are many communities of TOC (Third Order Carmelites) attached to the different parishes all over the country. The membership are scattered all over the country and in Papua New Guinea (PNG).¹³ Aside from the main tasks and assignments each one received from the Order, some members have also accepted and have been appointed in official capacity in some other tasks like, in the Diocese, Association of Major Religious Superiors in the Philippines (AMRSP), International Commissions, etc. or on community level commitment in different programs and groups with the Rural Missionaries in the Philippines (RMP), Task Force on Urban Conscientization (TFUC), Task Force Detainees in the Philippines (TFDP), Batang Pinangga Foundation in Cebu, Por Cristo in Butuan City and others, involvement with the Indigenous People through (ARISE) Advance the Rights of Indigenous People for Empowerment and Self-Determination and Protect Sierra Madre (PSM).¹⁴

I outline inculturation of Carmelite Spirituality in the Philippines through the following themes:

1. CONTEMPLATION: SEEKING THE FACE OF GOD IN THE HEART OF THE WORLD

Looking at the historical sketch of the Carmelites in the Philippines, one can say that its spirituality is incarnational. It is totally engaged and committed with the world. It is an embodiment of an ideal: "*As a contemplative brotherhood, we seek the face of God also in the heart of the world. We believe that God has established his dwelling place among his people, and for this reason, the Carmelite brotherhood knows itself to be a living part of the Church and of history*".¹⁵ Bernard Roosendaal expressed it in this way: Living in the midst of the people is a calling for us Carmelites, an invitation

¹³ CHRISTIAN BUENAFE, "Welcome Message" In: *Proceedings of the Mid-Triennium Assembly of the Life and Mission of the Carmelite General Commissariat of Blessed Titus Brandsma Philippine and PNG Mission- July 29-31, 2012*, Titus Brandsma Center, New Manila, Quezon City, 12.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *Constitutions of the Order of the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel*, Carmelite Communications, Australia, 1996, 17.

to be in the area of the *minores*, the little people. Most of them are found in the periphery of our cities or along the edges of urban conglomerates.”¹⁶

For the Carmelites in the Philippines, engagement with the world is very important. We think and feel that our vocation finds fulfillment through our involvement with the pressing issues of the day, in the way we engage with the lives of the people. Like Gustavo Gutierrez, we are saying that the world is the arena wherein God manifests Him/Herself. As he said: “*God reveals himself in the history of the people that believed and hoped in Him, and this leads us to rethink his words from the point of view of our history.*”¹⁷ A critical look and a critical stance are necessary in every occasion. We adhere to the idea of Bernard Haring that the lack of knowledge on the happenings in our society’s present trends, necessities and ventures incapacitates us to change the world and ourselves in the proper direction.¹⁸ Constant analysis of the on-going situation is required as we relate with our neighbor and with the world. Christian humanism and Christian love demand a concrete relationship to the situation of our neighbor. This point is similar with that of Carlos Abesamis, SJ, when he said that God speaks the challenges of today through the sufferings and hopes of the people of today. God portrays salvation in and through the people’s initiatives and actions towards a more decent and better world.¹⁹

The situation in many parts of the world is characterized by a worsening economic, political, and religious-cultural bankruptcy. Millions of people (especially Filipinos) leave their homelands every day and go abroad in order to hopefully get a better job and better opportunities. We are enraged at the continuous extra judicial killings of peasants, workers, Church people, journalists, lawyers, activists and many others. There is the on-going violence perpetrated against women and children. As high rise buildings are being constructed in the cities, there is the ruthless demolition of the houses of the urban

¹⁶ BERNARD ROSENDAAL, *Carmel Philippines: Journey towards a Challenging Future* (Unpublished Manuscript, 2013, 1).

¹⁷ GUSTAVO GUTIERREZ, *The Power of the Poor in History*, Orbis Books, New York, 1983, 4.

¹⁸ BERNARD HARING, *Free and Faithful in Christ: Moral Theology for Priest and Laity*, vol. 3, Saint Paul Publications, Middlegreen, 1978, 141.

¹⁹ CARLOS ABESAMIS, “Faith and Life Reflections from the Grassroots in the Philippines” in VIRGINIA FABELLA, ed. *Asia’s Struggle for Full Humanity*, Orbis Books, New York, 1980, 129.

poor communities. Displacement of farmers and the indigenous communities is rampant just to give way to the so-called development projects. For whom are these developments when thousands of people are pushed to the margins? The situation of the Philippines and neighboring countries is plagued by a culture of death. We are engulfed in a sinful social structure.²⁰

2. SERVICE THROUGH THE OPTIC OF THE POOR AND IN SOLIDARITY WITH THEM

The Carmelites in the Philippines was confronted with the harsh realities of life among the poor people. They were challenged to take responsibility for the poor people, the defenseless, the marginalized, the victims of injustices, and the suffering people.²¹ whom Emmanuel Levinas called the “Other”.²² Levinas posits ideas like: “The Face of the Other”, “*The face is a living presence; The face speaks*” and “[T]he Other faces me and puts me in question and obliges me.”²³ According to John Wild, we are always affected by the “Other” because: “*The Other person as he comes to me in a face to face encounter is not an alter ego, another self with different properties and accidents, but in all essential aspects like me.*”²⁴ Ton Danenberg posits the idea that no one can escape responsibility for the poor and from them. The Other makes us restless, a restlessness that does not stem from an inner void or need. There is always the poor who looks at us. It is so because:

“The Other has an authority by his or her naked presence; naked because of his/her undefined social position. And that presence makes me ashamed. I cannot reject that authority with good conscience. The Poor is my judge.”²⁵

²⁰ RICO PONCE, *Ownership and Property: An Empirical, Theological, Ethico-Moral and Pastoral Approach*, Lambert Academic Publishing, Saarbrücken, 2012, 79-81.

²¹ TON DANENBERG, *Where there shall be no Mourning, nor Crying, nor Pain Anymore...* Socio-Pastoral Institute and Forum for Interdisciplinary Endeavors and Studies, Manila, 1990, Series A5, 18.

²² EMMANUEL LEVINAS, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, The Hague, Boston, London, 1979, 66.

²³ *Ibid.*, 207.

²⁴ JOHN WILD, “Introduction” In Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, The Hague, Boston, London, 1979.

²⁵ T. DANENBERG, *Where there shall be no Mourning, nor Crying*, 18.

The Dutch Carmelites who came to the Philippines took the optic of the poor and work in solidarity with them. Asked what does service mean, Bernard Roosendaal has this to say:

“Service is not the same kind of “service” that one would expect when having his car repaired in the garage or what a service crew would provide when you’re a costumer in a coffee shop. Nor is it the availability of service outlets in the rooms of our monasteries for charging mobile phones or for connecting our laptops. Service is about how we relate with people in whose midst we are living, whether they are located in the barrio, along the riverbanks, near the piles of garbage, close to the red-light district or cramped on top of one another in the shanties.²⁶

3. A SEARCH FOR A RELEVANT AND CONTEXTUAL FAITH AND THEOLOGICAL FORMATION

It can be recalled that in the Second Vatican Council, one of the important discussions was on the renewal of religious life and of training of priests. *Perfectae Caritatis* discussed the principles of renewal, characteristics of religious life, different types of religious and special aspects of religious life.²⁷

As pointed out by Adrian Hasting, there is no doubt about the continuing value and vigour of Religious Life in the Church. The Council Fathers recognized that Religious Order and societies are an extremely characteristic part of the Catholic Church, even in several separated communions is noteworthy.²⁸ However, some problems need to be faced.

First, though new societies are being founded, old ones seldom come to an end. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 forbade the foundation of more, but they have kept on coming. The trouble comes from the multiplicity of small ones, especially when they were instituted for special purposes in particular situations with rules to match, and have continued in a very different world with rules largely unchanged.

²⁶ B. ROSENDAAL, *Carmel Philippines*, 18.

²⁷ Decree on the Up-to-date Renewal of Religious Life, *Perfectae Caritatis*, In AUSTIN FLANNERY, ed. *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents New Revised Edition (3rd Printing)*, Costelo Publishing Company, Inc. & Dublin: Dominican Publications, New York, 1996, 611-623.

²⁸ ADRIAN HASTINGS, *A Concise Guide to the Documents of the Second Vatican Council (Volume Two)*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London, 1969, 185.

Second, there is a contrast of understanding on the motives for entering religious life. For example, on the one hand, there is the idea of “flight from the world” and on the other, “acceptance of the world” and its values as God-given, the need for participation in contemporary culture and the like.²⁹

Optatam Totius was concerned with the encouragement of vocations, general principles of seminaries, spiritual training, intellectual training, pastoral training and post-ordination training.³⁰ Its stress on human qualities acknowledged the need of priests and seminarians for human maturity and for a sound knowledge of the human being and the world.³¹ This renewal introduced by the Second Vatican Council challenged the Carmelites in the Philippines to design a formation program that is relevant, contextualized and liberating.

One of our formands in the name of Isagani Valle left a strong message to the Carmelites in the Philippines. He was killed while doing immersion among rural folks in Mindanao. He was suspected of being involved in subversive activities in the area. He had this to say:

We still have to see a theology that proceeds from the people and goes back to the people; a theology which contains the lives and experiences and struggles of the people. This needs real immersion in the lives, sufferings and struggles of the people. It is being written in the midst of the slums, in dialogue with the poor and their life-situations. It is that place where we have to listen and learn. It will for sure, be different from a theology written in an air-conditioned room. We must work and struggle for this theology-liberative and developmental of the people, and transformative for reality.³²

The Carmelites are recognized as the prime-movers in the establishment of the Inter-Congregational Theological Center (ICTC). On the tenth anniversary of ICTC, Danenbergre called that it was at the Redemptorist Seminary in Antipolo where the concept of ICTC was born in January 1987 in the aftermath of the so-called EDSA Revolution. Everyone still had vivid memories of the hard and often fierce

²⁹ Ibid., 186.

³⁰ VATICAN II COUNCIL, “Decree On the Training of Priests, *Optatam Totius*,” In Austin Flannery, Ed. *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents New Revised Edition (3rd Printing)* (New York: Costello Publishing Company, Inc. & Dublin: Dominican Publications, 1996), 707-724a.

³¹ A. HASTINGS, *A Concise Guide*, 161.

³² ISAGANI VALLE, quoted by Billy Bong Manguiat, O.Carm., “In the Inserted Community” in *Brown Prophets*, Vol 5, # 10 (May 2010), 25.

confrontations between the resistance movement and the Marcos dictatorship during mass demonstrations, arbitrary arrests, raids and in the overall atmosphere of oppression, insecurity and fear.”³³

By looking at the philosophy of ICTC, one can say that it was an attempt to establish a contextualized and relevant formation. Thus, the philosophy of ICTC states:

“Theological formation has to be rooted in a spirituality that is both critical and arising from solidarity with the life-realities of the poor and the oppressed. This spirituality is based on the following of the footsteps of Jesus, the poor man who emptied himself and did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped (Phil 2:6-7) and his compassion for the masses (Mt 9:36). This theological formation, therefore, gets its inspiration from the basic conflict between the appalling situation in which we live and our daily prayer “Your name be holy, your kingdom come, your will be done.”³⁴

According to Danenberg, the philosophy of ICTC was a product of discussions of a small group which formulated an idea that had been brewing among many concerned individuals: namely, students, religious and lay, and some Provincials in the AMRSP.³⁵

The following are some features of a relevant and contextualized formation as envisioned by the Carmelites:

a. It takes sides with the Poor and is Rooted in Lives of the People

An important element in the formation of our student friars and theology students is the rootedness of their lives among the lives of the people. Integrated in the formation program are immersion and pastoral exposures whereby students immersed themselves with the life reality of the ordinary people, especially the poor and marginalized in the society. This concept is similar to what Danny Pilario calls “confronting the ‘rough grounds’ of everyday life”.³⁶ It confronts the

³³ T. DANENBERG, “*The Philosophy and Theology of the Inter-Congregational Theological Center (ICTC) in Retrospect*,” *Himig Ugnayan: The Theological Journal of the Inter-Congregational Theological Center (ICTC) and the Institute of Formation and Religious Studies (IFRS)*, Vol. 1 No. 2, Second Semester (1998-99), 52.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ DANIEL FRANKLIN PILARIO, *Back to the Rough Grounds of Praxis: Exploring Theological Method with Pierre Bourdieu*, University Press and Uitgeverij Peeters, Leuven, 2005, 538- 539.

daily struggles of ordinary people: the urban poor, the workers, fishers folks, women in the situation of prostitution, unprotected children, peasants, indigenous peoples and others.

We are never apolitical. We should always regard the poor, first of all, as God's creatures. In suffering people, we see the face of Christ. God is the God of justice, precisely because his commandment speaks in the face of the orphan, the widow, the stranger."³⁷

b. It is a Down-to-earth Christology

Looking at the philosophy of ICTC, we may notice that it is inspired by and emphasizes a very down-to-earth Christology. It regards Jesus as the poor man who emptied himself and did not count equality with God, a thing to be grasped. It also stressed as the core of its spirituality the compassion of Jesus with the masses, a compassion that characterized him as Son of the Father".³⁸

Thus we can ask: What does it mean to know God, if it is not based on following the footsteps of Jesus as he walks in the midst of the exploited and degraded masses of the Philippines in the here and now? Jesus can be encountered among the workers in the factory, the urban poor in the slum areas, the farmers in the fields, the fish vendors, etc.³⁹ This kind of understanding is corroborated in the famous song composed by Fr. Eduardo Hontiveros, SJ.⁴⁰

c. It is Formation towards Authenticity

The Carmelites envisions authentic people as the fruits of formation and theological training. For them education develops a sensitivity to people's search for meaning and therefore, for a meaningful mode of living in the concrete circumstances of life. Only when we shall have developed that sense of meaning can we expect to articulate God's word in people's lives.

The task is beyond the search for meaning. The philosophy of ICTC reminds us that formation should also enable students to unmask the illusory social and religious structures that not only suppress and obscure this search for meaning but also pervade our very way of life.

³⁷ T. DANENBERG, *"The Philosophy and Theology"*, 56.

³⁸ T. DANENBERG, *"The Philosophy and Theology"*, 56.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ <https://www.musixmatch.com/lyrics/Himig-Heswita-2/Hesus-Na-Aking-Kapatid> (Accessed September 15, 2017).

Indeed, the structures we need to unmask are not outside or over us. They are in us. We are part of the church and society where we, Religious and theologians, occupy a place and role of some privileges. Clericalism, in particular, is still a major characteristic of the Philippine Church and of the religious culture of the majority of the people. This fact makes it extremely difficult for all our goodwill to resist being attracted to the goodies of being clerics, and to recognize and resist the manipulation of the rich and influential. It definitely tends to make us subservient, as well, to the powers-that-be in the church itself.⁴¹

The issue of clericalism is much alive today. This is what Pope Francis mentioned to the Somascan Fathers during their general chapter:

One of the gravest dangers, stronger in the Church today, is clericalism. Work with the laity, let them go ahead, that they have the courage to go forward and you, support and help them as priests, as Religious. This is a very precious service to the local Churches, in communion with the Pastors and in union with the whole Church and her living Tradition.⁴²

4. A SEARCH FOR NEW FORMS OF SERVICES TO THE PEOPLE

Another area that can be identified in the area of inculturation of Carmelite Spirituality in the Philippines is the way we understand our apostolate and service to the people. At first, the approach of the Dutch Carmelites who came to the Philippines was in line with the philosophy of the 1960's that the transfer of Western culture would solve the problem: "let the poor share our welfare". In the second half of the sixties, they became involved in the so called "church renewal programs spearheaded by the "Cursillo de Christianidad" actually a conversion movement targeting primarily male Catholics for more involvement in Church affairs. Also for youth program was started, the "Youth Encounters Christ (YEC)" almost every weekend conducted in Negros Occidental. They realized however after a decade, that in such an approach the people were made as object rather than subject in the process.

⁴¹ T. DANENBERG, *"The Philosophy and Theology"*, 61-62.

⁴² POPE FRANCIS, *"No to Clericalism' (Pope's Address to Somascan Fathers in Rome for General Chapterr (March 30, 2017),"* <https://zenit.org/articles/popes-address-to-somascan-fathers-in-rome-for-general-chapter/>. (Accessed March 31, 2017).

Towards the end of the sixties, the Carmelites started to involve in the social action apostolate and became involved in new forms of service to the people. Among them are: parish initiated cooperatives, labor apostolate in Iligan City among the factory workers and in Negros island among the sugar workers through the National Federation of Sugar Workers (NFSW) farmers organizing, Christian Community Seminars (CCS), a forerunner of the Basic Christian Community-Community Organizing (BCC-CO), pastoral program, Family Life apostolate and catechetical programs wherein lay-leaders training became a priority.

After series of reflection-sessions and analysis of the Philippine situation, the Carmelites came to realize that the existing exploitative economic, political and social structures have been the root causes of the misery of the people. They found out that even the church and other religious institutions are apparatus in maintaining these exploitative structures, thus they subjected them to critical reflections and discussions. According to them, the Church was not spared because of its ambiguous attitude towards the Martial Law regime of the late President Marcos. Its “critical collaboration” stance was perceived as actually protecting the system.

During the annual Convention in 1976, the Carmelites became aware of the cancer pervading the whole society and as a result, we started placing more stress on “serving the people” rather than maintaining institutions. We then switched in our pastoral ministries. We got involved in the Basic Christian Community programs, seeing the need to assist pastorally the struggling masses in their motivation in the struggle for a more humane society. The main emphasis of the Basic Christian Community approach is first of all to decentralize the big parishes, dominated by the rich and powerful who were because of their membership were also controlling the parish councils and charitable organizations. And secondly, to empower the small communities to nurture their own needs listening to and finding inspiration in the voice of the living God in the in the stories of the bible. We were convinced that serving the people in all its aspect means to get involve actively in the coming about of a New Way of Being Church, which is the Church of the People, the Church of the Poor.

The Carmelites were actively involved in the setting up of cooperatives and credit unions because, they perceived that the common people were victims of middlemen and loan sharks. These cooperatives were intended to neutralize these exploiters.

5. ADVOCACY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND JUSTICE AND PEACE

The Carmelites in the Philippines witnessed the rampant violations of human rights especially when martial was declared in the country. From their perspective, Martial Law was designed in order to control labour and student unrest, and to maintain and even expand the exploitative export.

It was reported that 3,257 persons were killed by the military during President Ferdinand Marcos' dictatorship, specifically over the ten-year period from 1975 to 1985 that the military under Marcos committed gross human rights violations; and that terror and brutality distinguished martial rule.⁴³ September 21, 2017 marked the 45th year after the declaration of martial law that lasted fourteen years (1972-1986). In her column Ma. Ceres Doyo wrote:

Etched on the Wall of Remembrance at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani are the names of 27 priests/pastors and religious (women and men) who fought the Marcos dictatorship. A number of them died violent deaths or are counted among the desaparecidos (the disappeared). Many of them fought and died without seeing the dawn. They are among the 287 individuals who are in the Bantayog ng mga Bayani's roster of heroes.⁴⁴

The Carmelites became involved in the issue of human rights. We have been a staunch critic against the human rights violations, especially in the 1980s and 1990s. The gruesome and brutal violations of human rights happen in our parish in Mt. Carmel Parish in Escalante City in 1985. One journalist described the incident in this way:

“The stench of death has gone from the streets and ditches of Sitio Balintawak, Escalante, washed away by the elements and deodorized by the officials of the state. Only stink injustice, pain and grief and the pochmarks of bullets remain to remind fellow travelers of the massacre of September 1985.”⁴⁵

Danenberg opined that respect for human rights can be gleaned from the divine command making us responsible for the “Other”. The

⁴³ RACHEL A.G. REYES, “3,257: Fact checking the Marcos killings, 1975-1985 (*The Manila Times*, April 12, 2016),” <http://www.manilatimes.net/3257-fact-checking-the-marcos-killings-1975-1985/255735/5> September 2017.

⁴⁴ MA. CERES P. DOYO, “Priests and religious fought Marcos tyranny,” *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, <http://opinion.inquirer.net/107302/priests-religious-fought-marcos-tyranny>, 23 September 2017.

⁴⁵ ROBERT J. ALIBUTOD, *What Massacre? Mr. & Mrs.* October 4-10, 1985, 1.

famous text in Matthew 25 on the last judgment is not a myth on the so-called end of the world, because the judgment is here and now: "What you have done to one of the least of my brothers, you have done to me."⁴⁶ This is the ethical foundation of all human rights. The Carmelites perceived that they are the ear to hear the often suppressed cries of the powerless, the eye to see what is not seen by the officialdom which rules our laws and our politics, the space and the sounding board for the voiceless.⁴⁷

CONCLUSION

The praxis of our Carmelite Spirituality in the Philippines is through the optic of the poor and in solidarity with them. We seek the face of the living God by living a kind of life that is in allegiance with Jesus Christ through fraternity and through service in the midst of the people. A challenge that can be forwarded to us and the present members and incoming members is how open and ready are we in this viewpoint and stand point.

Similar with other people, we dare to ask the question: How to be a beacon of hope in a world of destitution and despair? We embraced a kind of spirituality which is committed to life, cause and struggle of the millions of debased and marginalized people and has a commitment to end the history of social discrimination and social injustice.

We are touched by an immense power. We become committed to a particular cause or a movement towards bringing positive changes in our homes, communities and in the Philippine society. This immense power that touches our core being is Carmelite Spirituality. Carmelite Spirituality is a "life-energy". It is a breath of fire. It is an ember that sustains the flame of our heart. It is restlessness. It is something that calls every one of us to go beyond "ourselves", to concern for - and to enter into a deeper relationship within ourselves - others, and to a relationship with the mysterious "Other".

⁴⁶ T. DANENBERG, "The Rights of the Human" in *We Did Not Learn Human Rights from the Books: The Philippines and Human Rights in the Period 1986-1996* ed. Evert de Boer, Huub Jaspers and Gerard Prickaerts (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1996), 163.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 178.

While reflecting on the inculturation of Carmelite Spirituality in the Philippines which can be discerned in the written documents, involvements and advocacies of its members, one can say that the Carmelites have charted a life pattern that is coherent and anchored on the optic of the “Other” and of the poor, defenseless, downtrodden, marginalized and exploited. One can rightly suggest that this is an enactment of our identity or “identity enacted”.

While writing this paper, I kept on playing music from YouTube in the hope of getting inspiration. It came when my attention was caught by the song “Looking through the Eyes of Love” with these particular lines:

Please, don't let this feeling end
It's everything I am
Everything I want to be
I can see what's mine now
Finding out what's true
Since I found you
Looking through the eyes of ...⁴⁸

I believe that this song fittingly describes the Carmelites passion and intense feeling for the “Other”. I can say that our thoughts and intense feelings have always been focused on them. We want to dwell on them. We want the advocacy to remain. It is everything for us, everything we want to happen since they we them.

And so, instead of looking through the eyes of love, I entitle this paper “Looking through the Eyes of the Poor and in Solidarity with them” so as to account the Carmelites’ love and passion for them.

⁴⁸ <https://www.google.com.ph/search?q=lyrics+looking+through+the+eyes+of+love&oq=lyrics+lookingh+through+the&aqs=chrome.1.69i57j0l5.17135j0j8&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8>, 23 September 2017.

THE VALUES OF CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATION FOR
CATHOLICS IN THE LIGHT OF SAINT TERESA'S SPIRITUALITY

STANISLAUS LIRMANJAYASASTRA, O.CARM.

INTRODUCTION

Chinese New Year or the Spring Festival is the most important festival among the traditional Chinese festivals. This festival has been celebrated over generations in a long period of time. Its activities and customs have undergone a long development process as well. Chinese New Year festival or Spring festival has some festivities, starting from the eighth day of the month prior to Chinese New Year until the fifteenth day of the first month of the new year.¹ The preceding days is a time of saying goodbye to the year past and preparing the new year. This period is marked by offering sacrifices to god and ancestors and then preparing everything for celebration the New Year' eve and welcoming the first day of the New Year. The end of Chinese New Year festival is the fifteenth day of the first month that is marked by *Yuanxiao* Festival or the lantern Festival.

This festival is also popular in many other countries where Chinese communities live. The importance and popularity of this festival bring certain influences among the Chinese Catholics who celebrate it. In some places there are many questions about how to deal with this festival's celebration with Catholic faith, especially during the night of new year's eve and the first day of the new year. Some Chinese Catholics seek for the values of this Chinese New Year celebration that might affirm our Catholic faith.

In this article I try to find some values of the Chinese New Year celebration for the Catholic faith by analyzing the following topics: 1)

¹ Cf. PATRICIA BJAALAND WELCH, *Chinese New Year*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1977, 4; Cf. NN, *A New Beginning Customs of the Lunar New Year*, Singapore, Times Editions-Marshall Cavendish, 2005, 2; Cf. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_New_Year, 10 November 2017.

The story behind the Chinese Spring Festival and our Christian faith; 2) The red color in the Chinese Spring Festivals and the blood of Christ; 3) The meaning of *fu* character and the union with God; 4) The red pocket in the connection with charity; 5) The family gathering and veneration of ancestors in Catholic way.

I. THE STORY BEHIND THE CHINESE LUNAR NEW YEAR FESTIVAL

This festival has some stories behind as the reason why this festival exists and becomes a custom. Although these stories are not an historical data, but it give us insight of the spirit behind the celebration and can be a means for us to make reflection on them in the light of Catholic faith. Among those stories, the legend of Nian is most popular. This legend has many similarities to the story of Israelites Passover in Exodus 12. Some Catholic Communities use Passover story as a reading in the liturgical celebration of the Chinese New Year.

1.1. *The Legend of Nian*

Among the stories behind this celebration, the legend of Nian (literally, “year”)² is most popular. According to the ancient Chinese legend, in ancient time, there was a monster named Nian.³ It was a fierce monster that lived in the forest of remote mountains. Nian feeds on birds and animals, fishes and insects. Each day Nian eats a new kind of food, from the small animal to human. After some observations, the people grasped the habit of Nian that every 365 days, at the end of Winter, it would come to the villages to eat a kind of fresh food: livestock, crops, and even villagers. Nian comes to the village after dark and would goes back to the forest when cocks are crowing before day break. That night was a long frightening night for the villagers.

After Nian had left the village, the people would be very happy because they still alive. They called this terrifying night as “Nian guan” or “vigil of Nian” or “Nian pass over vigil”. This experience gave them

² Chinese character of nian is 年, literally means year. This character originally signified a harvest. In the ancient period, it depicts a man who is carrying grain on his back. It refers to ripe grain ready to be harvested. See. 顾建平, 《汉字通, Times Encyclopedia of Written Chinese》, 上海: 东方出版中心, 2014, 465; Cf. <https://baike.baidu.com/item/年/30052>, 13 November 2017.

³ Cf. 高天星, 春节, 《中国节日传说》, 郑州: 郑州大学出版社, 2016, 1-3.

some ideas of activities that to during the vigil which then became customs to spend the “vigil of Nian”. Every night on that day, when Nian comes to the village, each family makes a good dinner with rich foods, because they don’t know what would be happen at this night. Before the dinner, they perform a ceremony to respect ancestors and ask their spirit to protect the whole family this night. After dinner, they tidy up the kitchen, put livestock into their places, locked the gates of the yard’ house and gather in one room. Nobody dares to go asleep. They share food that they call “Nian food” and cheered each other up during all night-vigil.

When the morning came and they had a safe night, villagers were very happy. They give thanks to the ancestors’ spirit for their protection, while opening the gate, they light firecrackers and they meet each other to offer greeting for their safe night that they were not eaten by Nian. This custom went on for years until one day Nian suddenly came to the village and preyed on villagers. Only one family that hung red curtain and newly wed couple who wore red clothes, were not preyed on by Nian. They also discovered that Nian did not come to the place where there was fire and loud noise.

The villagers, then, understood that the Nian was afraid of fire, the color red and loud noises. So when the day of Nian was about to come, the villagers would set off red color everywhere. They wore red clothes, hung red lanterns and mounted red paper on the windows and doors. They used firecrackers also to frighten away the Nian. From then on, Nian never came again to this village. But Nian only came to the villages that didn’t know about these things.

This case was heard by Ziwei god. On the day of the coming of Nian, Ziwei came and hit Nian with a big fireball then tied it to a pillar stone. From then on, villagers live peacefully without any threats of Nian. Now on, villagers freely spend their time during the end of the year. Even though Nian never comes again, they still keep the customs of what they had been doing. They became their customs of celebrating new year.

1.2. The Story of Jewish Passover

The origin of Jewish Passover come from the history of Israel when they were living in Egypt. At that time, the Israelites had big number of population. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt feared if the Israelites decided to rise against the Egyptians. He decided to avoid this possibility by enslaving them. Then, Israelites became slaves in Egypt.

Although the Israelites lived in the difficulty of slavery, their number were not decreased, but on the contrary continued to rise more and more: "But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread" (Ex 1:12). Because of this reason, the Egyptians made the Israelites live bitterly with harsh labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields (Cf. Ex 1:13-14). Pharaoh also decided to kill all the male children born to the Israelites (Cf. Ex 1:16.22).

Then, God of Israel sent Moses, His prophet, to bring message for Israelites that God would deliver the Israelites out of Egypt. He also asked Moses to tell Pharaoh to give Israelite permission to leave Egypt. Pharaoh refused it. Then, God gave ten plagues upon the Egyptian people. After the tenth plague Pharaoh allowed the Israelites Egypt. This was the first Passover for Israelites.

Before the tenth plague, God warned the Egyptians of it, that if they didn't let His people go, He would kill all of their firstborn children. Stubbornly they still suborn, refused to release Israelites. Then God asked the Israelites to eat the Passover sacrifice. They had to take a lamb or goat (Cf. Ex 12:3.5), slaughtered it at twilight, take some of its blood and put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes of the house where they eat the lamb (Cf. Ex 12:3-7). This blood was a sign for Israelite where they were at that time. When the time came, God would pass over all the houses of Israelites that had the blood and spared their firstborn from death.

The Israelites did like the God commanded them to and their firstborns were spared. At midnight, God passed through Egypt and killed all the firstborns except Israelites who had eaten the Passover sacrifice. After that, Pharaoh released the Israelites. Then, the Israelites call this as Passover and every year celebrated it to remember God's deliverance.

1.3. The Values of Nian's Legend in the Connection With the Catholic Faith

1. The dynamic of liberation

The main issue of these two stories is the dynamic of liberation. The story of liberation evolves from the state of terror or oppression by evil force and authority which threaten human life. Their freedom and harmonious life is seized by the evil forces. Then people attempt to release themselves from that situation. In this process of libera-

tion, there are also divine forces that help and gives them a perfect freedom.

The dynamic of liberation is a main issue in Catholic faith as well. The liberation in God is an ultimate purpose of Catholics spiritual life. This liberation is a salvation of man from the bondage of sin to the freedom in the communion with God by the grace of God through Jesus Christ. Originally man was created in the image of God (Cf. Gn 1:27), was given the breath of life, and became a living soul (Cf. Gn 2:7). He had high dignity and lived in a good communion with God but he destroyed it by his disobedience to God. He chose to follow Satan rather than to obey God' Word. God drove man out of the Eden and man became slave to sin. Now, the problem of man is that he wants to be free from his slavery of sin and to return to his state of Eden in the communion with God. Man from himself has no ability to fulfil this goal. He needs the grace of God.

Jesus Christ came to the world, became a savior. He proclaimed and granted the grace of love and forgiveness from God. Through His death and resurrection man received the grace of forgiveness. He led the people to the liberation, "liberation of human race or of individual man from sin and its consequences"⁴ and restore man's dignity in the communion with God. On this freedom, Cardinal Ratzinger wrote: "The freedom brought by Christ in the Holy Spirit has restored to us the capacity, which sin had taken away from us, to love God above all things and remain in communion with him."⁵

St. John of the Cross who have a deep experience on spiritual life, confirmed that this freedom in God will be received by those who walk in this direction. He explained this freedom as a state of union with God. According to him, this state of communion with God is transformative union when "God's will and the souls are in conformity, so that nothing in the one is repugnant to the other" (*Ascent*, II.5.3)⁶. In this union, the soul is brought by God to enter into the sublime knowledge of God that is indescribable by words (*Ascent*, II.26.5)⁷.

⁴ ANTHONY MASS, "Salvation." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Volume. 13, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1912. <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13407a.htm>>. 12 November 2017.

⁵ JOSEPH RATZINGER, *Introduction on Christian Freedom and Liberation*, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19860322_freedom-liberation_en.html. 13 November 2017.

⁶ JOHN OF THE CROSS, *The Collected Works of St. John of The Cross*, Washington D.C, Institutes of Carmelite Studies, 1991, 163.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 246.

Those who receive this grace of union, will get personal renewal to be free in God, free from the bondage of sin and free to choose and to do God's will. In this state of union, the soul will receive profound peace, love, joy and growth in virtue.

2. The Evil forces

In the legend of Nian, Nian is the representation of the evil force that comes regularly, works in the dark, breaks the society harmony, destroys personal peace and even threaten the life of villagers. In the Jewish Passover, Pharaoh is representation of evil force who oppress Israelite by slavery. Both of these evil forces, produce terror and lead the people away from peaceful life. They threaten people's life, bringing them to death.

In Catholic faith, the evil force refers to Satan or the devil who opposes God and all of His salvation's plan. He does not want people to live in God and their dignity restored in the perfect communion with God. He wants the people to avoid God and refuse the salvation in Him. Jesus says that the devil is a liar and the father of lies who is always trying to destroy man and lead them to the death: "He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he speaks in character, because he is a liar and the father of lies" (Jn 8:44). Because of this devil's cunning Jesus advises us to be careful of his various deceptions.

The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness gives us insight on the work of the devil to bring us to sin against God (Cf. Matt 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; Luk 4:1-13). He uses subtle way in the center of our weakness to influence us. By manipulating our abilities, the devil tempts us to despair and to distrust the goodness of God who always takes care of our lives. The devil can use some aspects of our spiritual life to grow our pride and then lead us away from God. He also can lead us to enjoy the worldly life so that we are distracted from our direction of life to God. This experience shows us that we need to humbly surrender to God, trust in Him and hold the Words of God to overcome any temptation.

About this evil force, we can also learn from Teresa of Avila. In her treatise of spiritual life, Teresa Avila reminds us to keep watchful eye on the work of evil forces. In each stages of our growth of spiritual life, before the state of union, the evil forces actively try to prevent our further growth toward union with God. Sometimes the work of devil is very obvious, tempting a person to do something clearly wrong or against God. In other times, the devil is also works subtly. The devil

is very intelligent in manipulating our weakness for his purpose. Teresa said, "he's like a noiseless file, that we need to recognize him at the outset." (IC I.2.16). For example, he can give us reasonable suggestion to do something that in fact leads us away from the direction of God, to cool our relationship and charity to others, to strengthen our self-righteousness and false humility and to decrease our prayer spirit. He also influences us to feel guilty when we are receiving the grace of God when actually God really grants us that grace.

3. The human effort to get liberation

In the legend of Nian, the effort of villagers to protect their lives and to repel the evil force is a manifestation of their desire to live in their original state before the coming of evil force. They want to enjoy the harmonious and peaceful life without intrusion of the evil force. This could be a symbol of man's desire to restore his life to the state of life before the Fall.

St. Teresa of Avila described our high dignity as "the magnificent beauty of a soul" (IC, I.1.1). It is very shameful and unfortunate if we do not realize this identity. For her, our effort to get our perfect liberation is the way of realization of our soul's beauty, until we receive the grace of union with God. This union is the ultimate liberation, when we freely choose not to do the devil's will but to do God's Will. In this sense, we enjoy our perfect liberation.

In the legend of Nian, the villagers attempt to avoid their death, by hiding in their house, praying to the gods and asking ancestors spirit to protect them, and strengthen their brotherhood to encourage each family members. Then, they learn the habit of the evil force till they know its habitual time to come and the ways of how to repel it. Finally, there is divine power who heard of their problem and help them to destroy this evil force.

The hiding in the house perhaps can be paralleled with the inward process toward the center of the soul, as Teresa said on the journey of the soul toward the union with God. The union will be happening in the center of the soul where God dwells in. The soul itself has many room or dwelling places with all of its complexity that potentially can stop its journey. To get to the center, the soul must pass through these various places. The process of inwardness is not a process of hiding, but the process to conform its will to God's will among the many choices which dwell in each room of his soul. In this process, a person has to have self-knowledge: his own will, joy, sorrow,

love, the work of devil and its influences in his journey, the work of God and all of His graces, his desire to either follow God or to follow the devil, and so on. It is important not to get distracted or even stopped by these experiences and thereby miss the ultimate goal of his inner journey that is the union with God in the center of his soul. This self-knowledge helps the soul to build humility in order to keep direction to God and avoid the influences of evil power.

Those who want to walk in this way, need a community to keep their faith, encouragement, guidance and inspiration, as the villagers also need their family to encourage each other to face their situation. The presence of others can strengthen the motivation to keep direction toward God, to ensure that there is nothing wrong with their practice, to learn from the experiences of others and to consult problems during the journey. It also provides many kinds of community life practices which could improve one's spiritual life, such as heart's openness, humility, loving each other, discernment, grateful heart and so on.

4. The Liberator or Savior

After the villagers strived to protect their life through many ways, finally they got perfect liberation because of the liberator, Ziwei god. Ziwei heard the problem of the villagers and then he came to defeat Nian and brought liberation for the vilagers. For Catholics, this story is very similar with the salvation's work of God through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. God incarnated in Jesus Christ came to defeat death and bring a new life in Him.

Scripture gives us information that God always hears the cry of His people (Cf. The case of Hagar and Ishmael, Gen 21: 17; Psalmist wrote that God is a prayer-hearing God, Ps 3:4; 18:6;34: 4.6.15.17; 107:6). Jesus Himself assured that God the Father will hear those who ask Him, "Ask and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you: For everyone that asks receives; and he that seeks finds; and to him that knocks it shall be opened." (Mat 7:7-8; Cf. also Mat 18:19). He even says that those who ask in His name, would receive, "and whatsoever you shall ask in My Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask anything in My Name, I will do it." (Jn 14:13-14).

The proclamation on the prayer-hearing God is part of the salvation work which is granted to mankind. Apparently, God wants to ensure mankind that His salvation work is not to be enjoyed only after the death of those who believe in Him, but is also effective within their lives in this world while they are struggling for eternal liberation.

He never leaves mankind, but always accompanies them in the way of salvation. This promise is fully realized by the presence of Jesus Christ in the midst of the people.

II. THE NEW YEAR COUPLETS

The legend of Nian gives us information that to prevent the coming of Nian, the villagers put red paper on the windows and the doors. This custom is very popular until this time.

Historically, this custom existed before Qin and Han dynasty⁸. At that time, people hung peachwood charm boards that they call *taofu* (桃符), on the right-left side of the door during the time of the spring festival. They drew or crafted the image of door gods, Shen tu and Yu Lei, on the boards. Shentu and Yulei were believed capable of dispelling all demons or evil spirits. During Tang dynasty, the image of door god, increased in popularity and there were also goddesses⁹. They also added to these boards by scroll of red paper above the door. On this scroll was written Spring couplets of four or five characters.

Then, because of the difficulties, the people did not draw or craft the door gods, but simply wrote their name. Later on, they only wrote couplets of some blessings to symbolize good fortune or their best hope on the scrolls, which they call *chunlian*. Here is an example of couplet collected by Patricia in her book *Chinese New Year*:

"Fengtiaoyushun song jiu sui

Dajidaliying sin chun.

Propitious weather [for crop] sends off the departing year [harvest];
Great happiness and great profit greet the new year."¹⁰

Chinese Catholic community also develop this New Year couplet in the context of Catholic faith. In addition to celebrate this traditional custom, couplets can also be a reminder of Catholic faith or of Gospel's messages. There are many kinds of couplet: consisting of four, five or seven characters or sentences as well. For example:

Xin kao ye su (Trust in Jesus)

Gan xie zhu en (Thank for the grace of the Lord)

⁸ Cf. 郭兴文, 桃符与春联, http://epaper.xiancn.com/xawb/html/2014-01/28/content_274057.htm. 15 November 2017.

⁹ Cf. NN, *A New Beginning*, 30-31.

¹⁰ See P.B. WELCH, *Chinese New Year*, 20.

Zhu jiu shi ai (The Lord is love)
Fuyin chuan tianxia, jiu en bian quanqiu.
 (The Gospel spread to the earth, salvation all over the world)
Yao zou tiantang lu, bi xianjinzai men.
 (If want to go to heaven, must choose enter to narrow door)
Rongyao gui tianzhu, pingan ci shiren.
 (Glory to God, peace to the world.)
Xin zhenshen tiantiaan xile, kao yesu shishi pingan.
 (Trust in true God joy every day, rely on Jesus peace every time.)

This custom of the scrolls red paper recalls to mind the blood of Passover's lamb. At that time, Israelites were told to put the blood of sacrifice lamb on the door: "And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it." (Exodus 12:7). When the time came, God would pass over all the houses Israelites that had the blood and spared their firstborn from death. In other word, by the sign of blood, God protects the life of Israelite.

In the light of the New Testament, the blood of the Passover lamb refers to the redemptive blood of Christ. As the blood of the Passover lamb spared the Israelite from death, the blood of Christ saved man's life. In his letters, St. Paul expressed well about the values of the blood of Christ for a new life in God. He explained that Christ offered His own blood to bring us justification of life (Rm. 5:9-10), eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12), sanctification grace (Heb. 9:14), forgiveness of sin (Heb. 9:22) and reconciliation with God (Eph. 2:16). Jesus Christ by shedding His blood grants the people liberation from the bondage of sin.

Jesus Himself pointed out tat His Blood is the covenant that brings forgiveness of sin: "Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins."" (Mat 26:28; Cf. Mark 14:24). It is interesting that in Luke and the first Letter of St. Paul to Corinthians, it is written as the "new covenant" (Cf. Luke 22:20; 1 Cor. 11:25). These Words give us message that by shedding His blood, Jesus is not only granted the forgiveness of sin, but also built a new covenant between God and His people. Through Him, God grants the believers salvation, eternal life, forgiveness of all our sins, salvation, eternal life and the Holy Spirit who dwells in us to lead us to follow God. In other side, the believers have to believe and trust in God, especially in the God's work of love through Jesus Christ.

The blood of Christ has a deep meaning and values of the salvation of mankind. So while keeping the custom of red paper scroll during the Chinese New Year Festival, Chinese Catholics can also recall the history of salvation through the precious blood of Christ and the love of God.

III. THE CHARACTER OF FU

Besides the scroll, the poster of the Chinese character fú (福) is also very popular during the Chinese New Year Festival. This character refers to some values of good fortune, wealth, good luck, happiness or blessings. There are some rules for displaying this poster.

Generally, this poster is displayed upside down. Why is this character displayed that way? In Chinese, the character of upside down, dǎo (倒) has similar pronunciation but different tone to the character of “arrive”, dào (到). Displaying the character fú (福) upside down is a wordplay which gives the idea of the arriving of good fortune, happiness or blessing.¹¹ This is a symbol of the hope on good fortune, wealth, happiness or blessing within the new coming year.

It is difficult to get the exact translation of this character. It is interesting to know deeper meaning of the character fú (福). This character is composed of 示(shì) on the left part and 畀(fú) on the right part. The radical 示(shì) refers to an altar or a table used in rituals which is connected to deities and praying.¹² The radical 畀(fú) represents pronunciation of and depicts a picture of wine pot.¹³ Based on this information, literally, this character could refer to offering wine to deities to pray for good fortune.

Other interpretation was written by Zhou Huixin. He refers to fú (福) as blessing. The radical 示, refers to the altar. The radical 畀(fú) could be separated to three character: 一(yī) 口(kǒu), 田(tián).¹⁴ 一(yī) represents one 口(kǒu) represents mouth or measure word for man and 田(tián) represents land. In this sense 畀(fú) could refer to each one who has land¹⁵ or property for their life. The meaning of fú

¹¹ Cf. 天星, 春节, 21.

¹² Cf. 顾建平, 《汉字通 Times Encyclopedia of Written Chinese, 181.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ See. ZHOU HUIXIN, “The Chinese Character That Brings Blessings”, https://m.theepochtimes.com/the-chinese-character-that-brings-blessings_482764.html, 17 November 2017.

¹⁵ Ibid.

(福) or blessing could be “a land given by gods”, land of conscience or prosperity that given by god and “if one can retrieve that land of purity in his heart, blessings will befall immediately”.¹⁶

There is also a Christian interpretation which explained that 畀 (fú) refers to the first man who was put in the garden.¹⁷ This interpretation is based on the understanding that 一(yī) could be first 口(kǒu) refers to man because this character is a measure word for man and 田(tián) refers to land of the garden. This understanding is connected with Adam, the first man whom God created and who was placed in Eden. Based on this interpretation, the good fortune, wealth, good luck, happiness or blessing is the original state when man is living in Eden in the best communion with God.

These interpretations remind us to be aware of the meaning of happiness or blessing in relation to deities. For Catholics, of course all of these things have a connection with God. When we want to receive the true happiness or blessing as original graces as in the times of Eden, we are indivisible from God. On one side, God is the source of happiness or blessing. The happiness or blessing is grace granted by God to humankind. On the other side, to receive this grace in its fullness, humankind has to build a relation with God through prayer. Jesus stressed that God always provides and will grant the graces, but the humankind firstly have to seek God and His truth: “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Cf. Mt 6:33).

From the beginning, God wants man to live in the union with Him. Only in Him, man finds the fullness of blessing or happiness and the harmonious life with other creatures. In this sense, those who want to receive the fullness of happiness should do everything with awareness of God’s presence. Jesus Himself reminds His believers to be in the union with Him always so that He can fulfill their effort toward salvation: “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abides in the vine; no more can you, except you abide in me.” (John 15:4).

In this light of interpretation, as Catholics we can take the poster of fú (福) as a reminder that if we want to receive blessing or the grace

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ See. ISSACHAR LI, “The Connotation of the Chinese Character “福” (Blessing): A Record of God Creating Man”, http://chinachristiandaily.com/2016-02-24/culture/the-connotation-of-the-chinese-character—福—blessing—a-record-of-god-creating-man_627.html, 17 November 2017.

of happiness, we should stay in good communion with God. God is the center of our life. We strive to cultivate our spiritual life and He helps us to perfect it; we struggle with our weakness and He helps us to overcome it; we fight with our daily problem and He assists us to face them. God continues to grant His graces to us “who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1Ptr 1:5).

In some places, Catholic Chinese communities replace the poster of the character *fu* with the poster of the Cross. For them, the Cross is a representation of their identity and faith as Catholics. The cross is the way of receiving the fullness a happiness or blessing. Through the cross Jesus shows that God love His people. He who is the source of happiness or blessing incarnates as a man and lead humankind toward the perfect happiness in God. He also gives man a perfect example to seek God and His righteousness. When they celebrate the new year festival, they remember that they celebrate it not just as traditional custom, but also celebrate it in the Catholic way.

IV. CHINESE RED PACKET

During this festival it is very popular also to distribute red packets or red envelopes containing money. This red packets is monetary giftor ‘lucky money’ that are known as *hongbao* in Mandarin, or *angpow* in Hokkien.¹⁸ There is no rule on the amount of money that should be put in the red packet. This is to be decided by individuals according to their financial and relationship status. Usually, people prefer to put an amount of money related to ‘lucky’ number, for example number 8. Eight in Cantonese is homonym for ‘rich’ or ‘prosper’.¹⁹ When the people present in this number, they hope for getting more prosperity or good future, either for presenter or receiver. They avoid the number 4, because four in Mandarin is homonym for ‘death’, so this is considered bad luck.

This red packet is presented by adults to young people or the married to the unmarried; the bosses of a company to their employees; aunties and uncles to their nephews or friends children and so on. During the new year, people always prepare red packets to anticipate

¹⁸ Cf. P.B. WELCH, *Chinese New Year*, 37.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

whom they will meet and give this 'lucky money'. Upon receiving a red packet, the receiver should thank the giver and avoid opening the packet in front of the giver.

In this modern time, there is also the new way to distribute "lucky money". The electronic red packet has become popular in recent years. People easily send or receive red packets via their smartphone. There are many apps to support this custom. It is a fast and convenient way to exchange 'lucky money' to others in far place.²⁰

From this custom we could take value of supporting those who are in need, hoping for their good life and welfare. There is also a good trend that this red packets are not only distributed among the family members but also to friends, employees and others. Its means that this custom has tendency to strengthen the harmonious society through supporting each other, especially supporting those who need help or attention.

As Catholic, this custom's progress recalls us to love God and others (Cf. Matt 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Lk 10:25-28). Loving God is affirmed by loving others. Loving God with all of our heart means participating in the work of God which will please Him. One project of God's work is loving fragile humanity and elevated it. Jesus proclaim His holistic salvation and therefore has concern to those who are weak, sick, blind, excluded from society, hungry and poor (Cf. Lk. 4:18, 19). The responsibility to the poor or needy implicitly is mentioned by Jesus when He told the parable about rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31). Prosperity comes from God, so that it is not only to provide the need of ourselves but also for others. When He talked about the judgment of the nations, Jesus stressed also that God identified Himself as the poor and needy, "Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me." (Matt 25:40). For this things, St. Paul reminded Galatians "remember the poor" (Gal 2:10) and James also stressed in his letter: "if a Christian becomes aware of the needs of others but does nothing to help, he lacks genuine faith" (James 2:14-26).

We can learn this value also from St. Teresa of Avilla. She explained well that loving others is part of spiritual exercise that will bring us to decrease our self-centered, self-love and bring us toward union with

²⁰ The Straits Times reported "tech-savvy givers in China are increasingly opting to transfer money via their smartphones rather than go to the trouble - and expense - of buying envelopes and handing them out". See. The Straits Times, "46 billion electronic hongbao sent over Chinese New Year", <http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/46-billion-electronic-hongbao-sent-over-chinese-new-year>, 20 November 2017.

God (IC. V.3.5-6).²¹ For Her, loving others can bring us to do the will of God, so that we can increase our love of God:

“And be certain that the more advanced you see you are in love for your neighbor the more advanced you will be in the love of God, for the love His Majesty has for us is so great that to repay us for our love neighbor He will in a thousand ways increase the love we have for Him.” (IC.V.3.8).²²

Then, one of the fruits of the grace of spiritual marriage or union with God, is good work. The soul will have a new motivation to do good works for God and for others (Cf. IC.VII.4.6.). So that she suggests her nuns to strengthen their service for others, especially those who are nearby them in their community (Cf. IC.VII.4.14).

The custom of red packet is not only about the values of our spiritual life, but can also to be a way of evangelization. In some places, Chinese Christians produced red packets with Christians ornaments such as sacred pictures and bible quotes. This is could be a way for us to introduce Christian’s values for others and also to remind ourselves on our faith of the values of the Gospel.

V. FAMILY GATHERING

The most important part of the celebration of Chinese New Year is family reunion. Normally, whenever possible, before the celebration, all of family members return back to their main home or to the home of the oldest generation to be with their extended families. They call it as *huiji guò nián*, return home to celebrate New Year. Through this custom they want to strengthen their family relationship: respecting to their ancestors and the older generations, and getting to know the family of husband or wife, and nephews-nieces, cousins, etc.

According to the traditional custom, during the New Year’s Eve, one family arranges the reunion dinner. They will provide the best food and many dishes with the symbolic meaning of abundance which refer to the prosperity and material wealth in the coming new year. Togetherness and gladness of the banquet becomes an expression of harmonious and peaceful family. They wish these values

²¹ TERESA OF AVILA, *The Collected Work of Saint Teresa of Avila, Vol. II*, Washington DC, ICS Publications, 1980, 350.

²² *Ibid.*, 351.

to flow into daily life through respecting, supporting and caring for each other.

For Catholics, these values of annual reunion during the New Year Celebration could be a tool to live an ideal of family. Family life is a vocation from God, because He did not make man to live alone but instead He made a suitable partner for man (Cf. Gen 2:18) so that man will leave his parent and unite with his wife (Cf. Mat 19: 6), to build a new family, to give religious upbringing to their children (Cf. Eph. 6: 4). As a God's vocation, family life then become a way and a sign of unity, witness of the Kingdom of God and peace of Christ. The activities of family reunion becomes a good way to realize and to strengthen this vocation.

Some Chinese Catholic celebrate the New Year's Eve with gathering prayer: to thank God for the graces they received within the last year and to pray for the family for the coming new year, to pray for their ancestors, for each other which is then followed dinner and making conversation, playing or watching TV together. They share with each other their experience of life, include spiritual life. This way, the reunion becomes a good way to live the community life as a small church and strengthen fraternity relationship. It also develop their spirit of charity through sharing and supporting each other, especially when they distribute red packet, visit other family or give each other food and wish each other well.

During the family reunions, in the traditional custom, before the dinner there is also a rite of ancestor worship. The family will set an altar, put the statues or images of gods that they have, and also portraits or names of their ancestors, then put also food and fruit.²³ This ancestor worship is an expression of their "filial piety, family loyalty, and continuity of the family lineage."²⁴

The Catholics who practice this rite have to pay attention on the Church's guidance. After a long research and dispute about the custom of ancestor worship, Catholic Church finally allowed this to be done in the new meaning²⁵. The practice is not a worshipping but only an honoring or veneration of ancestors as the expression of filial piety

²³ See. NN, *A New Beginning*, 50.

²⁴ One World Nations Online, "Chinese New Year Festivities: New Year's Eve", http://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/Chinese_Customs/cny-new-years-eve.htm, 28 November 2017.

²⁵ Cf. 主教图书中心, "祖先崇拜, Worship Ancestor", <http://www.chinacatholic.net/book/html/131/7481.html>, 28 November 2017; Cf. Also. <http://www.chinacatholic.net/liyi/misa/esp/2011-04-15/11468.html>, 28 November 2017.

and all the superstitions of this rite should be eliminated. This ancestral honoring is supposed to use the prayers that originate from the Catholic tradition and is accompanied by biblical reading. This is a helpful decision for Chinese Catholic in particular and Asian Catholic in general, because this rite is also practiced in some countries in Asia. This veneration of ancestors is practiced in various way. It is practiced with the specific intention: Mass for remembrance of ancestors or is practiced after the New Year Mass is over²⁶.

EPILOG

The Chinese New Year Festival has beautiful values. It is good for the Chinese Catholic Communities who celebrate this festival, to reflect on these values in order to live their Catholic faith within their customs. So that, when they celebrate this custom, they can celebrate it in the catholic way and at the same time, they also express their faith through this custom of celebration.

The Church herself supports every effort of inculturation because the Church should live and express herself in various cultures, so that she can take the good aspects of that culture, renewing in her way and then “through inculturation the church makes the Gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces peoples, together with their cultures, into her own community.” (RM. No.52).²⁷

²⁶ Alphonse Minh, O.F.M. and Rufino Zaragoza, O.F.M. wrote an interesting article about the ancestor worship and liturgical inculturation. They wrote that in some Asian countries, during the New Year Festival, Catholic Church practice this ancestor veneration in Mass or rite of veneration prayer. The Vietnam Missal contains one Mass formula for ancestor remembrance on the second day of New Year Festival. The Korean Missal has one formula and The Hong Kong Missal has two Mass formularies, first Mass is for the Vigil and the second is for New Year's Day. See, ALPHONSE MINH, O.F.M. and RUFINO ZARAGOZA, O.F.M., “*Vietnamese Lunar New Year: Ancestor Worship and Liturgical Inculturation within a Cultural Holiday*”, *New Theological Review*, Vol. 27, Number 2, March 2005.

²⁷ JOHN PAUL II, “RedemptorisMissio”, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html, 29 November 2017.

COINCIDENCIAS ENTRE EL *COMENTARIO*
AL “*CANTAR DE LOS CANTARES*” Y EL *CÁNTICO ESPIRITUAL*:
HACIA UNA REVALORACIÓN DE ORÍGENES
EN SAN JUAN DE LA CRUZ

MIGUEL NORBERT UBARRI, T.O.CARM.

Hace años Jules Lebreton (1873-1956), profesor de Historia en la Facultad de Teología de París, destacó el mérito del esfuerzo exegetico de Orígenes (185-254 d.C.), diciendo que en este Padre de la Iglesia Oriental la teología comenzó a no ser apologética, prefiriendo no refutar a los adversarios, sino a instruir a los cristianos, deseando penetrar más íntimamente en las verdades reveladas y coordinarlas en un sistema doctrinal.¹ A lo largo de los siglos, la teología de Orígenes suscitó controversias que fueron motivo de condena y que acabaron recibiendo el nombre de *origenismo*. Es de sobra sabido que la patrística está presente en la obra y pensamiento de san Juan de la Cruz. Se han publicado estudios sobre la influencia o presencia de otros Padres: san Agustín, san Gregorio de Nisa, san Gregorio Magno, san Benito, san Bernardo. Pero en la bibliografía sanjuanista consultada no figura ningún estudio antiguo o reciente sobre ninguna relación entre Orígenes y san Juan de la Cruz.²

Muchas obras del alejandrino se perdieron y otras se conservaron gracias a las traducciones latinas de Rufino, san Jerónimo y otros.³ Aunque incompleta, el *Comentario al Cantar de los cantares* es una de esas obras que ha sobrevivido hasta hoy. Ha sido publicada recientemente en traducción española. El editor Simonetti afirma que

¹ JULES LEBRETON, *Orígenes*, en FLICHE – MARTÍN – FRUTAZ, *Historia de la Iglesia*, Valencia, 1973; en *Patrología*, Madrid, Instituto Superior de Ciencias Religiosas, 2009, 83.

² MANUEL DIEGO SÁNCHEZ, Patrística, en *San Juan de la Cruz. Bibliografía sistemática*, Madrid, EDE, 2000, 225-228.

³ HENRI CROUZEL, *Orígenes. Un teólogo controvertido*, Madrid, BAC, 1998, 5-74. Entre las páginas 57 y 74 encontramos una larga lista de las obras perdidas, que conocemos gracias a la lista que san Jerónimo insertó en su Carta 33. En la página 57 añade que esta lista fue redescubierta a mediados del siglo XIX por sir Thomas Phillipps en un manuscrito de la ciudad de Arras (Francia).

esta obra: “marcó un punto fundamental en la historia de la mística occidental, hasta llegar a santa Teresa de Jesús y san Juan de la Cruz”.⁴ En la opinión de muchos teólogos recientes, esta obra “da comienzo a una corriente espiritual que llega hasta nuestros días, comienzo de una teología espiritual no sistemática”.⁵ Esta obra fue considerada por san Jerónimo como la obra maestra de Orígenes. Una lectura reciente de ambos textos me ha permitido confirmar que, en efecto, se advierten coincidencias con san Juan de la Cruz que merecen la atención de los sanjuanistas y la reflexión teológica. Esto es lo que pretendo aquí con este artículo, no con el objetivo de realizar un estudio definitivo, sino más bien hipotético, como plataforma para otros estudios posteriores.

En el análisis contrastivo del *Comentario* de Orígenes y el *Cántico espiritual* de san Juan de la Cruz que propongo, me centraré en tres aspectos: 1. la relación entre el comentario y el poema original que sirvió de fundamento, 2. los métodos exegéticos empleados para desentrañar el sentido de los versos y 3. la resultante reflexión sobre las condiciones y etapas del proceso de maduración espiritual.

1. RELACIÓN COMENTARIO Y POEMA ORIGINAL

El comentario cristiano más antiguo lo realizó san Hipólito de Roma (170-235 o 6) algunos años antes que Orígenes. El interés de Orígenes por el *Cantar* se sitúa en torno al año 240, en una serie de homilías y una colección extensa de 10 libros. La interpretación de san Hipólito es de tipo alegórica o mística sin ningún indicio de interpretación literal. Se basa en la tipología anterior de los judíos quienes atribuyeron *Proverbios*, *Eclesiastés* y el *Cantar* al rey Salomón y lo interpretaron como el canto de amor entre Yahvé y su esposa Israel. Los primeros cristianos adaptaron esta interpretación identificando al esposo con Cristo y a la esposa con la Iglesia, siguiendo los consejos de san Pablo:

*Por esto dejará el hombre al padre y a la madre y se unirá a su mujer, y serán los dos una carne. Este misterio es grande, yo lo aplico a Cristo y a la Iglesia. En todo caso, también vosotros, que cada uno ame a su esposa como a sí mismo, y que la esposa respete al marido.*⁶

⁴ ORÍGENES, *Comentario al Cantar de los Cantares*, ed. MANLIO SIMONETTI – trad. ARGIMIRO VELASCO DELGADO, Madrid, Ciudad Nueva, 2015, 28.

⁵ *Teología Espiritual*, Madrid, Instituto Superior de Ciencias Religiosas, 1999, 21.

⁶ *Nueva Biblia de Jerusalén*, Bilbao, Desclee, 1999. Ef. 5,31-33.

El comentario de san Hipólito ha llegado a nosotros incompleto. Concluye con la interpretación de Ct 3,7-8.

Orígenes lo superó con una interpretación muy diferente en complejidad y actitud, como veremos más adelante.⁷ Estructuró la obra original con un prólogo, en el que sentó las bases teóricas de su exégesis, y un comentario del poema epitalámico. Rufino de Aquilea tradujo al latín en los primeros años del siglo V tan sólo el prólogo y hasta el comentario al capítulo 2, versículo 15. Esta versión recortada es la que ha sobrevivido el paso del tiempo. La mayoría de los manuscritos originales de Rufino reparten el comentario en tres libros, aunque la edición que manejamos para este trabajo recoge las ediciones anteriores de imprenta, que dividen el tercero en dos partes, generando un cuarto libro.

Aproximadamente trece siglos más tarde, en pleno siglo XVI, san Juan de la Cruz sacó del zulo de Toledo, donde estuvo recluso desde diciembre de 1577 hasta agosto de 1578, treinta o treinta y una estrofas, liras clásicas típicamente renacentistas, cuyo título original según figura en el manuscrito de Sanlúcar de Barrameda es *Cantar del alma que se huelga de conocer a Dios por fe* y que fray Jerónimo de San José Ezquerro, pensando en el *Cantar de los cantares*, tituló posteriormente *Cántico espiritual*. Movido por la necesidad psicológica, por el deseo de cantar algo sobre la experiencia mística e inefable de Dios, fue seguida por otra pedagógica, para responder a las preguntas que las religiosas y frailes le hacían. Empezó a escribir el comentario al poema en 1579, durante su período en El Calvario. Durante su priorato en Granada, de 1582 a 1584, completó el poema hasta llegar a las treinta y nueve estrofas de la primera redacción, conocida como *Cántico A*. Casi inmediatamente después amplió el comentario y alteró el orden las estrofas, terminado según parece en 1586. Es la segunda redacción conocida como *Cántico B*.

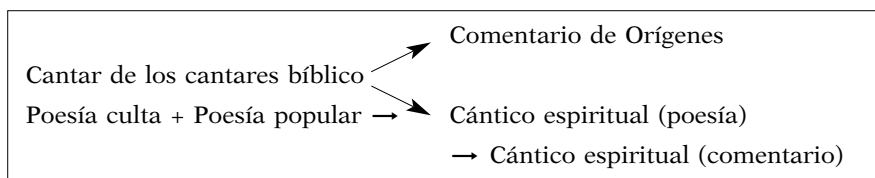
Las fuentes literarias del *Cántico espiritual* fueron estudiadas a principios del siglo XX por Dámaso Alonso quien, en su clásico estudio *La poesía de san Juan de la Cruz, desde esta ladera*,⁸ identificó tres vertientes: la poesía culta de Juan Boscán y Garcilaso de la Vega a través de Sebastián de Córdoba (el Garcilaso a lo divino), la poesía popular recogida en los romanceros y cancioneros de la época y, finalmente, el epitalámico *Cantar de los cantares*. Enumera expresiones comunes

⁷ ORÍGENES, *Comentario*, 19-20.

⁸ DÁMASO ALONSO, *La poesía de San Juan de la Cruz, desde esta ladera*, Madrid, Aguilar, 1958, 108-110.

en el poema: palabras que aluden al ambiente cargado de hieratismos provenientes del *Cantar*: carillo, hebra voladora, raposas, etc., y elementos de la atmósfera o ambiente del poema: elementos reunidos y condensados en un poema largo que simboliza el desposorio y en el cual la esposa comunica el encanto del noviazgo con imágenes poderosas del amor nupcial.

Así, vemos como ambas obras, el *Comentario* de Orígenes y el *Cántico espiritual* (la poesía) de san Juan de la Cruz tienen como referente el *Cantar de los cantares* bíblico. Orígenes comenta de manera directa el poema bíblico; san Juan de la Cruz comenta su propio poema, que a su vez toma algunos elementos del poema bíblico.



Es decir, que los niveles de recepción del poema bíblico son distintos. Orígenes escribió un comentario única y exclusivamente al *Cantar de los cantares*. En el caso de san Juan de la Cruz, el comentario en prosa llamado *Cántico espiritual* comenta un poema de su propia autoría, con el mismo nombre, que es el objeto inmediato de su exégesis o interpretación. Y este poema, a su vez, bebe al menos de tres fuentes literarias: la poesía culta, la poesía popular y el poema bíblico.

2. MÉTODOS EXEGÉTICOS

En sus homilias – explica Crouzel – Orígenes concede espacio al sentido literal, que él también llama histórico o corporal.⁹ En el *Comentario* la interpretación de cada versículo o grupo de versículos se inicia con un comentario de carácter literal, que él califica como “exposición histórica”.¹⁰ Se hace eco de la tradición judía que atribuía la autoría del poema al rey Salomón y subraya el carácter dramático del canto en el que los personajes principales, el esposo y

⁹ H. CROUZEL, *Orígenes*, 89.

¹⁰ ORÍGENES, *Comentario*, Libro I, cap. 1, 2.

la esposa, se alternan continuamente, también dirigiéndose a otros interlocutores:

Este epitalamio, es decir, canto de bodas tengo para mí que Salomón lo escribió a modo de drama y cantó como si fuera el de una novia que va a casarse y está inflamada del amor celeste por su esposo, que es el Verbo de Dios.¹¹

Acto seguido explica su método exegético:

Conviene recordar cuanto hemos advertido en el prólogo: que este libro, que tiene forma de epitalamio, está escrito a modo de drama. Ahora bien decíamos que hay drama allí donde se introduce a ciertos personajes que van hablando, mientras otros aparecen bruscamente, se acercan o hacen mutis, y así todo es cuestión de mutación de personajes. Ésta, pues, será la forma del libro entero, y a ella iremos adaptando, en la medida de nuestras fuerzas, la exposición histórica. En cambio, la interpretación espiritual, también conforma a lo que señalamos en el prólogo, se ajustará a la relación de la Iglesia con Cristo, bajo la denominación de esposa y de esposo, y a la unión del alma con el Verbo de Dios.¹²

El primer sentido del versículo bíblico "¡Que me bese con los besos de su boca!"¹³ lo interpreta diciendo que "según la forma histórica, se introduce a una esposa que recibió del nobilísimo esposo dignísimos regalos de esponsales, a más de la dote, pero que, al demorarse largo tiempo el esposo, se ve atormentada por el deseo de su amor...".¹⁴ Lo literal se pone de manifiesto en el establecimiento del género literario – un canto de bodas, a modo de un drama epitalámico con personajes con voz lírica: la novia inflamada de amor que va a casarse con el futuro esposo.

Tras la declaración del significado literal del texto, luego pasa a la interpretación espiritual. Como botón de muestra veamos el comentario al versículo bíblico siguiente: "Porque son tus pechos mejores que el vino, y el olor de tus perfumes superior a todos los aromas"¹⁵:

En este pasaje se dice evidentemente que Juan reposó sobre la parte principal del corazón de Jesús y sobre los sentidos profundos de su doctrina, y que allí indagaba y escudriñaba a fondo los tesoros de la sabi-

¹¹ Ibid., Pról. 1, 1.

¹² Ibid., Lib. I, cap. 1, 1-2.

¹³ Ibid., cap. 1, 2.

¹⁴ Ibid., cap. 1, 3.

¹⁵ Ibid., cap. 1, 2-3.

*duría y de la ciencia que se esconden en Cristo Jesús. Y en cuanto a que por seno de Cristo se entiendan las doctrinas sagradas, no creo que parezca indecoroso.*¹⁶

La justificación teológica está en el sentido espiritual-alegórico, que en el cristianismo es la revelación ante todo de una persona, Cristo. Para Orígenes, el Verbo de Dios no es sólo la Palabra, o el Logos joánico, sino la Razón eterna del Padre. A través de antropomorfismos bíblicos Orígenes descubre la manifestación de Dios a los hombres. Sólo podemos comprender a la manera de un hombre, sin salir de nuestra experiencia humana.¹⁷ Así, si la Revelación es Cristo, la Escritura será revelación indirecta, por mediación de Cristo, en la medida en que lo muestre y exprese. El Nuevo Testamento relata la vida y enseñanzas de Cristo. El Antiguo Testamento también lo revela tanto en cuanto habla no parcialmente sino en su totalidad de Cristo. Entonces, la exégesis espiritual o mística consiste para Orígenes en un proceso exegético que parte del mismo Cristo, que reconoce en las antiguas Escrituras la preparación del Nuevo Testamento pero, que también en la de éste sigue siendo en parte profético en cuanto guarda relación con los que se cumplirá en el tiempo escatológico.¹⁸

La interpretación espiritual se desdobra sistemáticamente en dos líneas que se cruzan pero que permanecen diferenciadas. La interpretación espiritual-alegórica que hemos visto: la esposa y el esposo son figura de la Iglesia y Cristo. Establece contraste entre Israel y la Iglesia cristiana, entre la economía de salvación del AT y del NT. Siempre resalta la superioridad del esposo. Y una segunda interpretación espiritual-tropológica o metafórica que hoy día los críticos modernos catalogan como psicológica, y que describe los estados del alma con consideraciones morales y espirituales. A propósito de las doncellas, Orígenes no se refiere ya a la Iglesia-Esposa, sino a las almas individuales que están creciendo en edad y belleza:

*Cuando tu nombre se hizo perfume derramado, te amaron, no aquellas almas añosas y revestidas del hombre viejo, ni las llenas de arrugas y de manchas, sino las doncellas, esto es, las almas que están creciendo en edad y en belleza, que cambien constantemente y de día en día se van renovando y se revisten del hombre nuevo que fue creado según Dios.*¹⁹

¹⁶ Ibid., cap. 2, 4.

¹⁷ H. CROUZEL, *Orígenes*, 101.

¹⁸ Ibid., 100-103.

¹⁹ ORÍGENES, *Comentario*, Lib. I, cap. 4, 3.

Seguirá hablando indistintamente de la Iglesia y del alma: "Mas, como quiera que la realidad de que se trata es la Iglesia que viene a Cristo o el alma unida al Verbo de Dios, ¿qué otra cosa hemos de pensar que es la cámara del tesoro de Cristo?"²⁰ De ahí que podamos afirmar que a lo largo del comentario haya dos líneas que se entrecruzan, pero que también están diferenciadas la una de la otra.

El *Cántico espiritual* representa el paradigma mejor logrado de un comentario en prosa de un poema. El poema comienza in medias res, cuando la amada descubre que el Amado se ha ido y corre en pos de él, hasta encontrarlo en el fondo de su alma: "El orden que llevan estas canciones es desde que un alma comienza a servir a Dios hasta que llega al último estado de perfección, que es matrimonio espiritual".²¹

En el pensamiento de san Juan de la Cruz late la idea de que su poema exige un comentario para explicar el sentido oculto de los versos y elaborar una doctrina espiritual. La exégesis se realiza partiendo de dos textos: un texto primario, que es el poema bíblico y que sirve de inspiración para el poema *Cántico espiritual* de su propia autoría, y ese mismo texto, secundario en la cronología exegética, pero que es el objeto principal de toda la declaración o comentario en prosa. Es decir, que el comentario no se propone desentrañar única y principalmente el sentido teológico de los versos del poema bíblico, sino que la exégesis lo asume y lo tiene en cuenta, incorporándolo como referente y autoridad, para entonces realizar la exégesis de su propio poema. En el plano ya literario, el poema bíblico es un referente, junto con la poesía culta y popular de la época, que alimenta con símbolos e imágenes poéticas el poema sanjuanista. San Juan de la Cruz toma símbolos e imágenes del poema bíblico, recreándolos para crear con libertad poética un poema nuevo: el Amado-ciervo, la amada-paloma, el lecho florido, la interior bodega... y tantas otras coincidencias más a lo largo de todo el poema. También la estructura del poema es similar al bíblico. En ambos la acción principal entre los esposos se realiza en forma de diálogo amoroso, con la participación de otros personajes. En el bíblico habla el coro, en el *Cántico* hablan las criaturas. Prueba de esta correlación entre ambos textos son las referencias al poema bíblico que se encuentran en el comentario. Veamos un ejemplo de la presencia del *Cantar* en el *Cántico*:

Esto mismo quiso decir la Esposa en los Cantares divinos, cuando, desearo unirse con la divinidad del Verbo, Esposo suyo, la pidió al Padre

²⁰ Ibid., cap. 5, 3.

²¹ *Cántico B*, Argumento 1.

*diciendo: muéstrame dónde te apacientas y dónde te recuestas al mediodía (1, 6). Porque, en pedir le mostrase dónde se apacentaba, era pedir le mostrase la esencia del Verbo Divino, su Hijo, porque el Padre no se apacienta en otra cosa que en su único Hijo, pues en la gloria del Padre.*²²

En las treinta y nueve canciones del CA y cuarenta del CB la forma del comentario en prosa se mantiene más o menos uniforme e inalterada a lo largo de todo el texto. Se conforma un juego entre lo narrativo-descriptivo en torno a la acción de los personajes y lo expositivo-doctrinal, sobrepuesto como explicación o sistematización.²³

En tiempos de san Juan de la Cruz se conocían diversos métodos exegéticos para un texto bíblico: la lectio divina de los monjes, una lectura contemplativa de la Sagrada Escritura, y el método escolástico que había elaborado varios sentidos para la exégesis de un texto bíblico: literal y espiritual, que se subdivide en alegórico (refiriéndose a Cristo), tropológico (o moral) y anagógico (de las cosas futuras). Pero, es curioso que, sintiendo la necesidad de convertirse en exégeta de su poesía, no siga ordenadamente los cuatro sentidos tradicionales de la escolástica aplicados a la Biblia. “En la práctica – dice Cristóbal Cuevas – los cuatro se combinan con gran libertad, surgiendo con frecuencia a impulsos de asociaciones y analogías de índole en última instancia poética”.²⁴

Por ejemplo, el argumento proemial y comentario a la primera canción no comienzan con el sentido literal. El breve argumento inicial al CB explica el sentido que tiene el orden de las canciones a tenor del itinerario espiritual de un alma. Y la primera declaración a la canción “¿Adónde te escondiste, Amado, y me dejaste con gemido?” no explica el sentido literal de la historia narrada en el verso, sino que de inmediato se sitúa en el sentido espiritual. Desde el principio, la amada es el alma y el Amado es Dios.

Cayendo el alma en la cuenta de lo que está obligada a hacer, viendo que la vida es breve, la senda de la vida eterna estrecha, que el justo apenas se salva, que las cosas del mundo son vanas y engañosas, que todo se acaba y falta como el agua que corre... renunciando todas las cosas,

²² Ibid., 1, 5.

²³ EULOGIO PACHO, *Tres poemas, un tratado y tres comentarios*, en *Juan de la Cruz, espíritu de llama*, Roma, Institutum Carmelitanum, 1991, 345-368.

²⁴ CRISTÓBAL CUEVAS GARCÍA, *La literatura como signo de lo inefable: el género literario de los libros de San Juan de la Cruz*, en JOSÉ NICOLÁS ROMERA CASTILLO ed., *La literatura como signo*, Madrid, Playor, 1981, 98-99.

*dando de mano todo negocio sin dilatar un día ni una hora, con ansia y gemido salido del corazón herido ya del amor de Dios comienza a invocar a su Amado...*²⁵

El sentido literal se encuentra entreverado en otros fragmentos, de manera rápida y breve, como en el siguiente comentario a la canción cuarta:

*¡Oh bosques y espesuras
plantadas por la mano del Amado!
¡O prado de verduras
de flores esmaltado
¡decid si por vosotros ha pasado!*

En el comentario, después de comenzar con la interpretación espiritual, en el segundo párrafo de la declaración aporta una brevísima interpretación literal: "Habla, pues, el alma en esta canción con las criaturas preguntándoles por su Amado".²⁶ Aclara el sentido literal de la escena. Después de haber salido y sobrevolado fuertes y fronteras, se encuentra con las criaturas, quienes le responden en la canción siguiente que el Amado pasó por ellas y las dejó vestidas de hermosura:

*En esta canción responden las criaturas al alma, la cual respuesta, como también dice San Agustín en aquel mismo lugar, es el testimonio que dan en sí de la grandeza y excelencia de Dios en el alma...*²⁷

Comparado con el *Comentario* de Orígenes, se puede deducir que ambos interpretan el sentido literal, pero san Juan de la Cruz privilegia desde el primer momento el sentido espiritual metafórico, refiriéndose al alma y su itinerario espiritual.

También está presente en el *Cántico* de san Juan de la Cruz el sentido espiritual alegórico, referido al binomio Cristo-Esposo/Iglesia-Esposa. Aparece en la declaración a la canción trigésima del *Cántico B*:

*De flores y esmeraldas
en las frescas mañanas escogidas
haremos las guirnaldas
en tu amor floridas
en un cabello mío entretejidas.*

²⁵ *Cántico B* 1, 1.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 4, 1.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 5, 1.

Este versillo se entiende harto propiamente de la Iglesia y de Cristo, en el la Iglesia, Esposa suya, habla con él, diciendo: haremos las guirnaldas; entendiendo por guirnaldas todas las almas santas engendradas por Cristo en la Iglesia, que dada una de ellas es como una guirnalda arreada de flores de virtudes y dones, y todas ellas juntas son una guirnalda para la cabeza del Esposo Cristo.²⁸

Las guirnaldas son la Iglesia, Esposa de Cristo, que habla con su Esposo. No es difícil, por lo tanto, afirmar que san Juan de la Cruz también emplea el sentido alegórico de la tradición exegética cristiana y por Orígenes. Sólo que para san Juan de la Cruz no es tampoco prioridad desentrañar el sentido de sus versos con este tipo de interpretación.

En realidad, el sentido exegético más utilizado por san Juan de la Cruz es el espiritual-metafórico, referido a la relación entre Cristo y el alma. Esto tiene una explicación histórica. La motivación principal a la hora de declararles el sentido de los versos a las monjas y los frailes era describir el itinerario de un alma, desde que comienza a caminar por los caminos del espíritu hasta que llega a la unión con Dios. Por esta misma razón tuvo que reorganizar el orden de las canciones, añadiendo una más al CB, precisamente porque la motivación del primer poema era más que nada emocional, para cantar a la experiencia de Dios, mientras que la segunda redacción obedece a criterios pedagógicos o mistagógicos.

Este sentido espiritual desarrollado de manera tan amplia por san Juan de la Cruz es el que apreciamos en estado embrionario en el *Comentario* de Orígenes. Veamos el mismo ejemplo anterior de las doncellas o jóvenes, ahora tal como figura en la Vulgata latina de san Jerónimo, que, aunque posterior a Orígenes, sería la que utilizaría san Juan de la Cruz.

*Fragantia unguentis optimis.
Oleum effusum nomen tuum;
Ideo adolescentulae dilexerunt te.
Trahe me, post te corremus
In odorem unguentorum tuorum.²⁹*

Orígenes dice que el perfume derramado es el nombre de Dios, amado no por las almas con años y revestidas del hombre viejo, sino por doncellas.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 30, 7.

²⁹ *Canticum Canticorum* 1, 2-3.

Cuando tu nombre se hizo perfume derramado, te amaron, no aquellas almas añosas y revestidas del hombre viejo, ni las llenas de arrugas y de manchas, sino las doncellas, esto es, las almas que están creciendo en edad y en belleza, que cambien constantemente y de día en día se van renovando y se revisten del hombre nuevo que fue creado según Dios.³⁰

Las doncellas aludidas son las almas jóvenes, que están creciendo en edad y belleza, y que están pasando por un proceso de conversión. San Juan de la Cruz recrea este verso de la Biblia en la canción 25.

*A zaga de tu huella
las jóvenes discurren al camino
al toque de centella
al adobado vino
emisiones de bálsamo divino.*

En el comentario dice:

Es a saber, las almas devotas, con fuerzas de juventud recibidas de la suavidad de tu huella, discurren, esto es, corren por muchas partes y de muchas maneras, que eso quiere decir discurrir, cada una por la parte y suerte que Dios le da de espíritu y estado, con muchas diferencias de ejercicios y obras espirituales, al camino de la vida eterna, que es la perfección evangélica, por la cual encuentran con el Amado en unión de amor después de la desnudez de espíritu acerca de todas las cosas.³¹

Queda claro que esas adolescentes referidas en la Biblia significan tanto para Orígenes como para san Juan de la Cruz las personas jóvenes. Se refiere al alma o a la persona que tiene la disponibilidad natural para abrirse a la maduración espiritual. En ambos autores vemos la coincidencia del sentido espiritual aplicado de manera similar al texto bíblico para referirse al alma y su estado espiritual.

Se desprende de esta lectura que el método exegético de Orígenes y san Juan de la Cruz tienen elementos en común. Ambos aplican el sentido literal y espiritual al poema, el primero al poema bíblico, el segundo a su poema, que a su vez toma elementos del bíblico.

³⁰ ORÍGENES, *Comentario*, Lib. I, 4, 3.

³¹ *Cántico B 25, 4.*

3. LA REFLEXIÓN SOBRE LAS ETAPAS DE MADURACIÓN ESPIRITUAL

Al describir los estados del alma Orígenes distingue entre dos grupos: 1. los sencillos o principiantes y 2. los perfectos. El objetivo es relatar cómo cada cristiano, cualquiera que sea su condición, debe sentir el deseo de progresar en sabiduría divina y en virtudes para unirse a Cristo. Cada cristiano debe volverse como la esposa del *Cantar*.³²

Veamos las condiciones para llegar de un estado a otro. El comentario al capítulo 2, versículo 15 del *Cantar*: “Cazadnos las raposas, las pequeñas raposas que devastan las viñas, nuestra viña en flor”³³ dice así:

*Parece, pues, que en el Cantar de los Cantares el esposo manda a las potestades sus amigas que cacen y confuten a las potestades contrarias que asedian a las almas de los hombres, para evitar les arruinen los inicios de la fe y las flores de la virtud bajo la apariencia de alguna secreta y oculta sabiduría; estas potestades se esconden, como raposas en sus madrigueras, en los hombres que se entregan a la búsqueda de esa sabiduría [...] aquí se da entender que el alma adulta y perfecta no se puede escandalizar, pero sí la pequeña e imperfecta, como se dice en el salmo: Mucha paz tienen los que aman tu nombre, no hay para ello escándalo. De modo parecido se puede interpretar que toda viña, es decir, toda alma principiante, puede ser lastimada por las raposas, o sea, por los malos pensamientos o por los perversos doctores, pero no el alma perfecta y fuerte. Sin embargo, si los buenos doctores cazan estas raposas y las expulsan del alma, entonces ella progresará en las virtudes y florecerá en la fe.*³⁴

Orígenes describe dos tipos de almas: la principiante, pequeña e imperfecta, susceptible a las raposas, que son los malos pensamientos, y la perfecta y fuerte, que está protegida por su madurez. El alma es comparada con una viña, “las cuales muestran ya las primeras yemas, y no las dejan llegar a florecer”.³⁵ Las raposas son “las potestades enemigas y los demonios malvados que, por medio de torcidos pensamientos y errónea interpretación, exterminan en el alma la flor

³² ORÍGENES, *Comentario*, 23-25.

³³ En latín: *Capite nobis vulpes parvulas quae demoliuntur vineas; name vinea nostra floruit*. Cf. *Biblia Vulgata*, Eds. ALBERTO COLUNGA – LAURENTIO TURRADO, Madrid, BAC, 1999.

³⁴ ORÍGENES, *Comentario*, Lib. IV, cap. 2, art. 29 y 33.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Lib. IV, cap. 3, art. 1.

de las virtudes y aniquilan el fruto de la fe".³⁶ Los doctores son los católicos quienes con buena doctrina guían al principiante hasta la perfección.³⁷

Aunque hoy día los estudios bíblicos revelen otras fuentes y autorías, según la tradición judía recogida por Orígenes, Salomón fue el autor de tres libros. En los *Proverbios* enseñó la doctrina moral, redactando normas de vida en sentencias breves y sucintas; en el *Eclesiastés* discurrió sobre temas naturales, distinguiendo entre lo inútil y vano de lo útil y necesario, exhortando a abandonar la vanidad y buscar lo útil y recto; en el *Cantar* bajo la figura de la esposa y del esposo, despierta en el alma el amor de las cosas divinas y enseña que se ha de llegar a la unión con Dios por los caminos del amor.³⁸

*Y por eso, tras los Proverbios, se pasa al Eclesiastés, que, según dijimos, enseña que todas las cosas visibles y corpóreas son caducas y frágiles. En todo caso, cuando se dé cuenta de ello el que se consagra a la sabiduría, sin duda alguna las despreciará y desdeñará y, renunciando, por así decirlo, al mundo entero, se encaminará hacia las realidades invisibles y eternas que se enseñan en el Cantar de los Cantares con pensamientos espirituales, aunque velados por ciertas alegorías amorosas. Tal es la razón verdadera de ocupar este libro el último lugar, de modo que, cuando se llegue a él, uno esté ya purificado y haya aprendido a conocer y distinguir las cosas corruptibles y las incorruptibles, y por ello le sea imposible escandalizarse de nada a causa de esas alegorías con que se describe y representa el amor de la esposa al esposo celeste, el decir, del alma perfecta al Verbo de Dios. Efectivamente, una vez establecidos los medios por los cuales el alma se purifica en las acciones y en las costumbres, y alcanza el discernimiento de las cosas naturales, es el momento adecuado para pasar a lo doctrinal y místico y elevarse con amor sincero y espiritual a la contemplación de la divinidad.*³⁹

El hilo conductor de este camino de perfección presentado en este fragmento no es puramente racional o intelectual; el elemento afectivo también juega un papel importante en el proceso de maduración humana y espiritual: el hombre interior pasa al conocimiento místico de los misterios de Dios, a la contemplación de la divinidad, movido por el "amor sincero y espiritual".

³⁶ Ibid., Lib. IV, cap. 3, art. 2.

³⁷ Ibid., Lib. IV, cap. 3, art. 8.

³⁸ Ibid., Pról. 3, 7.

³⁹ Ibid., Pról. 3, 15-16.

No son pocas las referencias a lo largo de la obra de Orígenes que apuntan a un proceso de crecimiento. Existe un crecimiento en conocimiento natural: “cada alma que vive en el amor y deseo del Verbo de Dios ... ha ido recorriendo, por su orden, todas las doctrinas en las que se ejercitó y se instruyó antes de conocer al Verbo de Dios y que provenían, bien de las escuelas de moral, bien de las escuelas de filosofía de la naturaleza” y otro en “conocimiento espiritual y místico”.⁴⁰ En el comentario citado al verso “Perfume derramado es tu nombre, por eso las doncellas te amaron y te atraieron en pos de sí” identifica las doncellas como “las almas que están creciendo en edad y en belleza, que cambian constantemente y de día en día se van renovando...”.⁴¹ Son almas que han conocido a Cristo y que están en progreso, llenas de fuerza y entusiasmo, que corren en pos del Señor. El verso “Correremos al olor de tus perfumes” indica que estas doncellas han desarrollado otro sentido divino e interior, que es más que los cinco sentidos corporales, que les permiten percibir el perfume del esposo, Cristo. Contrastan con la esposa, que es una sola, la “perfecta”, “la que corre de modo que llega, y recibe sola el premio”.⁴²

Si bien el crecimiento se describe en pos de la adquisición de sabiduría divina en el clave de enamoramiento, en el libro segundo introduce el autoconocimiento como motor que propicia la conversión o transformación.

*Sin duda alguna, todo esto se lo puede también decir el Verbo de Dios al alma que, ciertamente va progresando, pero que no ha subido aún a la cima de la perfección. Esta alma, por el hecho de estar progresando, es llamada bella, sin embargo, para que pueda también llegar a la perfección, necesita de esta advertencia: si recorriendo cada uno de los interrogantes que hemos propuesto no se conoce a sí misma y no se ejercita vigilante en la palabra de Dios y en la ley divina, le tocará andar cosechando sobre cada punto opiniones bien diversas e ir a la zaga de hombres que no han hablado palabra notable ni que proceda del Espíritu Santo.*⁴³

Por eso dirá que es un peligro tremendo descuidar la ciencia del espíritu y el autoconocimiento.

Alcanzando el final de la versión recortada que ha llegado hasta nosotros, en el libro cuarto Orígenes introduce categorías de la vida

⁴⁰ Ibid., Lib. I, cap. 3, art. 12-13.

⁴¹ Ibid., Lib. I, cap. 4, art. 2.

⁴² Ibid., Lib. I, cap. 5, art. 8.

⁴³ Ibid., Lib. II, cap. 5, art. 29.

teologal en su comentario. Los vicios y deseos, como tormentas en el alma, se describen como impedimentos para la unión con el Verbo de Dios y hace hincapié en la importancia de las virtudes, que son como flores en el alma. Llega el tiempo de la poda en el que todo lo superfluo y menos útil de los sentidos será cortado. La esposa deberá atenerse a las "yemas de la inteligencia espiritual".⁴⁴ El lector versado sentirá sin duda cierto tufillo que le sugerirán las purgaciones del sentido y del espíritu en las noches oscuras de san Juan de la Cruz.

Incluso Orígenes menciona una primavera, que es el arribo a un estado de reposo del alma y sosiego de la mente.

*Efectivamente, para ella es primavera cuando se da reposo al alma y sosiego a la mente. Entonces viene ella el Verbo de Dios, entonces la llama hacia sí, y la exhorta a salir, no solo fuera de la casa, sino también fuera de la ciudad, es decir, a ponerse fuera no solo de los vicios de la carne, sino también de todo cuando de corpóreo y visible se contiene en el mundo.*⁴⁵

Dios la exhorta a salir de su casa y de la ciudad, ponerse fuera. La salida es de los vicios de la carne y de todo cuanto de corpóreo y visible se encuentra en el mundo. Sobre la salida de la casa y el control de las pasiones canta san Juan de la Cruz en el poema *Noche*:

*En una noche oscura,
con ansias en amores inflamada,
oh, dichosa ventura,
a escuras y en celada
estando ya mi casa sosegada.*

La amada sale de su casa, en medio de la noche más oscura, inflamada de amor, cuando ha dejado su casa sosegada. En el comentario dice el fontiverense que esto ocurre cuando:

*Estando ya esta casa de la sensualidad sosegada, esto es, mortificada, sus pasiones apagadas, y los apetitos sosegados y adormidos por medio de esta noche de la purgación sensitiva, salió el alma a comenzar el camino y vía del espíritu.*⁴⁶

Veamos la misma imagen de las raposas comentada por Orígenes, ahora recreado y comentado por san Juan de la Cruz en la siguiente canción:

⁴⁴ Ibid., Lib. IV, cap. 1, art. 7.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Lib. IV, cap. 2, art. 7.

⁴⁶ II *Noche* 14, 1.

*Cazadnos las raposas
Que está ya florecida nuestra viña,
En tanto que de rosas
Hacemos una piña
Y no parezca nadie en la montiña.*⁴⁷

Identificamos tres elementos: las raposas, la caza, la viña florecida. San Juan de la Cruz dice en el comentario que “la viña es el plantel que está en esta santa alma de todas las virtudes”.⁴⁸ Es decir que la viña es parte del alma del hombre y las flores son las virtudes. Las raposas o zorras son “armonía de apetitos y movimientos sensitivos, por la gran propiedad que tienen a este tiempo con ellas”⁴⁹ y “los maliciosos demonios [que] hacen molestia al alma” incitando y levantando apetitos e imaginaciones.⁵⁰ Si recordamos a Orígenes, éste dice que la viña es el alma y las raposas son las potestades enemigas y los demonios. Hay coincidencia en la interpretación. El problema teológico-moral que hay de fondo es la concupiscencia del hombre, que todavía no está suficientemente controlada por la voluntad fortalecida por la gracia de Dios.

En cuanto al conocimiento por orden natural del Verbo de Dios, es cierto que san Juan de la Cruz insiste menos que Orígenes en el conocimiento natural de las verdades reveladas como camino de perfección. En él, el amor es causa de conversión, método de conocimiento y la unión con el Amado es el fin de toda la experiencia espiritual. En el comentario a los dos versos “Y luego a las subidas cavernas de la piedra nos iremos” de la canción 37 del CB, sin embargo, dice que “una de las causas que más mueven al alma a desear entrar en la espesura de la sabiduría de Dios es precisamente el conocimiento de la hermosura de su Sabiduría divina” y esto se logra conociendo los misterios de la Encarnación “como las más alta y sabrosa sabiduría de todas sus obras” y, poco más adelante, “los subidos y altos y profundos misterios de sabiduría de Dios que hay en Cristo sobre la unión hipostática de la naturaleza humana con el verbo Divino, y en la respondencia que hay a ésta de la unión de los hombres con Dios...”.⁵¹

En el tratado *Subida del Monte Carmelo* y en el prólogo al *Cántico* se mencionan dos tipos de aprehensión. Recogiendo la teoría filo-

⁴⁷ *Cántico* B, 16.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 16, 4.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 16, 5.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 16, 6.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 37, 2-3.

sófica que afirma que el alma cuando nace es una tábula rasa, san Juan de la Cruz dice que el alma va adquiriendo conocimiento por vía natural a través de los sentidos corporales⁵² y sobrenatural a través de los sentidos del espíritu.

*Es, pues, de saber que por dos vías puede el entendimiento recibir noticias e inteligencias: la una es natural y la obra sobrenatural. La natural es todo aquello que el entendimiento puede entender, ahora por vía de los sentidos corporales, ahora por sí mismos. La sobrenatural es todo aquello que se da al entendimiento sobre su capacidad y habilidad natural.*⁵³

En cuanto al conocimiento espiritual o místico, que para Orígenes es de la dinámica o itinerario espiritual, la de san Juan de la Cruz es justamente el sujeto actuante que motiva y dirige la doctrina del comentario. Lo dice en el mismo prólogo:

*Porque la sabiduría mística, la cual es por amor, de que las presentes Canciones tratan, no ha menester distintamente entenderse para hacer efecto de amor y afición en el alma, por es a modo de la fe, en la cual amamos a Dios sin entenderle.*⁵⁴

Ese conocimiento espiritual lleno de fervor de amor de Dios y amor inmenso, es generador de sabiduría mística, que capacita al director de almas para comunicar el conocimiento sobre los procesos dinámicos del espíritu. Y lo hace a lo largo de toda su obra, no sólo el *Cántico*, también en todas las demás cuatro obras mayores.

Si bien para Orígenes el motor conducente a la madurez humana y espiritual es el enamoramiento de las cosas de Dios y el alcance de la sabiduría mística, san Juan de la Cruz menciona el "amor de abundante inteligencia mística" sin el cual las canciones antes parecerían "dislates" o disparates, antes que dichos puestos en razón. Y es que para el fontivero el camino a la sabiduría divina tiene como motor el amor a Dios. Es decir, que el amor no sólo es medio o impulso para desear y alcanzar la sabiduría mística, como si la segunda fuera más que la primera, sino dos aspectos inseparables que van mano a mano en el camino de perfección. Para san Juan de la Cruz el amor *ES* el camino, es método de conocimiento para aprehender los misterios de Dios. Esto no significa que la razón no sea parte importante de la

⁵² I *Subida* 3, 4.

⁵³ II *Subida* 10, 2.

⁵⁴ Pról. 2.

reflexión teológica; sí lo es. Pero, por medio de la razón sola no se puede llegar a profundizar en los misterios de Dios.⁵⁵ El punto de partida, por tanto, es la experiencia del amor de Dios, del Dios que es amor; el camino hacia la perfección comprende el crecimiento o maduración en al menos dos aspectos: en el amor o caridad a Dios y al prójimo, y en la sabiduría, en mayor conocimiento de los misterios de Dios. Y porque el conocimiento de Dios no es estrictamente racional ni sus misterios más profundos pueden ser explicados con razones humanas, porque sólo podemos hablar de su misterio análogamente, mediante aproximaciones y lenguaje figurado,⁵⁶ por eso dice: “De donde se sigue que los santos doctores, aunque mucho dicen y más digan, nunca pueden acabar de declararlo por palabras, así como tampoco por palabras se pudo ello decir. Y así, lo que de ello se declara, ordinariamente es lo menos que contiene en sí”.⁵⁷

Como Orígenes, también san Juan de la Cruz considera el autoconocimiento como factor importante en las primeras etapas del camino espiritual. A la altura de la canción 4 dice:

*Después que el alma ha dado a entender la manera de disponerse para comenzar este camino para no se andar ya a deleites y gustos, y fortaleza para vencer las tentaciones y dificultades, en lo cual consiste el ejercicio del conocimiento de sí, que el primero que tiene que hacer el alma para ir al conocimiento de Dios, ahora en esta canción comienza a caminar por la consideración y conocimiento de las criaturas al conocimiento de Amado, Criador de ellas.*⁵⁸

También es tema compartido con Orígenes el tema de la primavera del espíritu como etapa de sosiego y reposo después de un largo tiempo de prueba: “así como el canto de filomena, que es el ruiseñor, se oye en la primavera, pasados ya los fríos, lluvias y variedades del invierno, y hace melodía al oído y al espíritu recreación”.⁵⁹

Por último, contrario a lo que figura en el *Comentario* de Orígenes, san Juan de la Cruz acomoda el drama de la salida de la amada,

⁵⁵ BENEDICTO XVI, *Fe, razón y universidad. Recuerdos y reflexiones durante el encuentro con los representantes de la ciencia en el Aula Magna de Ratisbona*, en <https://www.aciprensa.com/benedictoxvi/viajes/alemania06/documento9.htm>, 12 diciembre 2017.

⁵⁶ *El conocimiento de Dios por medio de la fe es analógico*, en *Dios Uno y Trino*, Madrid, ISCR, 2014, 122-124.

⁵⁷ *Cántico B*, pról. 1.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 4, 1.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 39, 8.

encuentro y unión de los amantes al itinerario espiritual dividido en tres etapas. Cuando aplica categorías temporales a los procesos dinámicos del espíritu acude a la división en tres partes. Se vale de las tres tríadas empleadas en la tradición espiritual para explicar el proceso de crecimiento espiritual: 1. *principiantes-aprovechados-perfectos*, 2. *noviazgo-desposorio-matrimonio* y 3. *vías purgativa-iluminativa-unitiva*.

San Juan de la Cruz describe el progreso espiritual interior, no en dos etapas o estados de madurez espiritual como lo hace Orígenes, sino en tres, a tenor con la tradición espiritual posterior. En la tradición cristiana no será hasta el *Liber Graduum*, un texto sirio del siglo IV, donde por primera vez aparezcan las tríadas para explicar las etapas del camino espiritual.

4. REFLEXIÓN FINAL

¿Podría el *Comentario* de Orígenes considerarse un precedente de san Juan de la Cruz? En mi opinión, las coincidencias encontradas son significativas. Nos permiten formular una hipótesis.

El P. Eulogio Pacho afirmaba con relación al *Cántico* que "no existe ningún otro caso en el que se describa el camino espiritual en clave de amor al compás de un poema lírico".⁶⁰ Y esta ha sido la razón por la cual algunos críticos como Luce López-Baralt hayan buscado en la tradición oriental musulmana posibles antecedentes a la poesía mística comentada⁶¹ y otros, como Cristóbal Cuevas, buscaran precedentes en la tradición grecolatina y medieval: los comentarios simbólico-alegóricos de Homero, la *Vita nuova* y el *Convivio* de Dante, la *Glosa peregrina... de diversos romances* de Luis de Aranda (1552), la *Glosa intitulada segunda de moral sentido ... a los "Proverbios"* de Íñigo López de Mendoza (1575), la *Glosa de moral sentido en prosa. A la famosas y muy excelentes coplas de don Jorge Manrique* (1552).⁶²

Los primeros comentarios de san Hipólito y de Orígenes son las primeras manifestaciones de una tradición exegética. Sin una prueba que nos permita afirmar que la relación entre Orígenes y san Juan de

⁶⁰ EULOGIO PACHO, *Presentación*, en *Cántico Espiritual*, Burgos, Monte Carmelo, 1991, 8.

⁶¹ LUCE LÓPEZ-BARALT, *San Juan de la Cruz y el Islam*, 2a. ed., Madrid, Hiperión, 1990.

⁶² CRISTÓBAL CUEVAS GARCÍA, *Estudio literario*, en *Introducción a la lectura de San Juan de la Cruz*, Salamanca, Junta de Castilla y León, 1993, 161-162.

la Cruz fuera directa y causal, en el sentido de que el segundo hubiera leído el texto y recreado con libertad el método exegético del primero, las coincidencias y paralelismos aportan información que nos permite afirmar es que muchos elementos de esa tradición exegética iniciada por Orígenes están de alguna manera presentes en el método de san Juan de la Cruz.

Cita a los Santos Padres, pero el nombre de Orígenes no figura explícitamente en ninguna parte. Y es sabido que buena parte de la doctrina origenista había sido condenada por los concilios y magisterio de la Iglesia. No obstante, como confirma Simonetti en su edición, Orígenes inició una tradición exegética que luego fue enriqueciéndose y ampliándose en la tradición cristiana. Y es de sobra conocido que en la formación teológica de su época y en la Universidad de Salamanca incluía la ciencia de los Padres de la Iglesia. En estos tiempos en que los méritos del método teológico de Orígenes han sido reivindicados, propongo a los sanjuanistas tomar cada vez más en cuenta la importancia del método exegético de Orígenes, como referencia importante para analizar los precedentes literarios y teológicos de san Juan de la Cruz. El estudio de la patrística ofrece un filón de posibilidades para seguir leyendo e interpretando con renovada admiración y deleite a nuestros místicos cristianos.

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EL CICLO DE ELISEO COMO FUENTE
PARA UNA ESPIRITUALIDAD COMPROMETIDA.
UNA PEQUEÑA SIERVA, DOS DESGRACIADAS MUJERES
Y CUATRO LEPROSOS VALIENTES (2RE 5-7,20)¹

CARMEN YEBRA-ROVIRA

La realidad de una sociedad interconectada, los aportes de una sociedad multicultural y los cambios socio-políticos de las últimas décadas plantean nuevas realidades y problemas que es necesario abordar. El crecimiento de los grupos ultranacionalistas en muchos países de Europa, la tendencia a un conservadurismo rancio y auto-defensivo y el intento desesperado porque nada de lo conocido cambie son situaciones que exigen una profunda reflexión. Esta *cultura o modernidad líquida*, como la definió Zygmunt Bauman, enormemente cambiante, nos obliga a la búsqueda constante de una sociedad más fraterna en la que se comprenda que el extranjero y el diferente tienen mucho que aportar y en la que se valoren positivamente todos aquellos cambios que conducen al respeto de la dignidad de individuos, sociedades y pueblos.²

Los relatos bíblicos no pueden dar respuesta precisa a todas y cada una de las nuevas realidades y mucho menos soluciones para todos sus problemas. Sin embargo, sí ofrecen pistas que, leídas desde el conjunto de la revelación, invitan a retomar o reforzar actitudes que pueden contribuir a la construcción de una sociedad mejor y, sobre todo, a hacerla más consciente de sus límites, sus propias trampas y

¹ La elaboración de este trabajo ha sido posible gracias a la financiación del Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad de España y del Fondo Europeo de Desarrollo Regional: *Transmisión y recepción de la Biblia: textos e iconografía*, FFI2015-65610-P (MINECO/FEDERER).

² ZYGMUNT BAUMAN, *Vidas desperdiciadas: la modernidad y sus parias*, Barcelona, Paidós Ibérica, 2005; ID., *Modernidad Líquida*, Madrid, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2003; ID., *Daños colaterales. Desigualdades sociales en la era global*, Madrid, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2011.

sus carencias. Muchas de las historias bíblicas contempladas desde nuestro contexto y nuestras preguntas dejan entrever vías para ello. Al mismo tiempo, permiten visibilizar a personas y colectivos que hoy en día son ignorados, silenciados o incluso eliminados. Nuestra realidad y nuestros propios interrogantes permiten, a su vez, desvelar en los textos aspectos, personajes y situaciones que en otras épocas no habían sido apreciados o que habían sido claramente silenciados, permitiendo que pueda profundizarse en su significado.

Las historias del profeta Eliseo, pese a su extensión, no son muy conocidas; sus textos no se utilizan demasiado en la liturgia y su figura no resulta demasiado atractiva hoy en día, pese a que haya sido muy valorado en la antigüedad, destacándose de él no sólo el hecho de ser el sucesor de Elías, sino sus muchos hechos prodigiosos. Su ciclo es un buen ejemplo de cómo antiguos relatos sirven para poder mirar de otro modo las situaciones de la actualidad y cómo es posible descubrir en ellos nuevas posibilidades. La lectura atenta de sus historias ofrece realidades sorprendentes, relaciones interpersonales que son modelo para la actualidad y modos de resolución de conflictos que abren a nuevas vías para el hoy.

El presente artículo, que se plantea en el marco de una reflexión sobre los cambios en relación a la lectura de la Biblia y a los retos que ello plantea para el presente, estudia dos relatos: por un lado, el de Naamán el Sirio y su curación tras el encuentro con el profeta (2Re 5,1-27); por otro, el del sitio de Samaría con la dramática historia de dos mujeres y sus hijos y la sorprendente de cuatro leprosos que acaban con el hambre de la ciudad (2Re 6,24-7,20). El primero, es una de las unidades más conocidas de este ciclo profético y, en conjunto, podría decirse que de todo él. El segundo, mucho menos conocido, encierra realidades y retos que es necesario rescatar.³

1. LOS RELATOS DEL ANTIGUO TESTAMENTO: RETOS Y NUEVAS VÍAS EN LA ESPIRITUALIDAD Y LA PASTORAL

La celebración del Concilio Vaticano II y la publicación de la constitución dogmática *Dei Verbum* sobre la revelación supusieron el punto de partida para un cambio en la relación del creyente católico

³ Lo que aquí sigue nace de un estudio colaborativo. Agradezco a mis alumnos de la asignatura "Leer la Biblia hoy" del curso 2017-18 del Bachiller en Teología de la Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca sus aportaciones. Sin ellas las implicaciones y actualizaciones de estas historias no habrían sido las mismas.

con los textos bíblicos, con su lectura y con su importancia para la reflexión, vida y pastoral de la Iglesia. Mucho se ha caminado en los últimos cincuenta años en el conocimiento de la Biblia por parte del creyente no especialista en Teología y muchísimo se ha avanzado desde el campo de los estudios bíblicos en su conocimiento y en la apertura de nuevas perspectivas de estudio y análisis. Ambas esferas, además, han interactuado notablemente entre sí, aunque aún quede un apasionante camino por recorrer. El deseo de un mejor y mayor conocimiento por parte de los fieles de la Palabra revelada es el punto de partida de esta progresión positiva. A él hay que unir el empeño que el Magisterio, distintas instancias autoritativas y distintas propuestas pastorales han puesto en la difusión y conocimiento de la Biblia.⁴

En este período los métodos de estudio se han multiplicado y han evolucionado notablemente. En ellos, entre muchos otros aspectos, puede decirse que se ha pasado de poner el énfasis en el conocimiento del texto, sus autores, orígenes, características literarias (géneros, formas, estructuras, recursos compositivos) o contexto de composición a los efectos del texto sobre el lector o receptor. Ello ha llevado al análisis del contexto no solo de quienes los crearon sino sobre todo de quienes hoy los escuchan, y a la búsqueda constante de su significatividad para el presente de un sujeto, grupo, espacio o contexto concreto. Además, las nuevas lecturas ya no se fijan tanto en los grandes protagonistas y en la lectura moralista de sus historias, sino que, poco a poco, han ido ganando relevancia los personajes secundarios, las figuras menores y las historias olvidadas.⁵ Este es un paso muy significativo y enormemente rico para la espiritualidad, la lectura orante y la pastoral. La identificación con personajes menores se ofrece como camino más fructífero para muchos lectores. Ninguno somos reyes, grandes profetas, grandes creyentes, ... Esas historias "menores" rescatan y evidencian la pluralidad, la subsidiariedad, la necesaria colaboración, ... e invitan a mirar de una forma distinta la cotidianidad.

⁴ En este sentido es importante destacar no sólo los documentos magisteriales como las exhortaciones *Verbum Domini*, fruto del sínodo sobre la Palabra de Dios, y *Evangelii Gaudium*, los documentos de la Pontificia Comisión Bíblica y las orientaciones de las distintas conferencias episcopales nacionales como, sobre todo, las actividades de los grupos bíblicos, los distintos grupos de *Lectio Divina* o los movimientos de lectura popular de la Biblia en distintos contextos.

⁵ En este sentido han sido de gran relevancia las aportaciones realizadas desde el método narrativo y las aproximaciones contextuales de la Biblia que han centrado la atención de sus estudios en situaciones y personajes distintos a los de épocas pasadas.

Este largo recorrido tiene, sin embargo, algunos puntos débiles, reseñados muchas veces como dificultades en la lectura de la Biblia. No hay como en épocas pasadas problemas para poder acceder a los textos. Ediciones económicamente muy asequibles llenan las librerías de cualquier tipo y los textos ya son accesibles a través de internet en todas las lenguas imaginables. Los problemas son de otra índole.

El primero es la cuestión de cómo abordar textos poco conocidos, cómo enfrentarse con libros completos o cómo interpretar pasajes de especial dificultad, violencia o de una moral muy distinta a la nuestra. En estos dos últimos casos, lo más habitual es que el lector trate de obviar dichos textos o simplemente responda diciendo que fueron compuestos en una época diferente a la nuestra.⁶ No profundizar en su valor para la actualidad resta significatividad a esa palabra revelada que, al tiempo que anuncio, es denuncia de situaciones contrarias al plan de Dios.

El segundo es la excesiva fragmentación de la escucha, la lectura y del estudio. Los relatos bíblicos de carácter narrativo están formados por relatos que conforman unidades de sentido. Las lecturas fragmentadas imposibilitan apreciar las constantes presentes en una historia, las repeticiones, los contrastes, los cambios, la evolución y el sinfín de detalles que han posibilitado que se sigan contando y leyendo. Esto se aprecia con claridad cuando se leen de forma seguida el ciclo del Elías o el de Eliseo. Lo habitual, sin embargo, es aproximarse a ellos por unidades breves o muy breves, obviando, además los relatos de las historias de los reyes que están intercalados, como si no tuvieran relación. En este sentido el método de interpretación narrativo ha contribuido notablemente a recuperar ese carácter narrativo de los textos y su valor como unidades de sentido.

El tercero, las reticencias de los lectores hacia el Antiguo Testamento o la concepción deficiente de la unidad del canon. El balance de la lectura de la Biblia entre los creyentes saca a la luz el mayor

⁶ La VD 42 dice a este respecto: “sería equivocado no considerar aquellos pasajes de la Escritura que nos parecen problemáticos. Más bien, hay que ser conscientes de que la lectura de estas páginas exige tener una adecuada competencia, adquirida a través de una formación que enseñe a leer los textos en su contexto histórico-literario y en la perspectiva cristiana, que tiene como clave hermenéutica completa ‘el Evangelio y el mandamiento nuevo de Jesucristo, cumplido en el misterio pascual’”. Los documentos de la Pontificia Comisión Bíblica ahondan en este sentido. Véase, por ejemplo, *Biblia y Moral. Raíces bíblicas del comportamiento cristiano*, Ciudad del Vaticano, 2008, n.º. 20, e *Inspiración y Verdad de la Sagrada Escritura. La Palabra que viene de Dios para salvar al Mundo*, Madrid, BAC, 2014, n.º. 124-134; 149-150.

desconocimiento del Antiguo Testamento frente al Nuevo, o quizá habría que decir frente a los evangelios, aspecto que se percibe tanto en la predicación – en la que no siempre se ofrece una explicación u orientación referida a la primera lectura o al salmo –, como en la pastoral o en la oración. Los modelos para la vida creyente están tomados en su inmensa mayoría del NT; podría decirse que un cierto *marcionismo* inconsciente sigue planeando sobre la Iglesia y la percepción de que existe un Dios diferente en el AT que contrasta con el Dios misericordioso anunciado por Jesús, sigue estando muy presente entre muchos creyentes. El mejor conocimiento de relatos del AT y pasajes poco conocidos ayudaría a normalizar sus historias, su modo de plantear la revelación y a percibir la unidad estilística, temática y teológica con el NT.

El presente artículo aborda textos veterotestamentarios poco conocidos para el lector actual, protagonizados por personajes secundarios y que contienen grandes dosis de violencia. Con todo ello se pretende dar respuesta a cómo leer estos relatos y descubrir qué pueden aportar tanto para la vida de los creyentes como para la transformación de la sociedad.

2. EL CICLO DE ELISEO: ALGUNAS CARACTERÍSTICAS Y TEMAS PRINCIPALES (2Re 2-13)

Eliseo, cuyo nombre significa *Dios es salvación*, es, junto con el profeta Elías, una de las figuras más importantes de la profecía preclásica o la profecía anterior.⁷ Sus acciones están relatadas en el segundo libro de los Reyes (2Re 2-9;13) aunque su nombre aparece antes, en 1Re 19,16 cuando en el Horeb, Dios ordena a Elías unirlo como profeta. En 1Re 19,19-21 se relata el encuentro entre los dos personajes y la llamada de Eliseo (cf. Nm 27). Por esa narración se deduce que Eliseo era agricultor y procedía de buena familia con estabilidad económica. Su actividad como auténtico profeta y como protagonista principal de las distintas historias se inicia tras la ascensión de Elías (2Re 2,13) y finaliza con la mención de su muerte a causa de enfermedad, sus últimas acciones y los hechos acaecidos tras su fallecimiento (2Re 13,14).

⁷ Cf. MIGUEL ÁLVAREZ BARREDO, *Las narraciones sobre Elías y Eliseo en los Libros de los Reyes: formación y teología*, Murcia, Ed. Espigas y Azucenas, 1996; CARMEN YEBRA-ROVIRA, *Eliseo*, en JOSÉ LUIS BARRIOCANAL (dir.) *Diccionario del profetismo bíblico*, Burgos, Monte Carmelo, 2010, 248-255.

Ejerce su ministerio básicamente en el siglo IX a.C. en Israel durante los gobiernos de Ajab (como discípulo de Elías), Joram, Jehú, Joacaz y Joás. Este período se caracteriza por una gran inestabilidad política con continuos conflictos o alianzas entre los reinos de Israel y de Judá y de estos territorios con las monarquías de los territorios vecinos de Moab, Aram y Edom. En todo el ciclo puede apreciarse que las relaciones entre los reinos son muy tensas y el ambiente bélico está muy presente. Su ámbito de actuación desborda las fronteras de Israel pues interviene directamente en acontecimientos de todos estos territorios y de la costa filistea. Su itinerancia lo lleva a Guilgal, Betel o Samaría, así como a las tierras de Moab, Edom y Aram. Sus desplazamientos se combinan con tiempos más o menos largos de residencia en determinados lugares en los que es acogido por personas como la Sunamita o las comunidades de los profetas a las que presta ayuda e instrucción (2Re 6,13). Se dice que habita en el Carmelo (2Re 4,27) o en “su casa” (2Re 7,32), y que pasa tiempo en Guilgal (2,1; 4,38), Sunem (2Re 4,8), Dotán (2Re 6,13) o Damasco (2Re 8,7). Eliseo, que vive solo o en compañía de un siervo, actúa casi siempre en solitario.

La inestabilidad política y las constantes guerras provocan en el plano socio-económico, tal y como se puede ver a partir de las distintas narraciones, importantes problemas como hambre, migraciones y pobreza, así como una creciente injusticia y abuso de poder. En ese contexto Eliseo ejercerá su misión como defensor del pobre, garante de la vida y testigo fiel del Dios de Israel, y se presentará como el anti-tipo del monarca de Israel, figura muy criticada por no cumplir con las funciones asignadas de proteger al pueblo, garantizar la paz y la justicia, y ser modelo de fe y comportamiento.

En toda la narración hay una enorme dicotomía entre la muerte y la vida. El profeta, mediador de Dios, es garante de su bendición y procura vida a aquellos que no la tienen o que se sienten amenazados. Así, por ejemplo, provee de aceite a una mujer viuda a quien su acreedor amenaza con llevarse a sus hijos como esclavos si no subsana sus deudas. Con todas sus vasijas llenas del preciado líquido por la actuación de Eliseo, este le dice “*anda y vende el aceite y paga a tu acreedor y tú y tus hijos viviréis de lo restante*” (4,1-7).⁸ Anuncia el

⁸ La situación de esta mujer es extremadamente grave pues, según la Ley, los acreedores podían apropiarse de los hijos de los que tenían deudas y no las pagaban, haciéndolos sus esclavos (cf. Lv 25,39). Ello agravaría aún más su situación como viuda. Cf. YAEL SHEMESH, *Elisha and the miraculous Jug of Oil* (2Kgs 4:1-7) en *Journal of*

nacimiento de un hijo a la Sunamita y cuando este fallece, recupera la vida gracias a su mediación (4,8-37). Las intervenciones del profeta estarán muy relacionadas con la provisión de agua y de alimentos pues el hambre y la sed son dos constantes. La falta de agua afecta a todos los seres vivos, personas y ganados, ya sea porque no hay o porque no es potable. Su primera acción es la de sanar las aguas en una nueva ciudad de la que se dice *“el emplazamiento de la ciudad es bueno pero las aguas son malas y la tierra estéril”* (2Re 2,19). En la historia de la guerra contra los moabitas se dice *“fueron el rey de Israel, el rey de Judá y el rey de Edom; dieron un rodeo durante siete días y faltó el agua para el campamento para las bestias de carga que les seguían”* (2Re 3,9). En ese momento, ante la petición que los reyes hacen, él responde *“No veréis viento, no veréis lluvia, pero este valle se llenará de agua y beberéis vosotros y vuestros campamentos y vuestros ganados”*.⁹ En relación al hambre se narran situaciones diversas, como, por ejemplo, la sanación de la comida envenenada que los profetas iban a comer pues uno de ellos había cocinado por error tubérculos dañinos (4,38-41). Sin embargo, las situaciones más abundantes son las hambrunas causadas por la guerra, las batallas o los conflictos. Eliseo, por ejemplo, ordena proveer de comida a los enemigos arameos apresados por Israel (6,21-23) y terminará con el hambre de Samaría por el asedio sirio, como se verá más adelante. La carencia de alimentos aqueja especialmente a los más vulnerables, mujeres, niños, viudas con historias dramáticas y permite la narración de escenas de gran cercanía en situaciones extremas. Todo el ciclo muestra cómo el profeta, enviado por Dios, tiene la potestad de hacer surgir la vida allí donde parece imposible. Con ellas además se muestra el valor de la hospitalidad, la bondad y la justicia.

Uno de los elementos más llamativos del ciclo, muestra de la universalidad de la actuación de Dios, es que Eliseo actúa en favor de todos los sectores sociales; hay escenas, por ejemplo, en las que asiste a mujeres a punto de morir y otras en las que es consejero real. Las narraciones van contraponiendo personajes de distinto estrato social pero que viven situaciones similares. Así, ayuda a una viuda pobre y

Hebrew Scriptures [electronic resource], 8 (2008), 18 pp., http://www.jhsonline.org/Articles/article_81.pdf, [28 abril 2018]; ALICIA WINTERS, *Una vasija de aceite: mujer, deudas y comunidad* (Reyes 4:1-7) en *Revista de Interpretación Bíblica Latinoamericana*, 14 (1993), 53-59.

⁹ El anuncio del fin de la sequía es un claro paralelismo del ciclo de Elías, aunque en ese la lluvia que dará fin a tres años de sequía se vislumbra tras el exterminio de los profetas de Baal en el Carmelo (1Re 18).

luego a una mujer principal (la sunamita) o ayuda primero a los “hombres de la ciudad” y a continuación a los reyes de Israel, Judá y Edom.¹⁰ Ese aspecto hace de esta figura un modelo de gran valor para el presente.

La lectura atenta de todo el ciclo de Eliseo descubre al lector pequeños personajes que conducen la trama con sus acciones, provocan la intervención del profeta o sirven de denuncia de situaciones injustas. Lo habitual es que una vez transcurrida su escena desaparezcan; sin embargo, ahondar en ellos permite no sólo recuperarlos sino tener una visión más amplia sobre su función en los relatos y su valor para la actualidad.

3. LA HISTORIA DE NAAMÁN EL SIRIO Y SUS PEQUEÑOS MEDIADORES (2Re 5)

El capítulo 5 es una unidad completa de gran importancia teológica en la que se cuenta la curación de Naamán el Sirio (2Re 5,1-19) y el comportamiento erróneo de Guejazí, siervo de Eliseo, y sus consecuencias (2Re 5,20-27). Constituye, aparentemente, una historia independiente y cerrada dentro del ciclo. Sin embargo, está emplazada dentro de una secuencia de acontecimientos extraordinarios protagonizados por el sucesor de Elías y enmarcada por dos capítulos con los que comparte características y elementos teológicos, y que lo unen al conjunto del ciclo.

La historia inmediatamente precedente (4,42-44) narra cómo un personaje anónimo lleva “al hombre de Dios” alimentos que, sorprendentemente, él rechaza diciendo: “*dáselo a la gente para que coman*”. Es una historia muy breve que a cualquier lector recuerda a la multiplicación de los panes del evangelio (cfr. Mc 6,35-44) y en la que se muestra a Eliseo como el profeta que se preocupa por las necesidades de quienes lo rodean. Es llamativo y muy iluminador que en un contexto de hambruna él ceda los dones a los demás, que los comparta. Esta sección es la conclusión de las narraciones del capítulo 4 en las que el profeta realiza acciones en favor de la vida de los más humildes. En su primera sección (4,1-4) resuelve la pobreza de una viuda y sus hijos con el milagro del aceite, en la segunda (8-37) restituye la vida al hijo de la Sunamita que había mostrado una gran hospitalidad con él, y en la tercera (38-41), en ese mismo contexto de hambre

¹⁰ Cf. GINA HENS-PIAZZA, *1-2Kings. Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries*, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2006, 249.

resuelve el problema de la olla envenenada de los profetas. A través de pequeñas acciones con algunos destinatarios poco relevantes, Eliseo actúa en favor de los más desfavorecidos. El relato se encarga, además, de presentar cuáles son las cualidades del profeta; él es un hombre de palabra cuyos vaticinios se cumplen y sólo él es auténtico conocedor y mediador de lo que Dios comunica. La escena concluye afirmando “*comerán y sobraré porque así lo dice YHWH*” (4,43).

La unidad posterior (6,1-7), mucho más llamativa, cuenta cómo Eliseo halla el hacha perdida en el Jordán por los profetas que trataban de construir un lugar para habitar. La forma de hacerlo es paradójica: “*Eliseo cortó un trozo de madera, lo arrojó allí y sacó el hierro a flote*”. Con esta acción ayuda a los demás profetas de un modo extraordinario con acciones que parecen imposibles; el hierro sale a la superficie atraído por la madera. Además, se encuentra el lugar exacto de la pérdida. El texto recuerda a la acción de Moisés en el desierto cuando saca el agua de la roca, transformando las aguas amargas del desierto y salvando a los israelitas (Ex 17).

Tal y como se verá con el estudio de la sección intermedia, las tres unidades juntas muestran un conjunto de acciones vitales cuyo beneficiario no es Eliseo sino las personas que están junto a él; la multiplicación del alimento, curación y resolución de carencias y conflictos. Incluso la última, que parece anecdótica, tiene que ver con la vida: estaban construyendo un lugar para vivir. Con ellas además se muestra un abanico social de actuación del profeta muy amplio; Eliseo es significativo para la población en general, para las élites extranjeras y para los profetas.

La historia de Naamán es una unidad mucho más larga y por ello narrativamente más compleja.¹¹ Está formada por una secuencia de encuentros y diálogos sucesivos con una trama que aborda desde la presentación de la enfermedad del general hasta su curación. El relato narra que el sirio tiene una enfermedad en la piel, que una esclava informa de que hay un profeta en Samaría que puede curarlo y que, tras varios encuentros, Naamán acude junto a él para ser curado. La solución, acogida con recelo, llegará tras un baño en el río Jordán. La gran tensión narrativa se resuelve cuando Naamán es curado de su

¹¹ SIDNEY K. BERMAN, *Greatness versus Smallness: A Postcolonial Analysis of the Healing of Naaman (2Kings 5)*, en *Old Testament Essays*, 29 (2016), 403-418; WALTER BRUEGGEMANN, *Elisha's Gift to Naaman. Perpetual Shalom*, en *Cristian Century*, August (2012), 30-33; ID., *A Brief Moment for a One-Person Remnant (2Kings 5:2-3)*, en *BTB*, 31 (2001), 53-59; KIM JEAN KYOUNG, *Reading and Retelling Naaman's Story (2Kings 5)*, en *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 30/1 (2005), 49-61.

enfermedad y reconoce al Dios de Israel. La siguiente historia contrasta con la precedente pues el israelita Guejazí, siervo del profeta, no reconoce al Dios de Israel, mostrando una conducta inadecuada (5,20-27). Supone una crítica a los propios hebreos y es un desarrollo de aspectos muy presentes en los ciclos de Elías y Eliseo que cuestionan quiénes son los verdaderos creyentes. Esa tensión se incrementa al comparar la actitud del siervo del profeta con la de la sierva israelita esclava en el extranjero pero que sigue siendo fiel a su Dios y que actúa como mediadora en la sanación de su señor.¹²

La historia comienza con la descripción del personaje principal, Naamán. En el primer versículo, a modo de introducción, tal y como es habitual en la narrativa bíblica, se ofrecen todos los elementos que serán fundamentales para el desarrollo de la trama. El narrador nombra a Naamán, poniendo su nombre propio y dice su profesión, “*jefe del ejército del rey*” y su consideración social, “*era hombre muy estimado y favorecido por su Señor*”. El autor enfatiza con el uso de la adversativa “*era un hombre poderoso pero tenía lepra*”.¹³ La mención de su enfermedad contrasta abruptamente con la presentación positiva y genera una tensión que deberá ser resuelta.

La siguiente unidad, la historia de la sierva y su señora (3,2-3), establece un claro contraste con lo anterior. En ella se presenta a una muchacha de la tierra de Israel que había sido apresada por las bandas arameas y que estaba al servicio de la mujer de Naamán. El género, la edad, la condición social marcan una clara ruptura, al tiempo que introducen una anécdota protagonizada por un pequeño personaje que pasará desapercibido en el transcurso de la trama pese a ser fundamental. El narrador desplaza al lector con muchísima rapidez desde un escenario de batalla y militares a un escenario doméstico y femenino. El diálogo entre la muchacha y su señora se narra en tercera persona haciendo con ello que el espectador contemple esta escena. La pequeña es quien introduce al profeta de Samaría, sin darle

¹² MARVIN A. SWEENEY, *I & II Kings. A Commentary*, Louisville Kentucky, Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, 297-298.

¹³ La mayoría de las biblias en castellano traducen el término hebreo por lepra. Los investigadores, sin embargo, sugieren que se trata únicamente de una enfermedad de la piel. La exclusión social que generaría la enfermedad lo apartaría de todo cargo de gobierno y de acompañar al rey en el templo. El miedo al contagio tampoco hace plausible que sea la dolencia a la que se refiere el relato. El texto empleará siete veces la raíz que designa la enfermedad, siguiendo el proceso y desenlace de la historia: en boca del narrador; de la criada, de un rey, del otro rey, de Naamán, de Eliseo y una vez más, del narrador.

nombre, como quien puede resolver el problema de su señor: “*le curaría la lepra*” (3). La breve escena introduce además al lector en la dura realidad de las guerras, de las dificultades de los territorios fronterizos y en cómo ello afecta a las personas más vulnerables. Una joven es raptada para llevar una vida de servidumbre lejos de los suyos (situación trágica que no es solo una historia de antaño sino una realidad muy actual). Pese a todo ello y aunque la chica tenga más motivos que nadie para no creer en Dios, se muestra como verdadera creyente que no olvida que su Dios y su mediador son los únicos capaces de restaurar la vida.¹⁴ Además, se preocupa por el bienestar de quienes la rodean.

La siguiente escena desplaza al lector a otro espacio interior; el palacio. En este tercer escenario transcurre el encuentro entre Naamán y su señor, el rey de Aram (Siria). El militar le hace saber las posibilidades de su curación y él se ofrece a mediar con el rey de Israel para que el profeta lo cure. Es llamativo en esta historia que las palabras de la niña no se repitan, pero son relevantes por cuanto han sido el detonante de todas las acciones que siguen. Sus palabras se dirán a Naamán y al rey, es decir, traspasan lo doméstico para llegar hasta lo más alto, la corte. La descripción se enriquece comunicando que escribirá una carta y enumerando los bienes con los que agasajará a su homólogo vecino. La progresión de la narración, por tanto, va en ascenso. Ha dejado de ser una historia de una sierva extranjera, un asunto doméstico, para ser un asunto internacional entre dos monarcas en conflicto; el sirio y el israelita.¹⁵ Lo curioso de la historia es que paralelamente a ese proceso de ascenso desde la sierva israelita, la señora, el marido, el rey asirio y el rey de Israel hasta el profeta se produce un movimiento de retorno al territorio de Israel. La sierva raptada de su territorio conduce a quienes la habían secuestrado a su tierra de procedencia, no para la rapiña sino para la salvación.¹⁶ Un sujeto casi insignificante muestra que es posible devolver el bien a aquellos que tanto mal le habían causado.

¹⁴ M.A. SWEENEY, *I & II Kings*, 298.

¹⁵ LUIS ALONSO SCHÖKEL, *Reyes*, (Col. Los libros sagrados), Madrid, Ediciones Cristiandad, 1973, define el episodio como “milagro doméstico que amenaza convertirse en asunto de política internacional. Arameos o israelitas mantenían una paz inestable, que podían aprovechar bandas de guerrillas para sus correrías fructuosas”.

¹⁶ En la transición entre las escenas, se echa en falta una en la que se explique cómo ha sabido el jefe sirio lo que ha dicho la muchacha pues el narrador no dice que estuviera presente en el diálogo entre la niña y su esposa. Más bien, la narración rápida hace pensar lo contrario. En un paralelismo muy rápido él se lo cuenta a su señor.

El clímax de la historia parece llegar cuando el rey de Israel, de quien no se da el nombre y en una nueva escena palaciega, al leer la carta enviada por el monarca sirio rasga sus vestiduras pues reconoce su incapacidad para curar la lepra. Es una escena dramática en la que él afirma *“acaso soy yo Dios para dar la muerte y la vida, pues este me manda que cure a un hombre”* (7) frase que, además, anticipa la acción del profeta. Si bien la acción del rey y su lamento son un signo de reconocimiento de la superioridad de Dios, el hecho de no haber pensado en Eliseo es una crítica hacia la institución monárquica, pues ya había habido una relación previa entre ambos. El rey no reconoce al profeta o al menos no plantea que sea él quien pueda realizar aquello que se le está pidiendo. Además, hay en este punto aspectos que no acaban de encajar. En primer lugar, choca una relación tan pacífica entre los dos reyes cuando al comienzo de la historia se ha hablado de las razias de las bandas arameas en territorio de Israel y por lo tanto de la inseguridad de las fronteras. El temor que expresa el rey de Israel de que sus vecinos puedan atacarlo si él no cumple con la petición de curación, evidencia unas malas relaciones internacionales: *“reconocer y ved que me busca querella”* (7).

En el versículo 8, con la intervención del profeta, hay un giro en la acción. La autoridad de todos estos personajes queda supeditada a las órdenes del profeta quien manda decir al rey *“que venga a mí y sabrá que hay un profeta en Israel”*. Lo curioso en todos estos versículos es que hay unos mediadores no del todo perfilados en el relato que son quienes transmiten las órdenes, no sólo al rey sino también a Naamán. Son sujetos que pasan desapercibidos, pero sin los cuales las acciones no se podrían realizar y que hacen pensar en todas aquellas personas imprescindibles para que las realidades funcionen pero que muchas veces son invisibles o sus acciones no son reconocidas suficientemente.

La situación a partir del versículo 9 cambia de escenario. Ya no se está ni en Aram, ni en el palacio del rey en Israel, sino en el espacio abierto, en Israel, camino de la casa del profeta. La escena se ralentiza, se llena de detalles y se dilata el encuentro entre ambos. La participación de los mediadores, tanto el mensajero como los siervos es fundamental. La introspección, además, permite aún más conocer a Naamán y también lo que se espera de una curación. Esta sección transmite más desencuentros que encuentros; de hecho, ni siquiera hay un encuentro entre el soldado y el profeta. La orden de ir a bañarse siete veces en el Jordán la da un mensajero, y un narrador omnisciente transmite el enfado del destinatario que compara los ríos de Israel con los de Damasco. También permite conocer al lector sus

expectativas al relatar todos los pasos de una acción de sanación: “saldrá, se detendrá, invocará el nombre del Señor, frotará con su mano mi parte enferma y sanaré” (11). Lo que se conocía y se esperaba se quiebra. Nada se realiza según él espera y relato afirma que se da la vuelta. La acción parece detenerse y el narrador, una vez más, juega con el absurdo. El general que se había fiado de la palabra de una sierva extranjera y que había solicitado la mediación de la mayor autoridad de su país renuncia al proyecto porque no responde a lo que él pensaba y frustra sus expectativas. Es en ese momento cuando, de nuevo, los personajes secundarios intervienen en la acción. Los siervos de Naamán le hacen reflexionar diciendo que si le hubiera pedido algo difícil, lo habría hecho. La orden se cumple, “*va y se lava siete veces en el Jordán*” y la narración se acelera de nuevo contando como “*su carne se tornó como la carne de un niño pequeño y quedó limpio*” (14).

La parte final del relato narra el diálogo entre el sirio y el profeta. Este comienza con una profesión de fe “*ahora conozco que no hay en toda la tierra otro Dios que el de Israel*” (15) y ofrece un presente que, al contrario de lo que había hecho con los panes del final del capítulo 4, Eliseo rechaza. Naamán pide entonces que le permita llevarse un poco de la tierra de Israel consigo.¹⁷ El encuentro concluye con la marcha de Naamán y la bendición de Eliseo “*Vete en paz*” (19).

La historia presenta a Naamán como el sujeto que escucha y que sabe discernir; es el hombre atrevido que se mete en territorio enemigo buscando curación, que se desilusiona porque nada parece cumplirse como él esperaba, pero que, escuchando a los suyos, a la sierva y a los siervos, encuentra aquello que buscaba. Toda la narración es un buen ejemplo de colaboración entre extraños y de superación de dificultades y frustraciones escuchando a quienes las han sufrido y a quienes parece que no tiene voz. Naamán es también el extranjero que se ve obligado a cruzar una frontera por una situación de necesidad; es un arameo en Israel. El paso dado, sin embargo, no habría sido posible sin el consejo de otra extranjera; es una israelita en Aram. El relato evidencia cómo todos somos extranjeros pues ello depende de dónde nos encontremos y pone en entredicho las actitudes ultranacionalistas en las que grupos y países se consideran mejores que otros, olvidando que un único grupo no lo posee todo y negándose a las posibilidades de ayuda que se pueden dar. La historia del general sirio es

¹⁷ Para el estudio de esta parte final véase WALTER BRUEGGEMANN, *Perpetual Shalom: Elisha's Gift to Naaman*, en *Cristian Century*, August (2012), [<https://www.christiancentury.org/article/2012-07/perpetual-shalom>] (12 enero 2018).

ejemplo de la necesidad de colaboración entre pueblos y la importancia que tiene compartir lo mejor de cada uno. Las sociedades interconectadas en las que vivimos permiten explotar al máximo las posibilidades para ofrecer soluciones a quienes lo necesitan. El relato hace gala también de lo relativa que es la distinción entre clases sociales. En el texto todos los personajes se necesitan entre ellos y los que parecen principales se tornan en ocasiones los más pequeños, más vulnerables y necesitados.

4. EL ASEDIO DE SAMARÍA Y LA HISTORIA DE DOS MUJERES A LAS QUE SACAR DEL OLVIDO (2Re 6,24-7,2)

A la historia de Naamán le sigue un extenso conjunto de escenas relacionadas con las guerras arameas y que parecen enfocadas a presentar la clara superioridad de Eliseo con respecto a Ajab y su papel como profeta de corte.¹⁸ Los relatos, releídos con atención, desvelan además situaciones hondamente humanas, dramáticas y de enorme actualidad con soluciones contraculturales. La primera de las escenas es la captura de un destacamento arameo (2Re 6,8-23). Las lecturas tradicionales destacan el poder de Eliseo para poder atraparlos y el modelo que él presenta frente al rey de Israel.¹⁹ Las lecturas actuales, sin embargo, enfatizan las distintas soluciones que pueden darse a un conflicto. Cuando el ejército enemigo se descubre en el interior de Samaría, el rey pregunta a Eliseo si acaba con ellos, si les da muerte. El profeta responde negativamente y dice que se les prepare un banquete. Es una solución paradójica, una forma distinta de tratar a un enemigo; un modo diferente de abordar las relaciones con ellos y una forma contracultural de promover la paz. El poder o la superioridad de Israel no se muestran con la fuerza sino con la comensalidad, la hospitalidad y el perdón. El relato cuenta que la estrategia surte efecto pues:

“durante mucho tiempo no volvieron a acercarse las tropas de Aram”
(2Re 6,23).

¹⁸ Para el estudio de la unidad 2Re 6,24-7,20 cf. WALTER BRUEGGEMANN, *Testimony to Otherwise: The Witness of Elijah and Elisha*, St. Louis, MO, Chalice Press, 2001, cap. 4, 65-88. Brueggemann indica cómo el tema del hambre es especialmente relevante como consecuencia de las malas acciones humanas. En el contexto del ciclo de Eliseo es consecuencia directa de la guerra o del mal gobierno.

¹⁹ ROBERT LABARBERA, *The Man of War and the Man of God: Social Satire in 2 Kings 6:8-7:20*, en *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 46,4 (1984), 637-651.

A esta historia, que termina con un banquete, signo de abundancia, le sigue el asedio de Samaría (2Re 6,24-7,20) que es una de las historias más trágicas y que bien sirve para traer a la mente del lector la situación en la Siria del siglo XXI o en cualquiera de los muchos conflictos abiertos en la actualidad. Está narrada a partir de tres escenas breves, bien enlazadas entre sí. Como indica Alonso Schökel, es una narración “que podemos leer en tres actos. En el primero se plantea la situación; el cerco de la ciudad y el hambre. En el segundo, el rey se enfrenta con el profeta y este pronuncia dos oráculos. El tercero trae el desenlace, que es el cumplimiento de los dos oráculos de modo insospechado.²⁰ Nos centraremos en la primera y la tercera.

La primera dice lo siguiente²¹:

“Sucedió después de esto que Ben-Hadad rey de Aram, reunió todas sus tropas y subió y puso sitio a Samaría. Hubo gran hambre en Samaría; y tanto la apretaron que una cabeza de asno valía ochenta siclos de plata, y un par de cebollas silvestres cinco siclos de plata. Pasaba el rey de Israel por la muralla cuando una mujer clamó a él diciendo: “¡Sálvame, rey mi señor!” Respondió: ¡Que Yahveh no te salve! ¿Con qué puedo socorrerte yo? ¿Con la era o con el lagar? Le dijo el rey: “¿Qué te ocurre?” Ella respondió: “Esta mujer me dijo: ‘trae tu hijo y lo comeremos hoy; y el mío lo comeremos mañana’. Cocinamos a mi hijo y nos lo comimos; al otro día le dije: ‘Trae tu hijo y lo comeremos’, pero ella lo ha escondido” Cuando el rey oyó las palabras de la mujer desgarró sus vestidos; como pasaba sobre la muralla, el pueblo vio que llevaba saco a raíz de su carne. Dijo: ‘Esto me haga el Señor y esto me añada, si hoy le queda la cabeza sobre los hombros a Eliseo, hijo de Safat” (2Re 6,26-31).

Esta historia lleva a la condena a muerte del profeta quien, en respuesta a las afirmaciones del rey de que el causante de la hambruna es Dios, responde con el anuncio del fin de la hambruna:

²⁰ L. ALONSO SCHÖKEL, *Reyes*, 192.

²¹ El texto presenta una escena tipo que no es ajena a otros relatos veterotestamentarios y es común con la literatura mesopotámica. MORDECHAI COGAN – HAYIM TADMOR, *II Kings: A new Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, New Haven, Yale University Press (Series The Anchor Yale Bible, vol. 11), 2008, 80, la definen como “escena típica de salvación en caso de asedio”. VICTOR HAROLD MATTHEWS, *Taking calculated Risks: The Story of the Cannibal Mothers (2 Kings 6:24-7:20)* en *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, 43,1 (2013), 7, la analiza como “escena tipo familiar” en la que una mujer solicita auxilio a una autoridad. Sus paralelos serían 1Re 3,16-28; Jos 2,1-21; 2Sam 14,1-20; Rut 3; 2Sam 10,11-14; 1Re 14,1-18.

“Mañana a esta hora estará la arroba de flor de harina a siclo, y las dos arrobas de cebada a siclo, en la puerta de Samaría” (2Re 7,1).

La historia narra un terrible problema social –la guerra y el hambre– y cómo afecta de forma dramática a la familia. El relato habla del hambre, la más terrible entre las armas y de sus efectos. No son los de fuera quienes matan sino el pueblo mismo quien se niega el futuro matando a sus niños. Al lector actual le disgustan enormemente estas historias, y a oídos de un occidental reflejan actos más propios de “salvajes” que de sujetos civilizados. Pensará además que la historia es imposible; una madre nunca se comería a un hijo.²² A oídos de un lector bíblico resuena Dt 28,53-57 en donde se vaticina cómo será el asedio de una ciudad por naciones extranjeras y cuáles serán sus consecuencias:

“⁵³Comerás el fruto de tus entrañas, la carne de tus hijos y tus hijas que te haya dado Yhwh tu Dios, en el asedio y la angustia a que te reducirá tu enemigo. (...) ⁵⁶La más delicada y la más tierna de las mujeres de tu pueblo que no hubiera osado posar en tierra la planta de su pie, mirará con malos ojos al esposo de su corazón e incluso a su hijo y a su hija, ⁵⁷y se esconderá de ellos para comer las secundinas salidas de su seno y los hijos que dé a luz, por la privación de todo, a causa del asedio y de la angustia a que te reducirá tu enemigo en todas tus ciudades”.

El relato bíblico pone ante nuestros ojos cómo las guerras traen consigo la perversión más absoluta del comportamiento humano y cómo en ellas todo vale, se anula la capacidad para discernir entre el bien y el mal y se desatiende al más desvalido. Si la historia se relea con atención será posible oír los gritos y el dolor que entraña, vislumbrar la situación extrema en la que este grupo vive. Se trata de un asedio en el que no es posible la huida y en el que aquel de quien se espera una solución –el rey– responde negando al Dios de Israel y descargando su ira sobre el profeta. El monarca, igual que había hecho con Naamán, se desentiende de su misión, de su responsabilidad.²³ Este comportamiento, sin embargo, tal vez no esté muy lejos de la

²² El estudio de LAUREL LANNER, *Cannibal Mothers and Me. A Mother's Reading of 2 Kings 6.24-7,20*, en *JSOT*, 85 (1999), 107-116, parte de esta premisa y de la reflexión sobre las dantescas consecuencias de las guerras sobre las mujeres.

²³ La actuación del monarca es la opuesta a la de Salomón cuando en 1Re 3,16-28 resuelve con justicia el litigio de dos mujeres que reclaman la maternidad sobre el mismo bebé y se acusan de haber matado a otro accidentalmente durante la noche. En esta ocasión no hay juicio. La historia no presenta el modo de resolver el conflicto.

actuación hoy en día de la comunidad internacional ante los requerimientos de las zonas en conflicto o de las peticiones de auxilio de los grupos masacrados por mayorías o grupos de poder. Escenas bíblicas tan tremendas como el infanticidio y el canibalismo se tornan, pese a nuestro rechazo, en realidades muy actuales ante las que cerramos los ojos y de las que negamos su existencia.

Cuando se salvan las reticencias ante un texto tan violento, entonces, el lector puede adentrarse en el dolor de las mujeres y en su desesperación, y preguntarse qué pasa con ellas. Evidentemente al narrador no le interesa profundizar en esa historia. A priori son actrices secundarias que únicamente sirven para mostrar la depravación de Israel y la incapacidad de Jorán para gobernar, para cuidar y proteger a los suyos.²⁴ El lector atento y el orante ven en ellas, sin embargo, sujetos a los que unirse, acompañar, rescatar, recordar y ofrecer una palabra de aliento. Esas mujeres actualizan el dolor tantas víctimas que sufren los conflictos bélicos. Esos textos violentos sirven de denuncia de aquellas situaciones que Dios no quiere y recuerdan a los sujetos cuyos comportamientos malévolos son provocados por circunstancias sobrevenidas, ajenas a ellos, y que reclaman justicia. Al mismo tiempo, descubren el hipócrita escándalo de los que juzgan la violencia sin ver su propia pasividad o su silencio cómplice ante ella. El relato además puede ayudar a reflexionar sobre cómo muchas realidades de nuestro contexto que causan un gran impacto por su gran dureza se olvidan con mucha rapidez; el día a día trae otros acontecimientos y preocupaciones que minimizan la gravedad o el dramatismo de los sucesos. Para quienes los sufren, sin embargo, la herida seguirá ahí, y probablemente no podrá ser curada, aunque sí deberá ser acompañada. La vida de las dos mujeres del sitio de Samaría ya no será la misma y el final del hambre no resolverá la situación en la que ellas se han visto envueltas.

²⁴ Ese carácter secundario de la narración se ve en comentarios bíblicos que obvian a las mujeres y reducen su realidad a un acto de canibalismo. Lo central en ellas es explicar hasta qué punto los productos básicos se han encarecido y evaluar la actuación del rey y el oráculo que pronuncia el profeta. Cf. JAMES D.G. DUNN – JOHN WILLIAM ROGERSON, *Eerdmans Commentary on the Bible*, Grand Rapids, Michigan – Cambridge, Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2003, 268. M.A. SWEENEY, *I & II Kings*, 310-312 explica con precisión el por qué se hace referencia al asno y a la flor de harina, pero no profundiza en la cuestión familiar ni en la tragedia de las mujeres. A L. LANNER, *Cannibal Mothers*, sin embargo, este hecho y la ausencia de la valoración de las consecuencias del matricidio en ambas mujeres por parte del narrador, le lleva a realizar una dura crítica contra el deuteronomista y contra la figura de Eliseo.

5. LA HISTORIA DE LOS LEPROSOS Y DE AQUELLOS QUE NO TIENEN NADA QUE PERDER (2Re 7,3-20)

En la lucha contra los arameos hay otra historia impactante; la de cuatro leprosos que con su dramático diálogo elevan la pregunta al lector actual sobre quiénes son aquellos que no tienen nada que perder en una sociedad en la que no importan a nadie. El texto dice lo siguiente:

“³Cuatro hombres que estaban leprosos se hallaban a la entrada de la puerta y se dijeron uno a otro: ‘¿Por qué estarnos aquí hasta morir? ⁴Si decimos vamos a entrar en la ciudad, como hay hambre en ella, allí nos moriremos, y si nos quedamos aquí, moriremos igual. Así que vamos a pasarnos al campamento de Aram; si nos dejan vivir, viviremos, y si nos matan moriremos’. ⁵Se levantaron al anochecer para ir al campamento de Aram; llegaron hasta el límite del campamento de Aram y no había allí nadie, ⁶porque el Señor había hecho oír en el campamento de Aram estrépito de carros, estrépito de caballos y estrépito de un gran ejército”.

En ese momento, los arameos ante el temor de que sean los israelitas toman la decisión de huir abandonando todos sus enseres y bestias en el campamento. Entonces:

“⁸Aquellos leprosos llegaron al límite del campamento y, entrando en una tienda, comieron, bebieron y se llevaron de allí plata, oro y vestidos y fueron a esconderlo. Regresaron y entraron en otra tienda y escondieron lo que de allí se llevaron. ⁹Se dijeron uno a otro: ‘No está bien lo que hacemos; hoy es un día de albricias y si nosotros estamos callados hasta el lucir de la mañana incurriremos en culpa; así pues, vayamos, entremos y anunciémoslo a la casa del rey’. ¹⁰Llegaron y llamaron a los guardias de la ciudad y se lo anunciaron diciendo: ‘Hemos ido al campamento y no hay nadie, ninguna voz de hombre; sólo los caballos atados, los asnos atados y las tiendas intactas’”.

La buena noticia, sin embargo no es acogida por el rey que no cree lo que se le cuenta pues piensa que es una estratagema del ejército enemigo para apresarlos (cfr. 2Re 6,8-23). Las experiencias previas, su obcecación en que la situación no puede cambiar paralizan la acción. Es una vez más un personaje secundario, en este caso un oficial, quien lo insta al riesgo, a la salvación sugiriendo utilizar los últimos caballos que les quedan para poder comprobar la veracidad de la historia. El final es exitoso y hambre desaparece de Samaría gracias al botín del campamento enemigo. La historia concluye afirmando que *“la arroba de flor de harina estaba a siclo y las dos arrobas de cebada a siclo, según la palabra de Yahveh”* (2Re 7,16).

Lo chocante en esta historia son sus protagonistas. Los leprosos son uno de los colectivos más vulnerables de Israel pues son sujetos considerados impuros, pecadores y alejados de Dios. Su enfermedad les lleva a ser excluidos y a vivir fuera de las ciudades (cfr. Lv 13,45). Son los destinatarios y beneficiarios de curaciones tanto en el Antiguo como en el Nuevo Testamento. En esta ocasión, además, actúan en grupo, manifestando que son varios quienes comparten una misma situación de carencia y exclusión que en el contexto de muerte del asedio arameo se ve enormemente agravada pues no cuentan con la protección de la ciudad. Son sujetos que *"no tienen nada que perder"*, pero eso no los paraliza.

Otro de los elementos rompedores del relato es que no son destinatarios de la acción salvífica como en muchas historias de curación, sino agentes de ella. Con ello imprimen una nueva dimensión a la dignidad de la persona e invitan a cambiar la mirada y el enfoque sobre quiénes son los necesitados y quiénes los que pueden ayudar. Las políticas asistencialistas tienen aquí una buena de piedra de toque pues estos cuatro enfermos recuerdan que toda persona tiene mucho que ofrecer independientemente de sus circunstancias. Ellos son sujetos de pleno derecho, autónomos, buenos discernidores y ejemplo de radical humanidad y valentía. Sorprendentemente, al final del relato posibilitan la supervivencia de aquellos que no se han preocupado por ellos. Como en el caso de la pequeña sierva de Naamán, buscan el bien de aquellos que no han sido bondadosos con ellos.

Pero quizá lo más llamativo es que se muestran como verdaderos creyentes. Los motivos que les llevan a volver hacia el lugar del que partieron es el no querer *"incurrir en culpa"*, es decir, pese a todo, siguen la Ley de Israel. Los bienes que hallan en el campamento, oro, vestidos, comida y bebida no son bendición si no son compartidos con los demás. Las riquezas halladas son para repartir, máxime cuando hay una ciudad a punto de perecer de hambre. Estos hombres, en quienes todos presuponen que hay pecado, nos invitan a revisar nuestras miradas sobre aquellos a los que no consideramos creyentes y a preguntarnos cuáles son los criterios desde los que los estamos juzgando.

Los leprosos, que parece que no tienen nada que perder pero que como todos buscan la vida, se aproximan a tierra extranjera; son capaces de salir hacia afuera cuando parece que no hay salidas, de hallar el cauce de salvación. Su acción es sugerente como modelo para instituciones y grupos con futuros inciertos o para una Iglesia imperfecta en salida. Cuando se está desazonado incluso al interior, salir hacia los otros puede ser el camino. Estos cuatro hombres no se quedan

parados. Alejarse de las murallas de la ciudad, de la seguridad, trae la vida no sólo para ellos sino para todos. En una situación límite ellos vislumbran como posible la situación más absurda; a saber, meterse en el campamento del enemigo y una vez hallado el botín inician un camino de regreso en condiciones distintas a las que salieron; son portadores de esperanza, aunque no vayan a ser creídos en el palacio más que por la servidumbre. La escena de palacio muestra también lo difícil que es cambiar la forma de mirar a aquellos a quienes una sociedad ya ha etiquetado. En el momento en el que con valentía ellos regresan intramuros, asumiendo un posible rechazo, se encuentran con que *“el rey no los cree”*.

Los leprosos, como las mujeres de la ciudad, son actores que desaparecen. Nada dice la historia de que se curara su lepra, de que fueran acogidos en la ciudad, de que rehicieran sus vidas. El lector bíblico está habituado a que las dolencias se curen, pero este no es un relato de curación al estilo clásico. La curación que nosotros podemos contemplar hoy es la de la restitución de su dignidad; la de verlos como sujetos que han permitido salvar a una ciudad, como personas que han vencido las dificultades de la segregación y la exclusión, como individuos que con sus acciones han reivindicado su necesaria participación en la marcha de una sociedad. Pocos relatos son tan contraculturales como este.

6. CONCLUSIONES

Los relatos analizados se presentan, a nuestro juicio, como historias muy actuales con mucho que enseñar. Verifican una vez más la riqueza de la Palabra y su vitalidad. Este artículo comenzaba expresando las dificultades que muchos lectores tienen al aproximarse a relatos veterotestamentarios y a historias violentas. Los ejemplos analizados contienen una gran violencia implícita o contextual. En ellos no hay un espacio pacífico en el que poder reflexionar con calma sobre los acontecimientos, ni realidades edulcoradas. Sin embargo, a través de ellos recibimos la invitación a contemplar aquellos espacios del presente que necesitan de nuevas miradas, de soluciones ingeniosas y de acciones pacificadoras. Son una clara denuncia de situaciones que se siguen dando hoy en día como los raptos y agresiones a mujeres, las trágicas situaciones que provocan las guerras, la exclusión de muchos sujetos de la sociedad o la negación de la responsabilidad colectiva frente a la desigualdad existente entre nosotros. Esas historias ayudan a percibir nuestra realidad y a ofrecerle nuevas vías,

caminos de solución y espacios de encuentro. Invitan a ver de un modo diferente al extranjero y a valorar a aquellos sujetos que pasan desapercibidos o que no cuentan. Nos permiten reconocer nuestros prejuicios sobre las personas, grupos, enfermedades o situaciones. Todas las historias son ejemplo de cómo la marcha de los acontecimientos necesita de la participación de todos, desde la sierva hasta el oficial de la corte.

La historia de Naamán el sirio es un ejemplo de la fructífera colaboración entre extraños. De cómo señores, reyes y siervos se unen en el cuidado de uno de ellos. Es modelo también de dinamismo, escucha, discernimiento y agradecimiento. Es una historia llena de siervas y siervos, de personajes secundarios, sin los que un héroe venido a menos no podría haberse encontrado a sí mismo. Es ejemplo de cómo una buena acción traspasa fronteras y cómo es posible el diálogo entre diferentes e incluso enemigos. La historia de Naamán se presenta como un ejemplo del amor universal de Dios que no hace acepción de pueblos o de personas.

La historia de las dos mujeres es el recuerdo constante de la injusticia, el dolor y el sufrimiento de muchas personas y pueblos y el acicate para trabajar por que no se den las condiciones que las llevaron a cometer la atrocidad de acabar con un hijo. Al tiempo, mirando nuestra propia realidad, invita a contemplarlas como víctimas de un conflicto y de una realidad que hace que se pierdan hasta los pilares básicos de la identidad del ser humano.

La historia de los cuatro leprosos estimula a mirar de un modo diferente a todos aquellos que se encuentran en situación de exclusión social, a recordar que todo sujeto tiene algo positivo que aportar al bien común, a creer en aquellos en los que nadie cree y a luchar por evitar situaciones en las que uno sienta que “ya no tiene nada que perder”.

Las narraciones presentadas son historias de gente preocupada por otras (una sierva israelita que busca la sanación de su señor y unos siervos que le ayudan a reflexionar), una historia de gente que apenas cuenta (los siervos, el profeta,...), de señores que deben abajarse (un sirio y un rey), de soluciones sencillas cuando se esperan grandes remedios (lavarse en el Jordán), de paciencia, de insistencia, de dolor profundo, de búsqueda incesante,... y de cómo buscando un remedio para algo... se descubre algo que no se buscaba, a un Dios que se mueve entre lo impensable. El estudio ha puesto ante la mirada del lector a una joven esclava que sirve como detonante de la mediación de su señor; a dos mujeres que en situación desesperada destrazan sus vidas pero que reclaman justicia, a cuatro hombres que siendo

rechazados por todos son los únicos capaces de hallar soluciones que salvarán la vida de muchos. Todas las historias muestran cómo la acción de Dios, a través de sus mediaciones, abarca todas las esferas de la sociedad y cómo todos los seres humanos, independientemente de nuestra condición social, compartimos problemas y carencias que solo pueden ser resueltas con la colaboración de los demás. Contempladas a fondo, desvelan muchos matices enormemente ricos para la reflexión social y eclesial actual y hacen patente la actualidad y riqueza de las historias del ciclo de Eliseo.

GOD, TERESA AND LUTHER.
IS THERE SUCH A THING AS PASSIVE FAITH?

GLEN ATTARD, O.CARM.

“Any good thing we do has its source,
not in ourselves but rather in that spring where
this tree, which is the soul, is planted, and
in that sun which sheds its radiance on our works”.¹

1. INTRODUCTION

Teresa of Jesus (1515-1582) could not have described her relationship with God any better than in her poem “*Vuestra soy*” (‘I am Thine’). In it, she so eloquently brings together three major aspects of her spirituality: God’s steadfast love which accompanies the soul’s “days of light and darkness through”, which is received through grace by the soul and disposes herself to say, “Sweetest Spouse Thou art / I have given myself to Thee”, and what, in turn, has the soul outstretch her arms in humble acceptance of those around her, “send me where Thou’d’st have me be”.² Teresa’s love for God overflows into her concrete love for others.

On the contrary, Martin Luther (1483-1546), although is willing to accept the possibility of the union of the soul with Christ, there is little agreement on what this union actually entails. According to some, this is the actual “indwelling of Christ [which] occurs sub-

* Abbreviations: M (*Moradas*); V (*Vida*); C (*Camino de perfección*); P (*Poesías*) – citations and pagination according to the following editions: TERESA DE JESÚS, *Obras Completas*, edited and introduced by Efrén de la Madre de Dios, O.C.D., and Otger Steggink, O.Carm., Madrid, BAC, ⁹2006; Id., *Complete Works*, 3 vols., translated and edited by E. Allison Peers, London, Burns & Oates, 2002; ND (JOSEF NEUNER S.J. – JACQUES DUPUIS S.J., *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church*, New York, Alba House, ⁷2001).

¹ Ist M II:5.

² P II:4, 8 (“I am Thine, and born for Thee”), in *Complete Works*, 279-281.

sequent to justification, as the power of God to transform the life of the Christian”, while others “fail to describe Christ’s presence as more than an experience of God” which means that union for them is only “the power of Christ on the believer’s heart, not the indwelling of Christ’s person in faith”.³ Despite such lack of clarity, it has been suggested that for the early Luther “the Christian is justified in receiving the righteousness of God through the indwelling of Christ. In union with Christ, the Christian then turns in love to her neighbour”.⁴

This common belief of the possibility of the union of the soul with God or, more precisely, Christ (whatever this might then lead to) seems to put Teresa and Luther on a par. Both Teresa and – at least the early – Luther seem to understand justification or sanctification as a lived relationship with God which is concretely acted out in love for Christ and neighbour. Although it could be argued that the later Luther for whatever reason seemed to have lost this connection between faith and morality, Teresa certainly remained a daughter of the Church in giving equal importance to faith and what consequences this had on one’s moral life. She knows that faith alone is not enough to please God – not even after mystical marriage – for this must always be accompanied by one’s choices of cooperating in the working of one’s salvation.

In this essay I shall depart from Susan Zuger’s position who says that Teresa’s spirituality is a middle course between Luther and Trent,⁵ thus giving the impression that she was neither wholly in line with Luther nor wholly in line with Trent. I would say that Teresa’s position is a deeper and more concrete understanding of Trent’s *Decree of Justification*. Teresa was obsessed with wanting to die a daughter of the Church, meaning that she wanted to remain faithful – even though she did not agree with everything she saw happening – in the Church.

Since there is not enough space here to exhaust the comparison and contrast between Teresa and Luther, more importance will be given to Teresa’s spirituality which, admittedly, will sometimes draw comparisons or contrasts from Luther. Also, it is our impression that Teresa’s writings, produced at a later stage of her life after an incredible personal transformation in God’s love, have come down to us more clearly than Luther’s views, also because interpretations of

³ MARK TOTTEN, *Luther on “Unio cum Christo”. Toward a Model for Integrating Faith and Ethics*, in *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 31/3 (2003), 444.

⁴ TOTTEN, *Luther*, 443-444.

⁵ Cf. SUSAN ZUGER, *A Theology of Grace in St Teresa of Avila’s Interior Castle*, in *Spiritual Life*, 49/3 (2003), 166-177.

Lutheran views have varied significantly from one context to the other.

2. CONTEXT

2.1. *Historical*⁶

Firstly, a look at the historical context in which Teresa lived, namely:

- (i) The Protestant Reformation: Although Luther was excommunicated when Teresa was still a child, the air that she breathed in Spain already contained traces of the Protestant ideologies – which were made known and public by the “letrados”⁷ – even though books were hardly available to the common folk in those days. By 1546, when Luther died, Protestantism, including the ideas of Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin, were already spreading throughout most of Western Europe.
- (ii) The Council of Trent (1545-64): It sought to bring clarity and order to the ambiguities that emerged by the errant ideas of Luther and the lot. The Council was primarily a doctrinal one, seeking to consolidate the old faith, reconciling with great care those who had been somehow detached from the Church, and restoring the old religion.⁸
- (iii) The Inquisition in Spain: The Spanish Inquisition was founded to purify the nation of heretics. Spain was home to a multitude of belief systems including Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism. The leaders of Spain wanted to unify the country into a strong nation for many reasons, but perhaps primarily because they were on the verge of becoming one of the wealthiest nations of the time. Ferdinand and Isabella chose Catholicism as the way to unite Spain and used the Spanish Inquisition as the purifying fire. They began by driving out Jews, Protestants, and other non-believers, but soon enough no Spaniard was safe. The Spanish Inquisition had taken a life of its own.⁹

⁶ Cf. DANIEL DE PABLO MARROTO, *Teresa en oración. Historia, experiencia, doctrina*, Madrid, Editorial de Espiritualidad, 2004, 71-95, 104-108.

⁷ The frequent term “letrados” in Teresa’s writings refers to the learned *men* of her time, particularly Catholic theologians who used to (perhaps unknowingly) expose Protestant ideas more by confuting them: see TERESA OF AVILA, C prol:3; III:5; V V:3, 10; Ist M II:6, Vth M I:7.

⁸ KARL BHLMEYER – HERMANN TUECHLE, *Storia della Chiesa III/L’Epoca delle Riforme*, Brescia, Morcelliana, 1969, 313.

⁹ *The Columbia History of the World*, edited by John A. Garraty and Peter Gay, New York, Harper & Row, 1972, 544.

2.2. Theological

Secondly, Teresa's position is to be understood within the theological context of her time, namely:

a) "Union" and "Love" in Luther's Theology

Essentially, grace was the issue that caused Luther to reassess his life as an Augustinian friar. For Luther, humanity is "curvatus in se" ("curved in upon itself"). His point of departure is that "as fallen creatures, humans are always striving for their own advantage, even in their loves"¹⁰ because of the viciousness of original sin. For Augustine, there is a legitimate type of self-love "on account of Him who is to be enjoyed",¹¹ for which Luther replies by believing this is a "condition from which [man] will not be delivered unless you altogether cease loving yourself and, forgetting yourself, love your neighbour".¹² This means that everything a person does – even good works – is "curvatus" or directed towards one's self, egoistic, sinful.

This self that strives for its own advantage is the essence of what Luther calls the old nature, distinguished from the new nature a person receives in Christ. In "Freedom of a Christian" he explains that "man has a twofold nature, a spiritual and a bodily one. According to the spiritual nature, which men refer to as the soul, he is called a spiritual, inner, or new man. According to the bodily nature, which men refer to as flesh, he is called a carnal, outward, or old man". The new does not simply replace the old, however, but is in conflict with the old until the "last day". Until then, the Christian harbours a "contradiction". The new person born in faith is marked not by a love that strives for a self-giving love.¹³

Luther eventually discovered he was unable to find peace in the traditional Catholic teachings, which gave equal weight to both faith and good works. "Luther was suffocated with the overwhelming sense that he was weak and impure and that every effort he made to satisfy God's justice and righteousness, to merit salvation, was a failure".¹⁴ He eventually found his solace and solution in St. Paul's Epistle to the

¹⁰ MARTIN LUTHER, *Lectures on Romans*, edited by Hilton Oswald, translated by Jacob Preus, in *Luther's Works*, xxv, St Louis/MO, Concordia, 1972, 291.

¹¹ AUGUSTINE, *On Christian Doctrine*, I:21, translated by Durant Waite Robertson, Jr., New York, Macmillan, 1958.

¹² LUTHER, *Lectures on Romans*, 513.

¹³ Cf. TOTTEN, *Luther*, 445-446.

¹⁴ *Columbia History*, 519.

Romans. He began to understand Paul's reference to righteousness to mean "that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely faith".¹⁵ Luther became convinced that salvation depends only on the freely given grace of God, which is accepted in faith. Human effort or merit is worthless. This doctrine of justification by grace through faith became a cornerstone of classical Lutheran theology.¹⁶

b) Trent's *Decree*

The doctrinal position of Trent stands in a middle way between two extremes: Pelagian self-sufficiency and Protestant diffidence regarding the human person's wounded nature.¹⁷ The *Decree on Justification* stresses three important points:

- (i) The moment when justification is first attained: "free will, weakened and distorted as it was, was in no way extinct";¹⁸ "justification is through Christ";¹⁹ "we are said to be justified through faith because faith is the beginning of the human being's salvation";²⁰
- (ii) The preservation and increase of this justification: "putting to death the members of their flesh and using them as instruments for righteousness";²¹ "sanctification by observing the commandments";²² "perseverance";²³ and
- (iii) The recovery of justification after it has been lost: "make the effort to regain through the sacrament of penance and by the merits of Christ the grace they have lost".²⁴

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 520.

¹⁶ For a concise explanation of Luther's theology of grace, see REGINALD GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, *Predestination. The Meaning of Predestination in Scripture and the Church*, translated by Dom Bede Rose, Illinois, TAN, 1998, 117-118. It is interesting to note that contemporary non-Catholic scholars, presenting Luther's notion of justification by faith alone, balance the importance of objective and subjective grace. They emphasise that God's freely-given grace needs the ground of good works to be able to bear fruit: See COLIN E. GUNTON, *The Christian Faith. An Introduction to Christian Doctrine*, Malden/MA, Blackwell, 2002, 139-145; ALISTER MCGRATH, *Christian Theology. An Introduction*, Malden/MA, Blackwell, 2001, 453-457. Whether this truly reflects the position of the later Luther is a discussion which we shall not enter here because the space does not provide us the length.

¹⁷ ND, 806.

¹⁸ ND, § 1925.

¹⁹ ND, § 1927.

²⁰ ND, § 1935.

²¹ ND, § 1937.

²² ND, § 1938.

²³ ND, § 1942.

²⁴ ND, § 1943.

3. GOD'S SAVING GRACE

Any discussion of man's relationship to God, therefore, boils down to precisely those same two concepts, God and man, which is a very dear theme in Carmelite Spirituality. Bl. Titus Brandsma explains that in the relationship with God and humanity, Christ and Our Mother have a unique role in bringing humanity into divinity and vice-versa,

"We like to act and speak in images and similitudes. We like examples and memory helps. We have an image for developing our representation of God. Once there was a Virgin who became the Mother of God made man, who gave us God as the Emmanuel. He died on the cross to make us live in union with God and to fill us with his grace. Thus, he was also born in us in the order of grace, to bring into its own the union with God in the order of nature, to make that union even more interior and superabundant. Thus, the Mother of God gave us that interior union with God, while she presented herself as an example of the profoundest communion. Let us keep that example before our eyes. It is more than a mere example. She is called to direct our gaze to God. Just as we, led by revelation, recognize God in the Child in her arms, so may she lead us through our intellects to the contemplation of God in all that he has created, in order that, as he lived in her, he may also live in us, and through the deed born of us be revealed in us".²⁵

Our Mother directs our gaze to God whose grace man is given 'interiorly' and 'superabundantly' thus giving man the possibility to behold divinity in a still and eternal act of contemplation. Indeed, to a certain extent Carmelite Spirituality in particular – as does the Catholic Church in general – agrees with Luther's claim, firstly, of the Pauline "contradiction" between the old and the new man (the man of the flesh as opposed to the man of the spirit) and, secondly, that full transformation in glory²⁶ takes place only after we behold God face to face in eternity.²⁷

²⁵ TITUS BRANDSMA, *Godsbegrip* ("The Concept of God"), XVIII, Nijmegen, 1932, *pro manuscripto*.

²⁶ "Transformation in glory" is a phrase coined by Kees Waaijman O.Carm. whilst describing the mystical journey of transformation in five steps, i.e. transformation in creation, transformation in recreation, transformation in conformation, transformation in love, and transformation in glory. All save the last are achievable (with God's grace) in this life, but full transformation occurs only in the life to come (in glory).

²⁷ "The goal of this life is twofold. One part we acquire by our own effort and the exercise of the virtues, assisted by divine grace. This is to offer God a pure and holy

But what is at stake here, it seems, is Teresa's and Luther's understanding of the contact that God chooses to keep with the soul, mainly through the sacraments but not just. Since, for Luther(anism), man is irreconcilably sinful, there is no action that a person – priest or not – could do to be capable of beholding God, not even celebrating the sacraments. However, to believe that God is present (or not) just because a person decides He should be present (or not) is very dangerous doctrine indeed for in the words of Joseph Chalmers O.Carm., “You can never outdo God in generosity”. God's continued presence amidst man – independently of our being conscious or unconscious of it – comes from His own will of incarnating Himself in the first place and, by grace, leaving us the possibility to be “sparked”²⁸ by His flame of love.

4. RECEIVING GRACE

As Teresa starts writing *The Interior Castle*, considered by many to be her *magna carta*, she does not have in mind the intention to expose any intellectualised theology of grace. Rather, she does this unconsciously. She is well aware of the currents that circulate her time and the importance that she gives, in the midst of this, to the intrinsic connection between the life of prayer and grace is telling of this. Teresa's theology, which can at first seem sporadic and disjointed, springs from her own personal experience. Her spirituality was scattered

heart, free from all stain of sin. We attain this goal when we are perfect and 'in Carith', that is, hidden in that love of which the Wiseman speaks, 'love covers all offences'. Wishing Elijah to reach this goal, God said to him, 'Hide in the wadi Carith'. The other goal of this life is granted to us as the free gift of God, namely, to taste somewhat in the heart and to experience in the mind the power of the divine presence and the sweetness of heavenly glory, not only after death but already in this mortal life. This is to drink of the torrent of the pleasure of God. God promised this to Elijah in the words, 'And there you shall drink of the torrent'.", see FELIPE RIBOT, *The Ten Books on the Way of Life and Great Deeds of the Carmelites*, I:2 (Early Carmelite Spirituality, vol. 1), edited and translated by Richard Copsey, Kent-Rome, St Albert's Press-Edizioni Carmelitane, 2005, 9.

²⁸ The idea of man being “sparked” comes from Jan van Ruusbroec who saw the Spirit as the “scintilla animae”, i.e. the spark of the soul; that spark with which man could, after a process of purification, illumination, and union, behold God. The Spirit, Ruusbroec believed, which we receive in Baptism is not just a metaphor of being open to the work of God in us, but is the actual trace of divinity, grace, divine image, Spirit (call it what you will) in, as St John of the Cross would later call it, “our most profound centre”.

around inside her and, as she writes, she was sceptical of her ability to gather it all together.²⁹

Teresa describes the soul as a castle made of a single diamond or of very clear crystal, in which there are many rooms. Wandering through these rooms, then, becomes a symbol of the soul's journey in receiving and cooperating with grace. This is no easy task for of his nature man is, she says, "centred in the rough setting of the diamond and in the outer wall, that is to say, these bodies of ours".³⁰ Hence, she sets out an itinerary of obtaining grace through prayer that can be followed by anyone who will devote the time and discipline that she believes is required. Mystical union with God made Teresa believe that, with the help of God's grace, one could gradually mature and – even if in slight glimpses in this world – briefly be in union with God. A soul can cooperate in its own salvation through prayerful meditation and a complete conformation of its will to God's will.³¹ Hence, the observance of commandments, which Trent had insisted on, was the skeleton that held together Teresa's counsels for the soul, which were then strengthened and bore the fruit of the gratuitous gifts given us by God through her experience.

Teresa gives us the following criteria for receiving grace,

- (i) Faith is a primary component for Teresa. One must believe that God's sanctifying or justifying grace is available to all souls who are properly disposed to receive it. One must also believe in the beauty and dignity of the human soul. She says, "The soul of the righteous person is nothing but a paradise, in which, as God tells us, He takes His delight".³²
- (ii) Self-knowledge: God dwells in the centre of the self. We come to the knowledge of God through our efforts to know ourselves. As we seek knowledge of God we seek in self-knowledge and as we grow in self-knowledge we deepen our knowledge of God.³³ Teresa insists on the importance of self-knowledge as a means for learning to exist in God's grace. Indeed, she appreciates how difficult it is for the human soul to deal with self-knowledge. However, she does not abandon her directive just because it is difficult, nor does she mince words.
- (iii) Detachment: Beginners always find these first rooms of the castle difficult to dwell in because it involves a letting go of past habits to

²⁹ M prol.

³⁰ 1st M I:3.

³¹ ZUGER, *Theology of Grace*, 171.

³² 1st M I:2.

³³ JOEL GALLANZA, *I Consider the Labour Well Spent. A mini-course on the Interior Castle*, Rome, Edizioni Carmelitane, 2001, 14.

give space for new, holier habits. Teresa spends much time explaining the suffering that the soul undergoes as the radiance of God's truth shows her who she really is. The soul is filled with dismay that it could ever have thought so highly of itself. The soul may indeed be aware of the many gifts and talents it has received from God and might even think them holy at a first glance. However, none is safe for the soul until it has been redeemed through God's grace.³⁴ "To him who has been given much, much will be expected" (Lk 12:48).

- (iv) Humility: In such a state of grace, the soul sees clearly that it is not good because of anything it has become or because of any good works it has been able to accomplish. It begins to see that a humble love is all that matters. Teresa believes that with the grace given in self-knowledge one cannot help but be graced with true humility as well. Therefore, humility is a way of "think[ing] of His greatness and then come back to our own baseness; by looking at His purity we shall see our foulness; by meditating upon His humility, we shall see how far we are from being humble".³⁵

5. BEARING THE FRUITS

By the end of the First Mansion, Teresa has laid the groundwork for her spirituality. She has outlined how one ought to dispose himself to receive God's grace. She says that the soul must be willing to labour, be resolute, and prepare herself with diligence to bring its will into conformity with the will of God. It is clear that Teresa believes that the only way to gain this grace is through prayer. It is in this prayer and meditation that the soul will receive the grace that will allow it to be transformed.³⁶ Teresa says, "The door by which we must enter this castle is prayer".³⁷

As we can observe, there is an element in Teresa's doctrine of grace that appears to augment the definition of grace handed down at the Council of Trent. Teresa's attitude about grace and good works is articulated when she says that we must realise "that any good thing we do has its source, not in ourselves, but rather in that spring where this tree, which is the soul, is planted, and in that sun which sheds its radiance on our works".³⁸ It is quite clear, then, that Te-

³⁴ Cf. Ist M I-II.

³⁵ Ist M II:10.

³⁶ ZUGER, *Theology of Grace*, 175.

³⁷ IInd M 19.

³⁸ Ist M II:5.

resa does not believe that the performance of good works can be accomplished without God's grace. She believes, rather, that any good works the soul might perform must be rooted in this indwelling presence of God.

Elsewhere, Teresa writes a small treatise to her sisters in Carmel more directly about the utmost need to pray and how this must be accompanied by love for neighbour. In *The Way of Perfection* Teresa writes,

*"I determined to do the little that was in me – namely, to follow the evangelical counsels as perfectly as I could, and to see that these few nuns who are here should do the same, confiding in the great goodness of God, Who never fails to help those who resolve to forsake everything for His sake [...] this is your vocation, this must be your business, these must be your desires, these your tears, these your petitions [...] the world is on fire".*³⁹

Surely enough, Teresa is aware of the dangers of closing oneself in one's "room" – literally or metaphorically – using prayer or meditation as an excuse to be detached from neighbourly love. Later in *The Way of Perfection*, she has a concrete word to say about pure love, i.e. that "love without any degree whatsoever of self-interest; all that the soul wishes and desires is to see the soul [it loves] enriched with blessings from Heaven".⁴⁰ As a matter of fact, even Luther would agree with Teresa that "[divine] love stands in contrast to natural human love, which is always striving for its own advantage".⁴¹ However, Luther's only way of accepting the soul's relationship with pure divine love is not "mutual", as for Teresa, but only in the passivity of faith. "Even in the absence of sin, however, a person could still only receive God's love in the passivity of faith. *Coram Deo*, faith is necessarily passive".⁴²

Moreover, Teresa is clear on how one ought to cooperate with the good Lord to dispose the soul to be increasingly perfected by Him,

- (i) "At first it may be mingled with emotion, but this as a rule will do no harm. It is sometimes good and necessary to show emotion in our love, and also to feel it and be distressed by some of our sisters'

³⁹ C I:2, 5.

⁴⁰ C VII:1.

⁴¹ MARTIN LUTHER, *Heidelberg Disputations*, translated by W. A. Lambert, in *Luther's Works*, XXXI, Philadelphia/PA, Fortress, 1957, 57.

⁴² TOTTEN, *Luther*, 447.

trials and weaknesses [...] We must not judge others by ourselves, nor think of ourselves as we have been at some time when, perhaps without any effort on our part, the Lord made us stronger than they; let us think of what we were like at the times when we have been weakest”.

- (ii) “Note the importance of this advice for those of us who would learn to sympathise with our neighbours’ trials [...] must be careful and alert for the devil never slumbers. And the nearer we are to perfection, the more careful we must be since the temptations are then much more cunning [...] In short we must always watch and pray for there is no better way than prayer of revealing these hidden wiles of the devil and making him declare his presence”.
- (iii) “Contrive always, even if you do not care for it, to take part in your sisters’ necessary recreation and to do so for the whole of the allotted time, for all considerable treatment of them is perfect love. It is a very good thing for us to take compassion of each other’s needs [...] Get to know what are the things in your sisters which you should be sorry to see and those about which you should sympathise with them; and always show your grief in any notorious fault which you may seem in one of them”.
- (iv) “Often commend to God any sister who is at fault and strive for your own part to practise the virtue which is the opposite of her fault with great perfection. Make determined efforts to do this so that you may teach your sister by your deeds what perhaps she could never learn by words nor gain by punishment”.
- (v) “This will be a much truer kind of friendship than one which uses every possible loving expression (such as are not used, and must not be used, in this house): ‘My life!’, ‘My love!’, ‘My darling!’ and suchlike things, one or another of which people are always saying. Let such endearing words be kept for your Spouse, for you will be so often and so much alone with Him that you will want to make use of them all, and this His Majesty permits you”.
- (vi) “It is also a very clear sign of love to try to spare others household work by taking it upon oneself and also to rejoice and give praise to the Lord if you see any increase in their virtues”.
- (vii) Finally, “if one of you should be cross with another because of some hasty word, the matter must at once be put right and must betake yourselves in earnest prayer. The same applies to the harbouring of any grudge, or to party strife, or to the desire to be greatest, or to any nice point concerning your honour”.⁴³

⁴³ C VII.

6. CONCLUSION

On the surface, Teresa's spirituality appears to be a simple method or, even better, an analysis of the prayer journey. It requires only that the soul have faith in the Holy Spirit who dwells within it, that it be willing to enter itself in order to find the Divine Presence. In the end, the soul must surrender its will to God's will and be transformed.

However, Teresa's spirituality is new in that it develops an applied and more concrete understanding of "good works" which appears in Trent's *Decree of Justification*. Teresa demonstrates that the soul must be willing to allow God to transform it through grace so that all of its good works will be rooted in Truth. She believes that this can happen honestly only through prayer and the disposition of the soul's will to God's will. Teresa demonstrates that grace is not gained through the addition of good works but rather through the union of one's will with God. If one truly knows oneself as being graced by God, then one realises that even one's good works are graced. Clearly, for Teresa the fact that man is redeemed of his sinful nature with sacramental grace (manifesting, through a visible sign, the invisible grace) means that "although the [mystical] night veils in darkness the face of the Good Shepherd, He is nevertheless present and is more than ever active. He it is who illumines, purifies, enkindles the soul, and unites it with Himself. The night is so dark and painful only because the Shepherd is leading the soul in the paths of justice, for his own name's sake".⁴⁴ God being the agent and the soul His recipient, makes Teresa determined to show her readers the necessity of: a) abandoning ourselves to God in faith (therefore, agreeing on this point with Luther); and b) disposing ourselves or making ourselves available, "vacare Deo" to let God start transforming us already in this life in preparation for the definite transformation in the life to come.

As we saw, through the contrasting figures – to a certain extent – of Teresa and Luther our intention was to show that man's quest for giving an identity to himself is intimately connected to the way we look at God, and, on the basis of this, to giving an identity to one's neighbour. To identify someone or something is to give it a name, to

⁴⁴ MARIE-EUGENE OF THE CHILD JESUS, *I am a Daughter of the Church. A practical synthesis of Carmelite Spirituality*, II, translated by M. Verda Clare, C.S.C., Notre Dame/IN, Fides-Claretian, 1997, 206.

assert its existence. To be clear, when this someone, then, happens to be God, the identification process makes a radical shift. It is no longer man who gives meaning but he is given meaning by God, his life becomes 'godly'. Whether through faith or grace alone, or whether this should be accompanied by one's works, both Teresa and Luther agree on the fact that God is the one from whom every good comes, disposing us to ask, "What, o good and loving Lord / wilt Thou have this creature do?"⁴⁵

⁴⁵ P II.

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HISTORIA

CATANA, MIHAELA, *La Chiesa Sposa*, Ed. Carmelitane, Roma 2016, 118 p.

Mihaela Catana, monaca carmelitana romana del monastero di Carpineto Romano, è autrice di questo denso volumetto su S. Maria Maddalena de Pazzi (1566-1607) che, già dal titolo sintetico e profondo, si propone di offrire una sintesi del pensiero ecclesiologico della santa vissuta come sappiamo nell'atmosfera riformistica dominata, da un lato, dalla figura di G. Savonarola († 1498) e, dall'altro, dal grande evento del Concilio di Trento (1545-63). Difatti sono sostanzialmente queste le due linee di spiritualità e di pensiero che confluiscono nel pensiero della santa. Proprio la riforma della Chiesa era al cuore del pensiero della Pazzi che non esita a scrivere le famose 12 lettere ai personaggi più in vista della Chiesa del tempo esortandoli con forza proprio a tale rinnovamento: lettere che forse non sono neppure giunte ai destinatari, ma che restano una valida testimonianza teologica, soprattutto ecclesiologica.

Dalla globalità degli scritti però sappiamo che la nostra santa non fa un discorso esteriore, ma la riforma deve partire dal suo monastero e da ogni religiosa e, *in extenso*, da ogni uomo. A conclusione del presente volumetto, l'autrice pone questa osservazione, a nostro avviso, basilare nei confronti della santa fiorentina vista come colei che: «propone una radicale novità interiore come radice di ogni possibile rinnovamento. Solo partendo dal cuore dell'uomo si può contribuire al rinnovamento dell'intero Corpo mistico di Cristo» (p. 112). Chiaramente una base antropologica che la nostra santa desume dalla sua meditata contemplazione dell'Incarnazione, più volte illustrata con i frequenti echi che le provenivano dalla tradizione patristica (soprattutto da Ireneo e Atanasio secondo i quali il fine dell'Incarnazione è proprio la divinizzazione dell'uomo).

Si comprende allora come la monaca fiorentina è portatrice di un messaggio attuale ancor oggi, in quanto intriso di profetismo: i profeti e le profetesse di Dio svolgono appunto questo ruolo apparentemente destabilizzante del corso degli eventi per ricrearne uno nuovo e come a Dio piace.

La presente pubblicazione, che inizia con la Prefazione di P. Bruno Secondin (che ha dedicato alla santa un corposo volume sulla santa e che sono stati seguiti da molti articoli sulla Pazzi), è articolata in sette capitoli precedenti da un'Introduzione e seguiti da una Conclusione a cui si aggiunge una Bibliografia ripartita in tre sezioni. Il proposito dell'intero testo è quello di

offrire «una sintesi leggibile e una visione generale subito chiara e fruibile» (p. 9). Domina quindi un fine divulgativo, ma non superficiale, quanto piuttosto animato da vera partecipazione e passione da parte della nostra autrice e ben redatto.

I sette capitoli che seguono, rivelano infatti una grande chiarezza espositiva toccando i vari aspetti (biografico, dottrinale e spirituale, servendosi anche di sottotitoli nei singoli capitoli) della santa. L'interesse dell'autrice chiaramente è ecclesiologico – campo nel quale molte teologhe negli ultimi anni si sono specializzate (la stessa Sr. Mihaela è licenciata in questa materia) – ma ciò non riduce l'interesse e la breve indagine che, nell'economia del volumetto, l'autrice fa di altri aspetti guardati però attraverso quest'ottica ecclesiologica. In merito sono notevoli alcuni capitoli – ad es. il III (*L'ameno giardino della Chiesa*), il IV (*La «Renovazione della Chiesa»*) e i due capitoli finali (VI-VII) dedicati al Carmelo e a Maria – oppure alcuni temi di riflessione come, al capitolo V, il binomio Verginità e profezia (pp. 75-77), aspetto particolarmente presente nella 'teologia al femminile', ma che non esclude o pone in ombra altri ambiti di riflessione (cristologia, antropologia, morale, ecc.). Particolarmente felice appare tutta l'illustrazione del tema della riforma della Chiesa, tanto auspicata dalla santa e programma principale del Concilio di Trento nella cui atmosfera la Pazzi è vissuta.

Molto appropriato appare, nella presente pubblicazione, l'uso dei testi della santa per i vari temi affrontati. Non appaiono illustrazioni salvo la riproduzione all'interno ed in b/n della tela di Francesco Curradi risalente al 1626 (che figura nella copertina a colori) conservata nel Monastero di Firenze raffigurante il Cristo che comunica la santa.

In sostanza, una pubblicazione che unisce piacevolezza di stile e densità di argomentazione nell'ambito della buona divulgazione.

LUCA M. DI GIROLAMO, OSM

SAVERIO CLEMENTE, *Un prete nel inferno di Dachau. Don Mauro Bonzi*, San Paolo, Cinisello Balsamo (Milano) 2018, 156 pp. ISBN 978-88-922-1686-0

Nos encontramos ante la segunda edición de una pequeña biografía del sacerdote *Don Mauro Bonzi* (acusado de colaborar con la resistencia contra los alemanes al final de la II Guerra Mundial y prisionero en Dachau), elaborada por el periodista Saverio Clemente. Creo que se trata de un acierto de la editorial San Pablo, ya que la primera edición de 2011 (Editrice Monti, Saronno) es de difícil acceso y tuvo menor difusión. Como señala uno de los prologuistas, Don Mauro Bonzi pertenece por derecho a esa lista de sacerdotes italianos que, de algún modo, inspiraron a Roberto Rosellini en su *Roma, città aperta*.

Bonzi nació en Legnano en 1904 y fue ordenado sacerdote en Milán en 1928. Tras ocupar varios cargos en la diócesis, fue nombrado Rector del *Collegio Arcivescovile Pio XI* de Desio, donde sería arrestado en abril de 1944.

La causa directa de su detención provoca, todavía hoy, cierta controversia. Al parecer, el motivo concreto fue el hecho de que en dicho colegio se encontrasen unas armas. Don Mauro se declaró responsable, por ser el Rector del Colegio, aunque no sabemos con seguridad si él estaba al tanto de ello, o incluso si él había permitido que las armas se escondiesen allí. Hay quien afirma que las armas habían sido declaradas, pero nunca fueron retiradas, lo que llevaría en último término a su detención. El autor, si bien no se decanta por ninguna teoría, nos advierte de la tentación de juzgar aquellos hechos con criterios pacifistas de nuestros días.

En cualquier caso, esta acusación provocó el arresto del sacerdote. Aunque posteriormente fue liberado por un tiempo, de nuevo sería arrestado el 19 de agosto de 1944 y pasaría a la cárcel de San Vittore en Milán y, más adelante, al *Durchgangslager* o campo de distribución de Bolzano (Bozen) y, por tanto, ya bajo la autoridad de las SS. De allí pasaría el 5 de octubre de 1944 al *Lager* de Dachau, donde permanecería hasta el final de la Guerra.

Las escasas noticias que tenemos de su estancia en Dachau, confirman lo que ya sabemos acerca de la brutalidad que imperaba en el campo y de las condiciones inhumanas del mismo, sobre todo a raíz de la epidemia de tifus que acabaría con cientos de prisioneros en los últimos meses antes de su liberación.

Pese a todo, el autor subraya (siguiendo el testimonio del propio Don Mauro) cómo se instauró entre los clérigos detenidos una cierta fraternidad sacerdotal e incluso un cierto ecumenismo que podríamos calificar “de catacumbas”. Se llegó incluso a idear una *Fraterna Cleri Unio Catholica* que no llegó a cuajar, pero que resulta significativa del ambiente que se respiraba entre los religiosos prisioneros. También se destaca la ambigüedad de ciertos “privilegios” de los que, en determinadas fases de la historia del campo, “gozaron” los sacerdotes. Así, por ejemplo, el hecho de poder usar la capilla (con muchas restricciones, especialmente para los sacerdotes no alemanes) era vivido por muchos, no como un privilegio, sino como un amargo contrasentido que separaba a los sacerdotes del resto de prisioneros. Resultaría interesante comparar esta descripción con otras de sacerdotes y religiosos que insisten en la crueldad con la que se “dosificaban” estos privilegios. Por poner solamente un ejemplo, el carmelita Albert Urbanski en su obra *Duchowni w Dachau* (El clero en Dachau) cuenta cómo los *kapos* obligaban a los sacerdotes a beber en ayunas hasta la última gota del cuartillo de vino que les estuvo asignado durante algunos meses. Muchos de ellos, por la debilidad que sentían, caían mareados y, por ello, consideraban los “privilegios” como una refinada forma de tortura¹.

¹ A. URBANSKI, *Duchowni w Dachau* (Kraków 1945). Esperamos publicarlo próximamente en castellano en la colección *Textos para un Milenio*.

Como les ocurriría a tantos prisioneros tras la liberación del campo (la célebre *Befreiung*) y el entusiasmo de los primeros días, Don Mauro pensó que volvería rápidamente a casa. Sin embargo, las labores de repatriación de los prisioneros serían muy lentas. Por una parte, las comunicaciones estaban en muchos casos totalmente destruidas. Además, se hacía necesario revisar uno a uno la identidad de los presos liberados para que no escapasen entre ellos antiguos criminales de las SS. Y, quizás lo más importante, se hacía necesario establecer un período de cuarentena para que el tifus no se extendiese por media Europa. La larga espera llevó a los prisioneros a un estado de desesperación que queda muy bien reflejado en el testimonio de Don Mauro², quien, junto a otros compañeros, decide fugarse y, tras pasar por muchas peripecias, llega finalmente a Italia. Allí se reencontró con su obispo (el Cardenal Schuster) con quien, al parecer, había tenido algún desacuerdo ya antes de la detención. En el encuentro –frío e incluso desagradable– el Cardenal le recriminó su imprudencia. Tras un breve paso por una parroquia rural, Don Mauro (muy debilitado tras la experiencia del Lager) enfermó y, tras ser sustituido como párroco (quizás con demasiada prisa) murió el 29 de abril de 1947, es decir, justo dos años después de la liberación de Dachau.

Qué duda cabe de que en Dachau, junto a la barbarie, a la brutalidad, al egoísmo y la violencia (incluso entre los mismos prisioneros), hubo también testimonios heroicos de generosidad, de perdón y de dignidad humana. Incluso (y sé que entro en un terreno muy delicado), me atrevería a hablar de una cierta mística, vivida de diversos modos por las almas más genuina, heroica y auténticamente espirituales. Valga como ejemplo esta misma frase de Don Mauro en uno de los artículos que publicó al terminar la Guerra sobre su experiencia en el Lager:

Non celebravamo la Messa. Ma la mattina all'appello quando sul piazzale del campo ventimila uomini doloranti iniziavano la loro giornata di pene inenarrabili, noi stavamo lì per compiere il nostro ufficio di mediatori tra Dio e l'umanità: quel campo brulicante era come una grande patena più preziosa di quelle dorate delle nostre chiese, una patena carica di tutte le atroci sofferenze del mondo, e noi la innalzavamo al cielo implorando pietà e perdono di pace (p. 77).

FERNANDO MILLÁN ROMERAL O.CARM.

² Es un clásico en este sentido el libro de P. LEVI, *La tregua* (Torino 1967). En unas cartas del P. Urbanski que publicó hace unos años en esta misma revista, se puede también intuir el grado de desesperación de los prisioneros liberados que veían cómo pasaban las semanas sin que pudieran retornar a sus casas. Cf. F. MILLÁN ROMERAL, *Carmelitas en Dachau: las cartas del P. A. Urbanski, desde el Lager, en el 50º aniversario de la liberación*: Carmelus 42 (1995) 22-43.

BORRIELLO LUIGI, GAETANI LUIGI (a cura di), *Maria discepola e sorella. Madre di Misericordia*, LEV, Città del Vaticano 2017, 646 pp.

Il corposo volume di oltre 600 pagine presenta gli atti di due Convegni di Mariologia Carmelitana svoltisi nel 2014 a Sassone (Ciampino-Roma) e nel 2016 a Maddaloni (Caserta). Si tratta di una iniziativa portata avanti da entrambi gli Ordini che ha avuto il suo avvio nel 2012 con un primo Convegno svoltosi a Jaddico in Puglia i cui atti sono stati pubblicati sempre dalla LEV in un volume dal titolo *Per una mariologia carmelitana* nella collana *Studi Carmelitani* curata da Luigi Borriello ocd.

Il volume si apre con una presentazione piuttosto estesa del prof. S. Perrella in cui, alla luce di recenti studi, si fa il punto delle ultime acquisizioni mariologiche collegate ai problemi e delle urgenze più attuali del momento, quali ad esempio il tema delle apparizioni e mariofanie, il discorso sulla simbolica, ecc. Il primo dei due convegni, che costituisce la prima parte del volume, si incentra sui due titoli mariani – particolarmente cari al carisma carmelitano – di *discepola e sorella* e comprende ben 12 interventi di varia lunghezza che, con taglio storico e antropologico, mostrano la vicinanza di Maria al piano di Dio (giustificando il titolo discepola) e alla dimensione umana (consolidando il tema della sororità propria di Maria svolta nei nostri confronti). Il testo si apre con il contributo della prof.ssa C. Militello, da lungo tempo impegnata nell'affrontare le tematiche femminili nella teologia e soprattutto nell'ecclesiologia, che sotto il titolo *Maria di Nazareth, donna mediterranea*, insiste sul ruolo unificatore che Maria svolge nei confronti delle tre religioni monoteiste facendo sì che Maria – si augura l'autrice – possa divenire paradigma di una ritrovata dignità di uomini e donne oltre la fede politica e religiosa, per far emergere la dignità della persona nella sua globalità.

A questa apertura di natura antropologica seguono i contributi di natura biblica (C. Pagliara), ecumenica (G. Cereti) per poi entrare nella dimensione storica attraverso l'epoca patristica medievale e moderna (L. Di Girolamo - G. Grosso) al fine di descrivere la recezione e la modulazione dei due titoli in questione (discepola e sorella) attraverso le varie epoche.

Nel successivo contributo (*Santa Maria di Nazareth, sorella e amica di futuro*) S. Perrella fa il punto sulla dimensione dogmatica e sistematica relativa a Maria esaminando soprattutto il titolo sorella partendo dalla Bolla *Misericordiae vultus* di papa Francesco. Si tratta di un lungo contributo nel quale l'autore pone insieme varie voci che costituiscono il panorama teologico attuale.

I restanti interventi a questo Convegno – raggruppati nella sezione finale della prima parte – toccano alcune figure specifiche del Carmelo (nei suoi due rami) quali il medievale G. Baconthorpe (M. Alfarano), la grande S. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi (A. Neglia), il mistico Giovanni di San Sansone (C. Camilleri) e le tre grandi figure del Carmelo teresiano (Elisabetta della Trinità e Teresa Benedetta della Croce curate entrambe da A. L'Afflitto e Teresa di

Lisieux curata da L. Borriello), ognuna con i propri tratti distintivi. Emerge perciò un ampio mosaico di voci che rendono ragione e scendono nel dettaglio sull'uso e sulla diffusione di tali titoli in seno alla famiglia carmelitana, guardandone anche lo svolgimento storico-teologico.

La seconda parte del volume con i suoi 7 contributi, corredati dalla conclusione affidata ancora alla prof.ssa C. Militello, prende in esame il dato della misericordia, anche in relazione all'Anno Giubilare ad essa dedicato e voluto dall'attuale pontefice. Come per la prima parte, si segue lo schema consolidato in cui al percorso biblico e quindi storico si affiancano tematiche specifiche o personalità particolari relative al binomio Maria-Misericordia. Rispetto al precedente convegno, questo è apparso più concentrato anche nella stesura dei contributi. Infatti dopo aver dato voce alla parola di Dio articolata nell'AT (C. Pagliara) e nel NT (A. Farca) si ripropongono i percorsi che dall'epoca patristica e moderna (L. Di Girolamo - G. Grosso) arrivano alle soglie del Vaticano II le cui acquisizioni sono illustrate da A. L'Afflitto e S. Perrella. Il primo pone sotto il denominatore comune della misericordia i due dogmi mariani del XIX e XX secolo (Immacolato Concepimento e Gloriosa Assunzione), il secondo pone invece in correlazione il Dio-Misericordia con Maria che ne diviene e ne resta la destinataria singolare e principale. Entrambi i contributi mostrano abbondante documentazione.

Particolare rilievo viene successivamente dato, da parte di P. F. Léthel, al p. Marcello della Vergine del Carmelo (al secolo Boldizsar Marton, religioso del Carmelo teresiano vissuto tra il 1887 ed il 1966) e al ruolo che, nel suo pensiero e nella sua esistenza, ha svolto la *Mater misericordiae*

L'interessante conclusione del volume redatta dalla prof.ssa C. Militello, oltre ad essere una sintesi delle tematiche emerse nel convegno sulla *Mater misericordiae* e a fornire un giudizio positivo sull'articolazione dei contributi, guarda all'insieme dei due convegni come piattaforma dalla quale partire per affrontare ed esplorare, con l'aiuto e l'ascolto dello Spirito Santo, altri terreni che possono allontanare da un certo deleterio ristagno e da una presentazione manchevole (soprattutto sul piano ecclesiologico) e non rispettosa dell'incidenza che il mistero di Maria possiede nella vita del Carmelo e dell'intera Chiesa. A questo proposito, la pista iconografica suggerita dalla prof.ssa Militello appare ottimale nell'incrementare l'interesse su Maria nella tradizione carmelitana e, più in generale, in quella della Chiesa. Si tratta di un *input* assai prezioso, offerto dall'autrice, che dovrebbe essere raccolto per la prosecuzione dell'iniziativa che, voluta da L. Borriello con suoi collaboratori e partecipanti ai tre Convegni (da menzionare anche la presenza di laici e suore ocam e ocd), ha mosso i primi passi con buon successo.

C'è da osservare che tutti gli studi di entrambe le sezioni sono assai documentati con note talvolta molto corpose, ma in alcuni casi non sempre, sul piano metodologico, rispettosissime dell'omogeneità dei caratteri.

Un volume, quindi, ricco che può servire per ulteriori e personali approfondimenti.

LUCA M. DI GIROLAMO OSM

EVA MOZES KOR, *Ad Auschwitz ho imparato il perdono. Una storia di liberazione*, Sperling & Kupfer, 2017, 216 pp. ISBN 978-88-200-6277-4

Nos encontramos ante la traducción italiana del testimonio sobrecogedor de una de las llamadas “niñas de Mengele”, el célebre médico que seleccionaba gemelos para sus experimentos en Auschwitz. Sin embargo, no es esto lo que distingue a esta obra de Eva Mozes Kor de otros testimonios y relatos del terrible universo concentracionario. Nuestra autora ha dedicado gran parte de su vida a promover el perdón, a no dejar que el odio y el resentimiento sean los que se impongan en la vida de los supervivientes y, en definitiva, aunque en menor medida, en la de todos nosotros.

De hecho, el título original de la obra en alemán, es muy significativo: *Die Macht der Vergebens* (“el poder del perdón”) y esa es la tesis que ella defiende en este libro: el perdón tiene una fuerza sanadora y liberadora que puede llegar a superar la negatividad del rencor y del odio.

La obra comienza con el encuentro (muchos años después de terminar la guerra) con Hans Münch, uno de los doctores nazis del *Lager*. Este encuentro (que no fue bien entendido ni aceptado por muchos supervivientes) cambió su forma de ver su pasado y la convirtió en una especie de activista del perdón.

En Auschwitz Eva perdió a toda su familia (judíos rumanos, pero de lengua húngara), excepto a su hermana gemela. En la tristemente célebre rampa de la estación, donde se separaban en décimas de segundo los que iban directamente a la cámara de gas de los que todavía podían hacer algún trabajo, alguien se dio cuenta de que eran dos gemelas y las separó para que pudieran servir de cobayas humanas en los experimentos dirigidos por Josef Mengele. Tras sufrir estos experimentos y pasar por diversas peripecias, Ana y su hermana sobreviven, pero acabarían sufriendo en su tierra (un caso paradigmático) la represión del comunismo, por lo que decide irse a Terre Haute en los Estados Unidos. Allí fundará un pequeño museo del holocausto y la asociación CANDLES (*Children of Auschwitz Nazi deadly Lab Experiments Survivors*).

Pero la actividad fundamental de Eva Mozes Kor fue la de dar conferencias, escribir artículos y organizar pequeños talleres promoviendo el perdón. Indudablemente, se trata de una tarea más que loable, noble y heroica si tenemos en cuenta que viene de una superviviente del holocausto. Intentar cuestionarla sería en cierto modo inmoral. Pero también es verdad que un perdón general, indiscriminado, a priori, como en algunos momentos la autora parece defender, podría suponer también una nueva ofensa para las víctimas (más cruel si cabe) y una cierta banalización del mal. Uno tiene la sensación de que a veces confunde perdón con sanación personal y con “estar bien” (*el perdón es puro egoísmo* llega a afirmar en la página 139) o con una amnistía. Ciertamente se trata de una postura válida que lleva a la autora a mostrar su dominio del pasado e invita a todos a conseguir así ser dueños de la propia vida y que el verdugo no nos reduzca a víctimas para siempre (págs.

124 y 136). No es de extrañar que su postura fuera criticada desde el mundo judío (muy reacio al perdón en nombre de las víctimas) y desde ciertas posiciones filosóficas y éticas. Se haría indispensable, en mi modesta opinión, analizar su postura desde el análisis ineludible de Vladimir Jankélévitch³, o desde el amplio panel de respuestas diversas que recogió Simon Wiesenthal en su obra sobre el perdón⁴, por poner solamente dos ejemplos clásicos.

Sin duda estamos ante un testimonio valiosísimo y no solamente porque toca algunos de los grandes temas del mundo concentracionario: los *musulmanes*, la deshumanización, la llamada *culpabilidad del superviviente* (que ella rechaza y califica como “*sciocchezze*”), la “indecibilidad” de la experiencia del *Lager*, la supuesta responsabilidad colectiva de los alemanes, etc., sino porque plantea desde una posición muy neta el tema siempre delicado del perdón. Podemos no compartir su planteamiento, pero no cabe duda de la nobleza del mismo.

FERNANDO MILLÁN ROMERAL, O.CARM.

MARÍA JESÚS FERNÁNDEZ CORDERO, *Juan de Ávila (1499?-1569). Tiempo, vida y espiritualidad*, Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, Madrid 2017. Pp. 922, ISBN: 978-84-220-1948-0.

Este libro de María Jesús Fernández Cordero –profesora en la Universidad Pontificia Comillas (Madrid)– sobre San Juan de Ávila viene a cubrir una carencia importante sobre la vida del Santo Maestro: una vida del Santo Doctor en donde se relaciona su biografía con el contexto histórico y su espiritualidad. Hasta ahora sólo teníamos biografías parciales desde las que era difícil penetrar no sólo en los datos biográficos sino en el contexto histórico en que se producían y lo que es más importante, en las motivaciones espirituales que las provocaban. Se puede afirmar que la autora ha logrado este objetivo con amplitud favoreciendo una presentación bastante integral de San Juan de Ávila. Otro valor importante es ofrecer una biografía no predeterminada por búsquedas de aspectos concretos –sacerdote, director de almas, reformador, etc. – sino dejándose guiar directamente por los datos hasta ahora conocidos del Juan de Ávila que existió y que vivió todas estas facetas; y señalando los aspectos que permanecen todavía en duda o simplemente los que se desconocen. Hasta ahora la biografía más completa, y de la que han bebido casi todos los estudiosos es la de Sala Balust enriquecida con las aportaciones de Martín Hernández, a las que se han sumado en aspectos concretos otras aparecidas sobre todo en el contexto de su proclamación como Doctor de la Iglesia en

³ V. JANKÉLÉVITCH, *Le Pardon* (Paris 1967); Véase al respecto el sugerente estudio de: M^a. D. LÓPEZ GUZMÁN, *Desafíos del perdón después de Auschwitz. Reflexiones de Jankélévitch desde la Shoa* (Madrid 2010).

⁴ S. WIESENTHAL, *Los límites del perdón* (Barcelona 1998).

2012. Todas ellas han sido tenidas en cuenta por la autora, analizándolas minuciosamente y llegando lo más posible a la persona de Juan de Ávila en su integralidad. Era necesaria una biografía interdisciplinar y María Jesús Fernández nos la ofrece muy acertadamente. Queda camino por recorrer, camino que incluso ella va señalando para ulteriores investigaciones. Pero sin duda este libro será imprescindible para conocer mejor a Juan de Ávila como persona, joven cristiano, sacerdote, testigo del amor de Dios, místico, director espiritual, discernidor vocacional, evangelizador incansable, reformador de la Iglesia y de la sociedad desde una clara opción por los pobres no excluyente, etc.

Además de las biografías tenidas en cuenta, la autora ha estudiado la multitud de publicaciones aparecidas hasta el día de la publicación del libro, valorando las aportaciones de cada una de ellas, señalando los puntos hasta ahora en discusión, las aportaciones de unos y de otros y los argumentos que esgrimen y tomando en algunos de los casos las conclusiones que le parecen mejor argumentadas, dejando abiertas a posteriores investigaciones las que no encuentran todavía argumentos de evidencia. De ahí que aborde cuestiones como el discutido origen judeoconverso de su familia, sobre todo por parte de padre y su posible influencia en su vida, si perteneció o no a alguna Congregación u orden tercera siendo estudiante en Salamanca, el papel que pudiera jugar su posible origen para no coger el barco para misionar en América o si fue por estricta obediencia el arzobispo de Sevilla, el porqué no llegó a entrar en la Compañía de Jesús aún teniendo tan estrecha amistad con San Ignacio de Loyola, etc. Esto hace que la aproximación a San Juan de Ávila se haya realizado con un exquisito rigor histórico.

El extenso libro de 922 páginas consta de una larga y completa Introducción (pp. xix-xciv) en que la autora centra los objetivos del estudio y la necesidad existente de ofrecer esta panorámica interdisciplinar del Santo Maestro. A ella le siguen seis capítulos en los que va desgranando tanto la vida, como el ambiente histórico y la espiritualidad del Santo Doctor. En el primero describe especialmente el tiempo en que vivió San Juan de Ávila, desde la infancia hasta su muerte en 1569, tiempo tan extenso y decisivo para nuestra historia y que va desde los Reyes Católicos hasta Felipe II. El segundo capítulo está dedicado a la infancia, juventud y formación del joven Juan de Ávila hasta su ordenación sacerdotal y sus comienzos del ministerio en Sevilla después de, por obediencia al arzobispo, no pasar como evangelizador a América, como habría sido su deseo. El tercero analiza los comienzos de su predicación deteniéndose muy especialmente en cómo, ya desde joven, se configura con los sufrimientos de Cristo debido a su fidelidad al Evangelio, a los problemas con la Inquisición y a sus enfermedades. En el cuarto capítulo presenta toda su actividad apostólica describiendo por orden cronológico los lugares y actividades, comenzando por Córdoba, siguiendo por Granada, Baeza, Jerez, y toda la geografía andaluza, parte de la extremeña y su influencia en Portugal y Castilla. Con razón San Juan de Ávila es conocido como el Apóstol de Andalucía. Mención especial se hace a la relación con la

Compañía de Jesús y con Teresa de Jesús, así como la influencia de sus discípulos en la vida de la Iglesia, no sólo en la actividad orante, sino en el mundo de la marginación. En el capítulo quinto nos presenta la autora las facetas más importantes del rico y variado ministerio pastoral de San Juan de Ávila, deteniéndose en aspectos como el de humanista, reformador y guía y maestro espiritual. En el sexto y último capítulo se analiza su teología espiritual, aspecto novedoso en las biografías al uso. En él presenta María Jesús Fernández con acierto su experiencia de la gracia, su concepción de Jesucristo como único mediador y bien verdadero, el aspecto eucarístico de su espiritualidad, su concepción del sacerdocio en la Iglesia entendido como ofrenda permanente y servicio y terminando y reconociendo que toda la obra de San Juan de Ávila es una verdadera teología mística experimentada y predicada. Es de agradecer la completa bibliografía que nos ofrece al final, toda ella utilizada por la autora y estudiada con detenimiento hasta la fecha de la publicación del libro. Siendo esto otro de sus grandes valores. Y en un libro tan extenso resulta muy útil el exhaustivo índice de lugares y autores, que sin duda facilita su consulta con rapidez. Creo que estamos ante un libro que era muy necesario y que es absolutamente imprescindible para todos aquellos que quieran adentrarse en el conocimiento de San Juan de Ávila. La autora ha sabido recoger lo que hasta la fecha se ha publicado y ha conseguido hilar y presentar con una exhaustiva investigación la vida, el contexto histórico y la espiritualidad de quien ha sido una de las grandes figuras de la Iglesia no sólo del siglo XVI sino de todos los tiempos, Juan de Ávila, Doctor de la Iglesia universal.

FRANCISCO JAVIER DÍAZ LORIT

PATRIZI, MARIA ELISABETTA, *La dottrina mariana di s. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi*, Tau Editrice, Assisi 2016, 100 p.

Nell'affrontare il pensiero di una figura insigne per santità anche in una pubblicazione a carattere divulgativo occorrerebbe avere ben presenti alcuni tratti fondamentali che riguardano tanto la forma di una pubblicazione quanto il contenuto, soprattutto se si trattano temi specifici. La presente pubblicazione, diciamo subito, lascia un po' interdetti per la carenza anzitutto di una Bibliografia recente (almeno orientativa) contenente i titoli di tante pubblicazioni che sono apparse sulla santa. La stessa autrice che, sulla base della tesi di E. Ancilli, afferma che, dal 1607 al 1967, sono apparse 500 opere sulla santa, forse dimentica che è stato celebrato, nel 2007, il 400° anniversario della morte, occasione in cui volumi, articoli di riviste scientifiche e altri testi (scientifici e divulgativi) hanno contribuito a vivificarne la memoria. Il presente volume è del 2016 quindi dal 2007 sono intercorsi 9 anni: un tempo abbastanza esteso per documentarsi su un autore specifico del quale si vuole si vuole redigere una monografia anche a carattere divulgativo. In particolare,

per quel 400° anniversario è da menzionare un Convegno svoltosi tra Roma e Firenze dove fu allestita una mostra con un catalogo nel quale oltre alla parte didascalica che accompagnava i quadri figuravano anche contributi di indubbio valore (anche per le note). L'illustrazione teologica della tematica mariana resta perciò limitata in quanto contrassegnata negativamente dalla mancata consultazione a testi e studi sul tema affrontato e che avrebbero potuto facilitarne un ulteriore approfondimento. Il fatto che «resta ancora tanto da approfondire. E ciò vale anche per la dottrina mariana di questa Santa» (p. 13), non doveva restare solo al livello di pura constatazione, ma impegno a leggere qualche altra pubblicazione, oltre alla tesi di F. Candelori risalente ormai a 32 anni fa, e saperla utilizzare in modo tale da offrire una riflessione che oltrepassasse il puro dato biografico della santa, anche se, ciò va detto, i cenni biografici sono lodevolmente condotti e documentati. Fra gli autori citati nelle sole note (in quanto manca un elenco bibliografico che si rende necessario e sarebbe orientativo anche in pubblicazioni divulgative), ad esempio, non si nomina neppure l'importante p. Bruno Secondin autore non solo di un notevole volume, ma anche di altri sulla santa alla quale poi ha dedicato anni ed anni di studio... Inoltre altri autori da F. Candelori (che difese una tesi sulla santa presso la Pontificia Facoltà "Marianum") in avanti hanno affrontato il tema mariano presente negli scritti della santa. Di tutto ciò silenzio assoluto!

La vera illustrazione teologica (giacché il titolo della pubblicazione recita "Dottrina mariana") si riduce paradossalmente ad una sorta di glossario dove alfabeticamente vengono elencati una serie di termini-chiave (con telegrafiche didascalie) ai quali sono associati alcuni testi della santa, oppure di carte e di voci del monastero. Illustrare in questo modo il pensiero di una esistenza teologica così complessa come è stata S. Maria Maddalena de Pazzi è, a nostro avviso, molto limitativo, perché manca il collegamento ad un discorso più ampio e tematico che poteva esser fatto, e non restando sul piano della pura elencazione. Faccio un esempio che poteva essere diversamente illustrato: a p. 30 si parla di Maria, figura della Chiesa chiamando in causa e citando *Lumen gentium* n. 64, ma la domanda che sorge spontanea: dove S. Maria Maddalena ha istituito tale comparazione? Li andava subito collocata una opportuna citazione a sostegno di quanto si andava argomentando.

Da aggiungere un ulteriore motivo di critica alla grafica molto diversificata (i grassetti, a nostro avviso appesantiscono la lettura) e la poca omogeneità presente nelle note. Se si voleva supportare l'idea di un dottorato della Chiesa da tributare alla santa mistica carmelitana, idea avanzata da Don Divo Barsotti nella sua nota pubblicazione dal titolo *Il mio cammino con S. Maria Maddalena de' Pazzi*, lo si doveva attuare con illustrazioni ed argomentazioni più approfondite.

Un lavoro che forse sarà stato animato da buona intenzione, ma è oggettivamente inficiato da gran superficialità ed è un peccato perché se si ama e se si vuol porre all'attenzione una figura insigne occorre avere quel minimo

di buon senso e di ricerca che aiuta non poco la redazione di simili testi e dà ragione e validità al tema trattato.

LUCA M. DI GIROLAMO, OSM

PETER TYLER, EDWARD HOWELLS, (EDS.) *Teresa of Avila: Mystical theology and spirituality in the Carmelite tradition*, London & New York: Routledge, 2017. Pp. 153. ISBN 978-1-4724-7884-9.

This remarkable collection of ten academic papers was presented at a three-day conference held at St. Mary's University, Twickenham, in 2015 to celebrate the 500th anniversary of St. Teresa of Avila's birth. The book brings together outstanding contributions, including some from international figures, covering several areas of Teresian research including medieval studies, philosophy, psychology and pastoral and systematic theology. The collection also includes the final contribution to the conference which was a presentation by three Carmelite nuns who offered a rare insight into their own understanding and experience of living the ideal that Teresa proposed. This book would make an important addition to any Carmelite or theological library. The studies have been arranged for this publication in three sections: the context, the impact and the 21st century relevance of Teresa.

The context is developed in three papers looking at the influence of St. Augustine (Professor Bernard Mc Ginn), the antecedents in the medieval tradition who influenced Teresa (Dr. Edward Howells) and a discussion of the roots of the Carmelite ideal through a study of the hermits of Mount Carmel and the written sources of early developments which were known to Teresa. (Fr. Wilfrid McGreal, O.Carm.).

Dr. Rowan Williams opens the section on Teresa's impact with a study of her Eucharistic understanding in the context of the Reformation, and the appeal she has, and has had, beyond the Roman Catholic Church. He sees her distinctive Eucharistic themes as continuing to provide material for a deeper 'Eucharistic conversation' (p. 74). The second contribution in this section is from two Carmelite friars, Fr. Matthew Blake, O.C.D., and Fr. Iain Matthew, O.C.D. Father Blake analyses her vocation as a foundress, relating this 'rare gift' (p. 81) in Teresa to a universal possibility to be open to the call of God. Father Matthew puts forward Teresa's intimate prayer in the context of the Resurrection of Jesus through his 'accessibility, availability [and] aliveness' (p. 82).

In considering Teresa's relevance in the 21st century, the conference heard, by a television link, the French philosopher Julia Kristeva recount her own deep relationship with Teresa for more than 10 years which culminated in her book *Thérèse mon amour*. As a Freudian and post-Freudian psychologist, she saw Teresa as 500 years ahead of her time by elucidating 'that strange experience which is at the boundaries of meaning and sensation,

body and soul together: the secrets of writing. At these extremities Teresa is our contemporary.' (p. 105).

Professor Gilliam Ahlgren identified the links between theology and spirituality which is so evident in Teresa's writing. She pointed out the Jesuit influences on Teresa, but states that Teresa 'moves Ignatian spiritual practices into the deeper realms that perhaps Ignatius lived but certainly never wrote about.' (p. 110). The contemporary relevance of Teresa's insistence that good works are the outcome of prayer means that partnership with God is not simply an internal experience but a whole 'way of being in the world' (p. 118).

The final contribution in the book comes from three Carmelite nuns. Sister Jo Robson, O.C.D., began by noting what she sees as a 'disconnect' between academic study and those who continue to live the Teresian charism, suggesting the urgency in this postmodern society to establish a link (p. 121). She noted how Teresa 'never ceased to insist on the primacy of the nuns' lived experience', adding that this does not mean the nuns live in 'living museums of 16th-century Spain' (p. 122). To illustrate possibilities for a dialogue, two other nuns offered contemporary comment. Sister Mary of St. Joseph, O.C.D., examined the contrast between the busy nature of modern life and the rhythm of life in Carmel and the freedom of prayer 'which can be bewildering, even paralysing, if you come from a world wherein everything has to be evaluated, boxes have to be ticked, and stars 1 to 5 have to be allocated.' (p. 124). This, she said, is far from Teresa's advice on prayer in the *Way of Perfection*: 'Just look at him.' Sister Philomena Sergeant, O.C.D., commented on the particular difficulties for novices today coming 'from a culture where extreme autonomy or individualism is the norm, where consumerism gives people their value, and where there is a subtle pressure to conform, to the accepted norms of casual sex or drug abuse. The concepts of community and lifelong commitment are particularly challenging today.' (p. 127). She pointed out the courage needed to grow in the self-knowledge which is both painful and liberating. Her final comment is on living in community which 'is the ground of all else and the very heart of Christianity itself.' (p. 129).

In the final contribution in this book, Sr. Jo Robson, O.C.D., draws together the possibilities for dialogue between premodern tradition and postmodern thought, where neither can be ignored. This is reflected in the teaching and practice of St. Teresa herself, who was 'thoroughly embedded in, and alert to, the social and cultural specificity of her own period, and indeed when she sought a restoration of the values and conditions of the primitive Carmel this was no flight of nostalgic sentimentality, but a hard-nosed recognition that those principles and circumstances could facilitate a realistic and effective response to the urgent needs of her own era.' (p. 135).

This wide-ranging book offers stimulus for further study in the areas covered, and considerable material for further reflection and study on the life, writing and impact of Teresa of Avila.

SHEILA GRIMWOOD

JOSÉ MANUEL QUEROL, *Swing para un futuro incierto*, Ediciones Evohé, 2018, 249 pp., ISBN 978-84-948985-1-8.

Nos encontramos ante una interesantísima novela cuyo argumento se desarrolla en los últimos años (convulsos y terribles) de la II Guerra Mundial. A través de sus páginas, vamos siguiendo (intuyendo, rastreando) la vida de dos espías que se deslizan entre las fronteras, los ejércitos y las batallas de forma escurridiza en un juego de identidades y contraespionajes realmente fascinante.

José Manuel Querol es (entre otras muchas cosas) antiguo alumno de los carmelitas en Madrid y ha publicado diversos ensayos sobre los neofascismos de nuestros días, así como sobre diversos temas de literatura comparada. Hace años publicó en esta misma revista un interesante artículo sobre el mito de Elías en las leyendas elianas medievales, sobre todo en relación con la figura del “caballero del cisne”⁵. En este caso, el autor nos introduce en su novela en un complejo mundo de relaciones y de falsas identidades. Quizás el único hilo de Ariadna que nos guía por este mundo laberíntico y caótico sea la música. A lo largo de sus páginas (ya desde el mismo título) la novela nos va haciendo recordar canciones paradigmáticas de aquella época: *Die Moritat von Mackie Messer*, *Das Mädchen unter der Laterne* –que pasaría a la posteridad como *Lili Marleen*–, *Les feuilles mortes*, o *Bei mirh bist du schön*, cantada incluso por los nazis, aunque era de origen *yiddish*. El *Swing* se convierte así en un símbolo de rebeldía que confirmaría lo que señala uno de los personajes: *Es curioso que nuestra vida sean canciones, viejas canciones encadenadas...* (pág. 55), o lo que sospecha otro de ellos: *la música es lo único que hace la vida soportable* (pág. 192).

Los protagonistas (que a su vez se desdoblán constantemente en una serie de identidades falsas o ambiguas) son dos agentes dobles o triples: Marie-Chantal, filóloga, astuta, culta, que llega a casarse con un oficial alemán y que trabaja a la vez para ingleses y alemanes; y su amante (intermitente) Joseph, español, filólogo y demócrata algo desencantado (¡la imposibilidad de la Tercera España!) que estuvo, entre otras, en la guerra de Marruecos. Pero ellos son también Juan Lobo y Marie Fenchel... y otros muchos. En el paroxismo final de este juego de identidades, la pareja de espías se habría trasladado en el tiempo con el artificio que varios científicos al servicio de los nazis habrían desarrollado, tras meses de trabajo secreto, en las últimas horas de la Guerra... y aparecerán de nuevo viviendo plácidamente en Formentera y negociando el contrato del segundo volumen de sus memorias con un editor americano.

Quizás por ello (para ayudar al lector despistado), Querol introduce al final de su novela una especie de *Dramatis Personae*, con fotos incluidas, que puede ayudar al lector a ubicarse y a identificar a los personajes principales

⁵ J.M. QUEROL, *Helyas, Elías y los cisnes: notas sobre la transmisión de una materia poética*: Carmelus 44 (1997) 105-124.

(algunos rigurosamente históricos, otros menos) que se esconden tras los cortinajes del contraespionaje y de la realidad hecha añicos por las bombas.

Con ello, el autor nos va convenciendo sutilmente de que *la identidad es una masa blanda y transparente, moldeable por el miedo* (pág. 72), mensaje, sin duda, provocativo y profético (permítaseme la expresión) en este mundo nuestro de exaltación de lo identitario, de nacionalismos históricos y de xenofobias vociferantes o tácitas...

La novela abunda en datos históricos y culturales del período en el que se desarrolla. Por sus páginas deambulan con cierto desparpajo el Almirante Wilhelm Canaris y Victor Klemperer, Bertolt Brecht, Albert Speer y Martin Heidegger, Andreu Nin, Madame Blavatsky y María Orsitsch, Adolf Eichmann y Hannah Arendt... entre otros muchos. Lo que quizás para un lector poco interesado en el contexto histórico pueda resultar excesivamente erudito, es, sin embargo, muy sugerente para el que sea aficionado a buscar conexiones culturales, políticas, filosóficas o literarias en medio de aquella trama endiablada de la Europa de los años 30 y de la Guerra.

Por poner solamente dos ejemplos, llaman la atención los dos discursos de la propaganda nazi interceptados por los espías británicos acerca de la Navidad: solsticio de invierno, *Julfest*, germanidad, elfos, sangre alemana, ceremonia del fuego... que me han recordado mucho a lo que contaba en su breve *Autobiografía* el entonces Cardenal Ratzinger⁶. Igualmente, Querol presenta muy bien (de forma indirecta) el drama de la ciudad de Dresde (donde Schiller escribió la *Oda a la alegría* que luego usó Beethoven para su IX Sinfonía), bombardeada de forma inmisericorde, sistemática e incluso innecesaria cuando la guerra estaba ya prácticamente terminada.

Y es que en los contornos de la II Guerra Mundial, en la caída inminente del III Reich, ya se empieza a entrever una nueva guerra. El creciente poder de Rusia en la Europa destruida del Este y el paternalismo americano en la del Oeste, sugieren un nuevo tablero de tensiones que se hará evidente cuando termine la Guerra. Se cumple así esa imagen afortunada y audaz del autor: el siglo XX es un desagüe trágico en el que cada guerra (la de España, la de Europa, la II Guerra Mundial) era absorbida por una guerra mayor.

En definitiva, nos encontramos ante una interesantísima novela, en la que José Manuel Querol consigue inquietarnos, intrigarnos, preguntarnos acerca de muchas cosas y sospechar con uno de sus personajes que *la vida es una novela insegura que no sabe acercarse a su final* (pág 23). No es ese el caso de *Swing para un futuro incierto*, cuya intriga nos lleva hasta el final de la novela con el deseo compulsivo de pasar una y otra página.

FERNANDO MILLÁN ROMERAL, O.CARM.

⁶ J. RATZINGER, *Mi vida. Autobiografía* (Madrid 2006) 53-54.

DE EXTERNO COMMENTARIORUM APPARATU
PRO SCRIPTORIBUS IN EPHEMERIDIBUS "CARMELUS" INSTRUCTIO

NORME EDITORIALI PER *CARMELUS*

1. Lunghezza dell'articolo: da 25.000 a 75.000 caratteri circa (inclusi spazi e note), su carta A4.

2. Note: le note vanno messe a pie' di pagina; vi preghiamo di indicare sempre questi dati bibliografici: Nome/i, Cognome/i (maiuscoletto), titolo in corsivo e altre informazioni, città, edizione o casa editrice, anno, pagina/e.

Esempio: JOACHIM SMET, *The Carmelites: A History of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel*, Volume 1, *Ca. 1200 until the Council of Trent*, Revised Edition, Darien-Ill., Carmelite Spiritual Center, 1988, 29.

Quando lo stesso autore viene citato nella nota immediatamente successiva, si scrive solamente: *Ibid.* e pagina.

Esempio:

¹ JOACHIM SMET, *The Carmelites: A History of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel*, Volume 1, *Ca. 1200 until the council of Trent*, Revised Edition, Darien-Ill., Carmelite Spiritual Center, 1988, 29.

² *Ibid.*, 31.

Se lo stesso autore viene citato nuovamente dopo una o più note, si prega di indicare: iniziale del Nome Cognome/i, titolo principale, (volume se esiste) e pagina.

Esempio: J. SMET, *The Carmelites*, vol. 1, 35.

Quando la nota viene presa da un periodico, si prega di scrivere: Nome/i, Cognome/i, titolo in corsivo, il nome del periodico in corsivo e preceduto da "in" e altre informazioni, anno tra parentesi e pagina.

Esempio: GREGORIO NOVAK, *L'alleanza veneto-serba nel secolo XIV*, in *Archivio veneto-tridentino*, 8 (1925), 29.

Quando in una nota si fa riferimento ad un sito internet, si indica: il sito, URL del sito e la data dell'accesso.

Esempio: La Santa Sede, http://www.vatican.va/news_services/or/or_eng/text.html#3, 16 Aprile 2008.

Per i testi patristici, i manoscritti, le fonti d'archivio e altre fonti, si prega di seguire le norme correnti.

3. Bibliografia: è consigliabile aggiungerla, soprattutto se aggiunge materiale interessante per l'approfondimento del tema. Non serve se ripete i testi già indicati nelle note.

4. Lingue: francese, inglese, italiano, portoghese, spagnolo e tedesco.
5. Ogni articolo in lingua inglese, italiana e spagnola deve essere accompagnato da un sommario (*abstract*); per gli articoli in lingua francese, portoghese e tedesca si prega di scrivere un sommario (*abstract*) in una delle tre lingue: inglese, italiano e spagnolo.
6. Ogni articolo deve essere consegnato entro 30 aprile. Gli articoli che arrivano dal mese di maggio in poi, verranno pubblicati nel volume dell'anno successivo. Gli articoli possono essere inviati via e-mail (consigliabile), oppure spediti, insieme alla copia stampata, in cd, o in dischetto.

Queste norme saranno valide per *CARMELUS* dal 2009.

Grazie,

NORMAS EDITORIALES PARA *CARMELUS*

1. Extensión del artículo: de 25.000 a 75.000 caracteres (incluyendo espacios en blanco y notas), en folio A4.

2. Notas: las notas se ponen a pie de página; se ruega indicar siempre los siguientes datos bibliográficos: Nombre/-es, Apellido/-os, título en cursiva y otras informaciones, ciudad, edición o casa editorial, año, página/-as.

Ejemplo: JOACHIM SMET, *The Carmelites: A History of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel*, Volume 1, *Ca. 1200 until the Council of Trent*, Revised Edition, Darien-Ill., Carmelite Spiritual Center, 1988, 29.

Cuando el mismo autor es citado en la nota inmediatamente sucesiva, se escribe solamente: *Ibid.* y página/-as. Ejemplo:

¹ JOACHIM SMET, *The Carmelites: A History of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel*, Volume 1, *Ca. 1200 until the council of Trent*, Revised Edition, Darien-Ill., Carmelite Spiritual Center, 1988, 29.

² *Ibid.*, 31.

Si el mismo autor es citado de nuevo después de una o más notas, se ruega indicar: inicial del Nombre/es Apellido/-os, título principal, (volumen, si existe) y página/-as.

Ejemplo: J. SMET, *The Carmelites*, vol. 1, 35.

Cuando la nota se toma de un periódico, se ruega escribir: Nombre/-es, Apellido/-os, título en cursiva, el nombre del periódico en cursiva y precedido de "en" y otras informaciones, año entre paréntesis y página.

Ejemplo: GREGORIO NOVAK, *L'alleanza veneto-serba nel secolo XIV*, en *Archivio veneto-tridentino*, 8 (1925), 29.

Cuando en una nota se hace referencia a un portal de internet, se indica: el portal, URL del portal y la fecha en que se ha accedido al mismo.

Ejemplo: La Santa Sede, http://www.vatican.va/news_services/or/or_eng/text.html#3, 16 Aprile 2008.

Para los textos patrísticos, los manuscritos, las fuentes de archivos y otras fuentes, se ruega atenerse a las normas corrientes.

3. Bibliografía: se aconseja añadirla, sobre todo si aporta material interesante para profundizar el tema tratado. No sirve si repite los textos que ya han sido indicados en las notas.

4. Lenguas: francés, inglés, italiano, portugués, español y alemán.

5. Todo artículo en lengua inglesa, italiana y española, tiene que ir acompañado de un sumario (*abstract*); para los artículos en lengua francesa, portuguesa y alemana, se ruega escribir un sumario (*abstract*) en una de las tres lenguas: inglés, italiano y español.

6. Los artículos tienen que ser entregados antes 30 abril. Aquellos que lleguen a partir del mes de mayo, serán publicados en el volumen del año sucesivo. Los artículos pueden ser enviados por e-mail (que es lo más aconsejable y práctico), o bien remitidos, junto con una copia impresa, en CD o en disquete.

Estas normas serán válidas para *CARMELUS* a partir de 2009.

Gracias,

CARMELUS STYLE SHEET

1. Articles should be from 25.000 to 75.000 characters in length (including spaces and notes), and formatted for A4 paper.

2. Notes: Notes should be placed at the foot of the page. For references to books you are asked to indicate the following bibliographical data: author name and surname(s), title in italics, city, edition and publisher, year, page(s).

Example: JOACHIM SMET, *The Carmelites: A History of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel*, Volume 1, *Ca. 1200 until the Council of Trent*, Revised Edition, Darien-Ill., Carmelite Spiritual Center, 1988, 29.

When the same author is cited again in the immediately succeeding note, use *Ibid.* (and page).

Example:

¹ JOACHIM SMET, *The Carmelites: A History of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel*, Volume 1, *Ca. 1200 until the Council of Trent*, Revised Edition, Darien-Ill., Carmelite Spiritual Center, 1988, 29.

² *Ibid.*, 31.

If the same author is again cited after one or more intervening notes, please give a brief reference indicating author name, main title, (volume, if necessary), page.

Example: J. SMET, *The Carmelites*, vol. 1, 35.

When the note refers to a periodical, please give author name and surname(s), title of article in italics, name of periodical in italics preceded by "in", volume and other information, year in parenthesis, page.

Example: GREGORIO NOVAK, *L'alleanza veneto-serba nel secolo XIV*, in *Archivio veneto-tridentino*, 8 (1925), 29.

When a note refers to an internet site, please indicate the site, its URL, and the date of access.

Example: La Santa Sede, http://www.vatican.va/news_services/or/or_eng/text.html#3, 16 April 2008.

For patristic texts, manuscripts, archival sources and other material, please follow the usual practices.

3. Bibliography: It is advisable to append a bibliography, especially if it adds material useful for further investigation of the subject. It may be omitted if it would only repeat works already indicated in the notes.

4. Languages: English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish.

5. Articles in English, Italian and Spanish should be accompanied by a summary (abstract); articles in French, German, or Portuguese should be accompanied by a summary in either English, Italian, or Spanish.

6. The deadline for submission of articles is 30 April. Articles which arrive after this date will be published in the following year. Articles may be submitted by email (preferred), or submitted on CD or diskette along with a printed copy.

These norms are valid for *CARMELUS* from 2009.

With thanks,

BIBLIOGRAPHIA CARMELITANA ANNUALIS

The authors are Carmelites (*irrespective of the subject*)
or the subject is related to the Carmelites (*irrespective of the author*)

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Cum permissu superiorum

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