PREACHING THE GOSPEL ANEW:

A Reappropriation of Negative (Apophatic) and
Positive (Cataphatic) Theology
in Redemptorist Mission and Identity in the Age of Globalization

Submitted by

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Dedicated

to

all Redemptorists

around the world

who preach the gospel anew

in season and out of season.

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Statement of Sources

This thesis contains no material published

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No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment

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ABSTRACT

In order for Redemptorists to be faithful to their charism as established by St. Alphonsus and to realise this charism today, they need to preach the gospel anew. To preach the gospel anew is to preach the gospel in the spirit of the times. The spirit of the times which best describe the contemporary situation is globalization.

This thesis sought to explore the most significant feature and impact of globalization not just on the structures of society—economics, politics and culture—but more on the everyday life of the people. This thesis then sought the most appropriate heuristic for preaching the gospel anew in globalization.

The most celebrated leitmotif about globalization is the greater interconnectedness among nations, cultures and religions in the world and the massive expansion of knowledge and information. The interconnection of globalization has resulted not in sameness but in the radicalization of differentiality. The expansion of knowledge and information, on the other hand, has brought to the fore the limitation of reason, science and language. To preach the gospel anew in globalization is to preach the gospel amidst radical differentiality and unknowing.

The heuristic for preaching the gospel anew that is conducive to this ethos of globalization is the ancient tradition of negative theology. Negative theology was prominent from the ancient to the Middle Ages, but was largely forgotten in modern times. It has made a comeback in contemporary theology.

Negative theology emphasizes a negative way of talking about God, that is, what God is not. However, it is always complemented by positive theology, which emphasizes a positive affirmation of God, that is, what God is. Negative theology in preaching in globalization follows the path of mysticism while positive theology in preaching in globalization follows the path of prophecy.

The heuristic of negative theology in preaching the gospel anew can help facilitate the Redemptorists' task of reimagining their life and preaching mission in the age of globalization.

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INTRODUCTION

A. Background

The Redemptorist congregation is a Catholic religious order of brothers and priests. Their total number today is 5,197 (as of December 31, 2011)[1] and they are at present working in 77 countries all over the world. Redemptorists are itinerant preachers by charism. The congregation was founded on November 9, 1732 at Scala, Italy by St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori.

Redemptorists are known for their simple and down-to-earth preaching particularly by people living in the rural and countryside during the heyday of their missionary exploits. They were also known in the past for their "fire and brimstone" brand of preaching.

In recent decades, due to rapid transforming changes in the world and in the congregation, Redemptorists have experienced some crisis in their life and mission which has led them to constantly evaluate their preaching tradition.

In 2009, the General Chapter of the congregation adopted the theme for the next sexennium (2009-2015): "Preaching the Gospel Anew!" This theme is rooted in the tradition of St. Clement Hofbauer.

The General Chapter recognized the crucial imperative of "preaching the gospel anew" today especially as we are now in the global age.

B. Thesis

Preaching is the *raison d'être* of the Redemptorists. It was the reason they were founded by St. Alphonsus in 1732 and is the reason for their continued existence today. Preaching the gospel anew holds one of the keys to the Redemptorists' survival in the global age. If they cannot preach the gospel relevantly in the global age, they have no reason to continue.

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[1] "Statistics," *Scala: Redemptorist Newsletter*, No. 73 (December 16, 2012). Accessed 16 January 2012 at http://www.scalanews.com/scala/jan12/scalaenglish.html.

Globalization is a new time and space in history. Globalization offers both threats and opportunities for preaching the gospel anew. Globalization can help to reveal something new about the Redemptorist life and mission of preaching.

In order to preach the gospel anew in globalization, Redemptorists need to reappropriate an ancient tradition called apophatic theology, in which God's ineffability is acknowledged by saying what God is not, rather than what God is. Apophatic theology's most suitable application in preaching the gospel anew is through prophecy and mysticism.

C. Significance of the Study

This thesis aims to contribute to the conversation regarding how we Christians can respond to the phenomenon of globalization in the way we speak about God.

This study's significance lies in the deepening and clarification of the meaning of the theme of preaching the gospel anew promulgated by the General Chapter for the next six years of the Redemptorist congregation. This thesis hopes to contribute to the understanding of preaching the gospel anew and as a result, the practice of preaching the gospel anew. Eventually, it can contribute to fresh vitality in mission, religious identity and community life in the age of globalization.   It can also contribute to the Redemptorist ongoing search for a relevant theology of mission.

This thesis is also significant in the theological discourse about preaching or evangelization, particularly in a globalized ethos. It can also contribute to a deeper understanding of the call to new evangelization today.

D. Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this thesis is to argue that for the Redemptorists to preach the gospel anew in the new time and space of globalization, they need to retrieve the ancient tradition of apophatic theology. Through apophatic theology Redemptorist can reimagine their mission in the global age.

This study will seek to explore and test the following questions:

What is the background and meaning of "Preaching the Gospel Anew" in Redemptorist tradition?

What is the mind of the General Chapter about preaching the gospel anew?

What is the theology of preaching that is most appropriate in the global age?

What is the unifying principle of globalization?

How does globalization impact the everyday life of the people today?

How does globalization impact the life and mission of the Redemptorists?

What are the opportunities and dangers of globalization for Redemptorist evangelizing mission?

What are the meaning and implications of "Preaching the Gospel Anew" in the age of globalization?

What are the new forms of mission, religious identity and community life in the age of globalization?

What new meanings about the gospel, preaching, the world and the Catholic Church in the age of globalization does preaching the gospel anew bring forth?

E. Method

The exploration of the Redemptorist tradition is done through research of documents on Redemptorist history, mission and charism. Data on the general theme of "Preaching the Gospel Anew" comes from pre-Chapter documents, minutes of the Chapter and the post-Chapter statements on the theme.

As globalization is a multifaceted reality, perspectives are gained from inter-disciplinary sources such as anthropology, economics, sociology, political science and philosophy. The forms of sources are not just books and journals but also multimedia sources like podcasts and film. This allows for a holistic picture of globalization.

Literature on the theology of mission comes from diverse contexts in order to reflect a world theology of mission. The forms of sources include multimedia sources like podcasts and film. Sources come not just from Western but also Asian, African and Latin American theologians.

All data collected is critically analysed, evaluated and synthesized based on the overall purpose and structure of the thesis. All summary findings are organized to form the

conclusion and recommendations of the study in response to the overall purpose of this thesis.

F. Limitation of Study

The main background from which this thesis is written and the main community to whom this thesis is addressed is the Redemptorist congregation and its tradition and culture, not limited to a particular context or locality.

This thesis is not about techniques or methods of preaching. Neither is this thesis about the detailed content of preaching about issues and themes of globalization. Rather it deals with an overall approach to preaching.

Although globalization is the main context for preaching the gospel anew, this will not be an exhaustive and comprehensive examination of globalization.

G. Outline of the Thesis

Chapter I

This chapter will examine the background and history of the Redemptorist charism and tradition. This will be done in four parts. The first part will discuss the origin of the charism of the Redemptorist, the inspiration of St. Alphonsus, the foundational evangelizing content and style of preaching of the congregation. The second part will examine the context of St. Clement's motto: "Preaching the Gospel anew." The third part will investigate the contemporary situation of the Redemptorists around the world especially the impact of globalization in the life and mission of the congregation. Finally this chapter will evaluate the theme of the General Chapter of the Redemptorist congregation for 2009–2015 : "To Preach the Gospel Ever Anew (St. Clement): Renewed Hope, Renewed Hearts, Renewed Structures—For Mission."

Chapter II

This chapter will inquire into the theology, tradition, purpose and elements of preaching relevant to the theme of preaching the gospel anew today. This chapter will seek to answer the question: What sort of theology of preaching is most appropriate for preaching

the gospel anew in the age of globalization? This chapter will show the return of negative tradition in theology

Chapter III

The purpose of this chapter is to try to define the unifying principle of globalization. This chapter will then inquire how this unifying principle impacts upon everyday life in globalization. This chapter will study the distinct processes and patterns which have evolved in globalization and the values, attitudes and lifestyles they engender in the everyday life.

Chapter IV

This final chapter will describe the meaning of preaching the gospel anew in today's global era, how globalization is giving new meanings to the gospel, preaching, the world and the Catholic Church and how the Good News can be heard in today's globalized world. This chapter will, finally, reimagine the evangelizing mission of the Redemptorists.

CHAPTER I

The Redemptorist Charism: Preaching from the Margins

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Luke 4: 18-19).

A. Origins

a. St. Alphonsus: Good News for the Poor

St. Alphonsus, the founder of the Redemptorists, was born on September 27, 1696, at Marianella near Naples, Italy. He was the eldest in a family of Neapolitan nobility. This afforded him the opportunity to receive a robust education in the humanities, classical and modern languages, painting and music at an early age, so much so that by age sixteen, he earned a doctorate in both civil and canon law. Shortly after, he began his practice in the legal profession.

He became a renowned lawyer for a few years. A defeat, however, in a high profile case due to an oversight and alleged bribery led him to abandon the profession altogether. In the midst of days of painful agony after his loss, he heard God's call during a visit to the hospital for the incurables, something he used to do when he was a lawyer. The voice from God told him to "Leave the world and give yourself to me". From that day on, he completely abandoned the world of law and all that it represents—power, ambition and titles—and crossed over to a life of service and simplicity. He then became a priest.

As a priest he first lived and worked with the homeless and marginalized young people of Naples. After some years of hard work he took a much needed rest and retreat in the mountains of Scala outside the city of Naples. There he encountered the shepherds and goatherds who were much poorer and more abandoned than any of the street children in Naples. He realized that these poor people had nobody to care for them while the rich in the city had ample spiritual and material care given by the church and local authorities.

Terrence Moran describes the situation of these most abandoned people, called *Lazaroni*, in terms of spiritual and material abandonment wherein "official church structures were unable to reach them, and official spirituality failed to touch them."[2] Moved by compassion, Alphonsus resolved to dedicate his whole life to preaching the gospel to them. He convinced a few other religious companions to join him in forming a new congregation. On November 9, 1732 at Scala, the Redemptorist congregation was born.

Alphonsus explains the reasons for the foundation of his congregation in a letter to Pope Benedict XIV in March 30, 1748:

> For the purpose of devoting himself to aid by missions, instructions and other exercises, the souls of the poor in the country, who are mostly destitute of spiritual help, since they are frequently in want of those that may administer to them the sacraments, and to preach to them the word of God. Indeed, many of them for want of laborers approach death without even knowing the necessary mysteries of the faith, since there are few priests that devote themselves earnestly to the religious education of the poor country people on account of the expenses and also on account of the inconveniences that they have to suffer from such a task.[3]

Alphonsus heard God's call and establish the congregation amongst the poor. This indicates that the Redemptorist charism is not just to preach the good news to the poor but to hear the good news and discover God especially from the vantage point of the poor. The poor were the ones who led Alphonsus to discover and preach passionately the love of Christ for every person. Alphonsus' casting his lot with the poor at a time when the church was identified with the powerful posed a challenge for the church not to become self-sufficient and to understand her goal beyond herself—the reign of God. Indeed the mission that Alphonsus and companions conducted helped to project a new face of the church during his times: "a church that leaves the security of the pulpit and enters the dirt and mess of human experience, preaching the good news eye to eye."[4]

When Alphonsus founded the congregation, the impact of the Catholic counter-Reformation and the post Tridentine conservative reaction by the Church to the onslaught of the Protestant Reformation and Renaissance dictated the times. Another powerful force upon the religiosity and pastoral practice of the ordinary people in Naples of the eighteenth

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[2] Terrence J. Moran, "Alphonsus Liguori: Preacher of the God of Loveliness," *Traditions of Spiritual Guidance*, ed. Lavinia Byrne (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1990), 250.

[3] Alphonsus de Liguori, "To the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XIV," *Letters of St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori,* The Centenary Edition, Part I, trans. Eugene Grimm (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1891), 200.

[4] Moran, "Alphonsus Liguori," 248.

century was Jansenism. Jansenism projected a cruel and distant God whose grace is available only to a select few.[5] Alphonsus fought very hard against this spirituality and philosophy. His critique of Jansenism became an important kernel of his mission orientation and methodology.[6] Amidst these constraining backgrounds, Alphonsus defined the central theme of preaching of the congregation as "*Copiosa apud eum redemptio*" (In Jesus the Lord is plentiful redemption), which evokes God's abundant, love and salvation, even infinite goodness which preaching cannot fully exhaust, much less confine to a box. His pastoral compassion for the poor and insistence on God's boundless mercy also became an important principle for the development of his moral theology.

Having founded a preaching congregation, Alphonsus deemed it worthy to set some guidelines for all its members on preaching. Alphonsus could not emphasize more the value of good preachers for the church; he declared: "Bad preachers and bad confessors are the ruin of the world."[7] He also exhorted his members about the importance of preparation and witness in preaching: "To preach in a proper manner … learning and study are necessary … an exemplary life is necessary."[8] Alphonsus also stressed the importance of preaching from the preacher's experience of God's love: "The divine love must first burn in the preacher, that he may afterwards kindle it in others."[9] Alphonsus stated that the goal of preaching is achieved when people are "weeping over their sins, resolved to change their lives, and to give themselves to God."[10] Finally he exhorted his members to use "the most popular and lowest kind of eloquence, in order to accommodate his instruction to their weak understanding. He must imagine himself to one of them, and that another is anxious to instruct him in some duty and to persuade him to fulfill it."[11]

Alphonsus and his new congregation employed the means of the parish mission. The form of parish mission that heavily influenced Alphonsus was the popular mission in its modern form. Popular mission arose in response to the tremendous negative effect on the

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[5] Moran, "Alphonsus Liguori," 251.

[6] Moran, "Alphonsus Liguori," 251.

[7] Alphonsus de Liguori, "Dignity and Duties of a Priest", *The Complete Works of St. Alphonsus Liguori*, Vol. 12, ed. Eugene Grimm (Brooklyn, New York: Redemptorist Fathers, 1927), 265.

[8] de Liguori, "Dignity and Duties of a Priest," 266.

[9] de Liguori, "Dignity and Duties of a Priest," 267.

[10] de Liguori, "Dignity and Duties of a Priest," 270.

[11] de Liguori, "Dignity and Duties of a Priest," 270.

pastoral care of the rural populations brought about by the suppression of the small monasteries *(conventini),* that is, of religious houses with insufficient personnel, as decreed by Innocent X with his bull *Instaurandae regularis disciplinae* of October 15, 1652. To remedy the decline of the practice of religion in the countryside the next pope—Benedict XIV—recommended the increase of popular missions as a valuable instrument of spiritual renewal.[12] Thus, popular mission was "the most characteristic and important phenomenon of the religious history of the seventeenth century."[13]

Moran describes the process of the parish mission employed by Alphonsus and companions as consisting of preaching and prayer events "oriented toward the fundamental conversion and catechesis of a population that consisted largely of baptized unbelievers."[14] The content of their mission preaching fairly represents the post-Tridentine traditions: "the eternal truths of death, judgment, heaven and hell; the nature of sin and the need for conversion; the love and mercy of God; the intercession of Mary; instruction on how to participate in the sacramental life of the Church."[15]

However, Alphonsus style of mission was a detour from the conventional form of popular mission. Alphonsus and companions made some refinements of the existing mission system in order to better reach the poor and the most abandoned—from centre to periphery. "Alphonsus, in contrast, required his missionaries to go *paese per paese*, from one small hamlet to the next, and to remain until every person had been reached."[16]

Within Alphonsus' lifetime the Congregation expanded beyond the Kingdom of Naples, first in central Italy and then in Poland. During the first decades of the nineteenth century Redemptorist communities were established in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Germany, Belgium and Holland. The Redemptorists enjoyed their largest expansion in the nineteenth century through communities located in Northern Europe—France, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands. In 1832, the centennial year of the foundation of the Congregation, six Redemptorist missionaries (three priests and three brothers) travelled to the

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[12] Giuseppe Orlandi, "The Mission," *The History of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, Vol. 1: The Origins (1732 –1793)* (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1996), 298.

[13] Orlandi, "The Mission," 298.

[14] Moran, "Alphonsus Liguori," 247.

[15] Moran, "Alphonsus Liguori," 247.

[16] Moran, "Alphonsus Liguori", 247–248.

United States of America and began the first missionary work outside of Europe. Foundations followed in Latin America, Australia and eventually Africa and Asia.

b. St. Clement: Preaching the Gospel Anew

After Alphonsus, the next inspiring figure in the congregation was St. Clement Hofbauer (1751–1820), who is often called the second founder of the congregation for bringing the congregation across the Alps in Northern Europe.[17]

St. Clement was born on December 26, 1751, in Tasswitz, Moravia (present day Czechoslovakia) in a poor family with twelve children. He worked as an apprentice baker before he became a Redemptorist.

St. Clement lived in one of the most difficult and trying times of Central Europe. The ideas of Enlightenment had pervaded the whole of Europe and the Church was slowly groping for meaning. "He had to face Josephism, Illuminism, the French Revolution, the Empire of Napoleon I, Protestantism, Free Thought, but he had German Romanticism as an ally"[18] Hans Scherman describes the impact of these socio-intellectual currents on theology in Clement's time: "Theology was searching for new ways of speaking to the intellectual currents of the age only to have its attempts condemned by Rome."[19]

At the same time, this social milieu provided a good opportunity for Clement to develop a great ecumenical spirit and the formation of a genuine freedom of conscience. Within his circle of friends he was responsible for many conversions from Protestantism.[20] He had a "global" perspective which at that time was European.[21]

The Saint, with a deep knowledge of his times, was able to adapt his pastoral work. When the government at that time forbade the preaching of missions, Clement endeavored to compensate the people for the loss of the occasional mission by conducting a "Perpetual Mission" in the church of St. Benno's in Warsaw, Poland.

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[17] Louis Vereecke, "The Spirituality of St. Clement Mary Hofbauer," *Readings in Redemptorist Spirituality,* Vol. 5, ed. Redemptorist General Council (Rome: Redemptorist General Council, 1991), 37.

[18] Vereecke, "The Spirituality of St. Clement Mary Hofbauer," 39.

[19] Hans Scherman, "Saint Clement Hofbauer," *Readings in Redemptorist Spirituality,* Vol. 5, ed. Rededemptorist General Council (Rome: Rededemptorist General Council, 1991), 13.

[20] Vereecke, "The Spirituality of St. Clement Mary Hofbauer," 43.

[21] Scherman, "Saint Clement Hofbauer," 21.

In the midst of these difficulties, Clement would often say that the "Gospel had to be preached anew." The keyword in this Clementian expression is "anew". Josef Heinzmann, in examining the historical context of these famous words, explains:

> The famous student of Hofbauer and preacher at the cathedral, Dr. Emmanuel Veith, reports: "I heard him say these splendid and emphatic words very often, yes almost daily: "The Gospel must be preached anew!" And in fact, people have wondered a great deal about this word anew. Does it mean again, or in a new way? What's the difference? Both are included in it."[22]

St. Clement's distinct legacy of "Preaching the Gospel anew" suggests two important points. First the gospel must be repeatedly preached at all times, in all places. Clement, who was always on fire, cannot accept the reality that the gospel cannot be preached because of external repressive conditions. Clement admonishes us that we should not give up preaching the gospel as it is relevant in all times and places. "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!" (1 Cor 9: 16). Thus, Clement preached the gospel with utmost persistence and zeal in spite of the political turmoil and persecutions in Europe during his time.

Second, each time the gospel is expressed it is preached in a new way. Preaching the gospel anew speaks of the newness of both the act and content of preaching. Every act of preaching and its content is ever anew as the gospel is preached in different places, cultures and times.

Clement's manner of preaching is marked by utter simplicity and connectedness with the language of the people. "'Today I'll preach a sermon so simple that even the most stupid of you and every little child can understand'—he is supposed to have said, according to a police report."[23] Clement did not use elaborate theology and pageantry. Although Clement was not a gifted rhetorician his sermons made an impact on all walks of life—rich or poor, illiterate, intellectuals and academics alike. "God's word must be preached in such a way that everyone understands it: the small and the great, the educated and the uneducated."[24]

Although Clement manifested exemplary apostolic spirit, he was also known to be ascetic. Clement's asceticism was, however, "principally the asceticism arising from an

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[22] Josef Heinzmann, *Preaching the Gospel Anew: Saint Clement Maria Hofbauer*, trans. Bernard McGrade (Liguori, MO: Liguori Publications, 1998), 67.

[23] Scherman, "Saint Clement Hofbauer," 20.

[24] Heinzmann, "To Be a Redemptorist Today," 60.

apostolic activism."[25] Joseph Oppitz sums it up: "Clement was innovative and daring, an existential opportunist."[26]

The mission system, which was a creative instrument of evangelization crafted by Alphonsus and appropriated by Clement, however, became fossilized in the nineteenth century for many reasons. Moran laments this fact: "It is one of the great ironies that Alphonsus dedicated his life to preaching the bounty of God's mercy available in Jesus Christ, while the Redemptorists later came to be renowned as blistering preachers of hell-fire and brimstone."[27]

B. Contemporary Situation: Redemptorists amidst Globalization
a. Image of Dying and Growing

One of the most visible impacts of late modernity and globalization over the last five decades is the changed demography of the Redemptorist congregation. In the West there has been a rapid decline in numbers.   Like most major orders and congregations, the Congregation has suffered a drastic decline in numbers especially in Western Europe, North America and Oceania, with the aging of the confreres and very few vocations coming in.[28] The Redemptorists' life and mission in its traditional form also appears to be dying in these countries.[29] Before Vatican II in 1962, the Redemptorists numbered more than 8,000; today they are just 5,197.

In the East (Asia and Eastern Europe) and the South (Latin America and Africa), however, there is steady growth, even blossoming in some countries. In these regions the congregation continues to have many aspirants, and has a vibrant ministry amongst the people. [30]

The image of the Congregation that this brings out is both and at the same time, an image of dying and flourishing. This changed demography of the Congregation perhaps

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[25] Joseph Oppitz, *Alphonsian History and Spirituality* (Rome: Private Redemptorist Publication, 1978), 82.

[26] Oppitz, *Alphonsian History and Spirituality,* 82.

[27] Moran, "Alphonsus Liguori," 248.

[28] Joseph Tobin, *A Letter to the Confreres: Called to be an Apostle of Christ by the Will of God* (Rome: Redemptorist General Government, 2009)*,* 19.

[29] Redemptorist General Council. "Instrumentum Laboris," *Acta Integra Capituli Generalis XXIV, XXIV Capitulum Generale* (Rome: Curia Generalis CSsR, 2009), 15.

[30] "Instrumentum Laboris", 26.

places the future of the congregation—as with the whole Catholic Church, which Philip Jenkins[31] has shown—in the East and the South.

b. Dying

It is clear, however, that because of the changing religious landscape brought by globalization, the once glorious past of the congregation is now gone or at least fading away. Gone are the days when many young people would be attracted to its lifestyles and work.

A major factor of this rapid decline of vocations and the "dying" of religious life in the last five decades is the changing attitude of the younger generation. Other major factors for this decline are the pervading secular culture, smaller family size, and consumerism.

The more recent theological shifts and consequent faith-stances, however, have also contributed to the decline of traditional religious life.[32] Barbara Fiand suggests that before Vatican II many were attracted to the religious life because of its particular mystique.[33] The mystique is expressed in the symbols that mark the religious' "different" identity from the world. Brian Johnstone enumerates these symbols of mystique as "the following of a rule, the wearing of a common habit, an ordered way of life, a shared apostolate, and in the practice of the evangelical counsels, confirmed by the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience and all officially approved by Church authority."[34] All these made the vowed life "a 'higher' way of life... This sense of being 'different' contributed to the security of the sense of identity."[35]

After Vatican II there was a change in the understanding of the vocation to religious life brought by a transformed image and changed approach to God-talk. Triumphalist language gave way to a humbler and more inclusive style of theology. This inclusive language also became the more accepted language in the mission of Catholic Church. It

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[31] Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 2.

[32] Vocation Committee, *Prophets on the Move: The Future of Redemptorist Membership in Australia and New Zealand* (Sydney: Redemptorist Province of Canberra, 2010).

[33] Barbara Fiand, "Religious Life for the Twenty-First Century: Embracing our Past Towards a Different Future," *International Conference on Religious Life*, Conference of Religious of Ireland, May 2011, accessed June 20, 2010 at http://www.cori.ie/component/content/article/66-Executive_Board/746-religious-life-for-the-21st-century.

[34] Brian Johnstone, "The Meaning of the Consecrated Life," *The Apostolic Life of Redemptorists: Some Perspectives*, ed. Raymond Corriveau, (Rome: Redemptorist General Government, 2009), 62.

[35] Johnstone, "The Meaning of the Consecrated Life," 62.

indicates a shift from the long held Cyprian dictum, "*Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*"—"Outside of the Church there is no salvation—to an appreciation of what Schillebeeckx termed "*Extra mundum nulla salus*"—"Outside of the world, there is no salvation."[36]

These shifts in theology led to a demystification of religious life. The important call of Vatican II towards a universal holiness[37] made special holiness and worthiness less meaningful. This also aided the turn from the object to the subject in Catholic tradition and religious life which reinforced the affirmation of religious liberty and particularly the dignity of personal conscience.[38] The influence of this on religious life was far-reaching, so much so that after Vatican II, many left and few remained out of loyalty.[39]

c. Mission

The massive urbanization, secularization and consumerism which have changed the landscape of the people had a dire impact upon the conduct of mission by the Redemptorists. Suddenly their traditional form of preached mission which they performed as itinerant missionaries no longer fitted into the changed landscape of the daily life of the people. Kevin O'Shea laments, for example, the swift changes in work, family, recreation and other areas that occurred in the daily life of ordinary people in Australia in recent years that made traditional mission to obsolescent.[40] O'Shea laments that even the parish itself, the traditional local church partner of the Redemptorist in the mission, could not fit in amidst these swift changes and was rendered irrelevant in the lives of the people.[41]

Because of this inhospitable landscape, many Redemptorists struggled to maintain their traditional mission methodology and content due to being apparently dismissed as irrelevant by the changed world. They found it hard to accept the new environment and the possibility of the end of their "glorious" days. Many Units have chosen to favour

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[36] Richard McBrien, "Schillebeeckx: No Salvation Outside the World," *Essays in Theology*, Feb 01, 2010. Accessed at June 27, 2010 at http://ncronline.org/blogs/essays-theology/schillebeeckx-no-salvation-outside-world.

[37] *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter 5: #39–42.

[38] Johnstone, "The Meaning of the Consecrated Life," 61.

[39] Johnstone, "The Meaning of the Consecrated Life," 64.

[40] Kevin O'Shea, *A Sense of Historical Perspective: A Faith Response to a Secular World* (Sydney: Redemptorist Province of Canberra, 2002).

[41] O'Shea, *A Sense of Historical Perspective*.

maintenance over mission.[42] They cling to their foundations even if they no longer serve the poor, and justify their presence by doing ordinary ministry.[43] They continue to maintain these structures even if they are no longer missionary.[44]

It is in this sense that the Redemptorists have become a victim of their past success.[45] They have become paralysed and unable to make changes because of inability to let go of the glorious past.[46] Voicing the same sentiment from the Philippine context, the Joint Commission of Mission laments this attitude of remaining in the comfort zones of the glorious past.[47]

Individualization has also invaded the traditional corporate way of doing mission. "Some (v) provincial superiors complain about the individualism of confreres who opt for a ministry outside of the common, shared priorities."[48] "At times we fall into a trap of individualism that leads each to look for 'his own' solutions."[49]

On the other hand, Redemptorists became cognizant of the new frontiers and the new opportunities for mission that the global milieu engendered. For example, because of pluralism Redemptorists see as new frontiers of mission inculturation and inter-religious dialogue.[50] In these new fields of mission, they see that new methods like dialogue and ecumenism are needed.[51] The changed world has also led to a reorganization of time and space in mission. Time and space in mission has been traditionally understood according to *missio ad gentes*' physical and geographical stance. With the massive movement of peoples, urbanization and explosion of information technology, Redemptorists have discovered that

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[42] Joseph Tobin, *Letter of Superior General to the Members of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer* (Rome: Redemptorist General Government, 2004), 20.

[43] "Instrumentum Laboris," #94.

[44] "Instrumentum Laboris," #15.

[45] Tobin, *A Letter to the Confreres,* 20.

[46] "Instrumentum Laboris," #21.

[47] Joint Commission on Mission, *Preaching the Gospel Ever Anew in Every Generation:Renewed Hope, Renewed Hearts, Renewed Structures for Mission: A New Missiological Perspective* (Manila: Redemptorist Vice-Province of Manila, 2010).

[48] "Instrumentum Laboris," #24.

[49] "Instrumentum Laboris," #30.

[50] Joint Commission on Mission, *Preaching the Gospel Ever.*

[51] Joint Commission on Mission, *Preaching the Gospel Ever.*

the "frontiers" of mission, for example, may no longer be geographical but more cultural and spiritual.

In the midst of these challenges, there is a need to stop clinging to identity, traditions which they have been used to in the past and to re-imagine their mission methods and content in the context of the global milieu. This is crucial for their future relevance if not survival.[52] "Our missionary methods need to be renewed: what should we retain, what should we modify and what should we abandon?"[53] There is also a call to find creative ways.[54] Conversion as "a refusal to cling stubbornly to the glory of the past or to accept complacently the limitations of the present" is essential.[55] It becomes clear that amidst the ambiguity and confusions, an appropriate missiological direction in the context of global age is critical: "We are faced with a lack of clarity about our reason for being in the Church as missionaries in this globalized age."[56]

d. Community Life

The ambiguity brought by globalization has also transformed everyday life in the community of the Redemptorists. Because of the demystification of the church and religious life and the secularized atmosphere, Redemptorists have found it doubly hard to live their religious life.[57] The sad thing is that many have become resigned to the situation and given up their prophetic disposition.[58] Individualization raised questions regarding the integrity of community way of life in the context of the frenzied complexity of the times.[59] Anton Reijnen, in talking about the sweeping changes which the Redemptorists have experienced in Austria in the past few decades, highlights the advent of individualization in community life: "Our common structure of life in our monasteries gave way to a more personal concept of life, according to one's needs. Many of us lived outside our communities."[60]

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[52] "Instrumentum Laboris," n. 32.

[53] "Instrumentum Laboris," n. 60.

[54] "Instrumentum Laboris," n. 61.

[55] "Instrumentum Laboris," n. 43.

[56] Joint Commission on Mission, *Preaching the Gospel Ever Anew*.

[57] Tobin, *Letter of Superior General*.

[58] Tobin, *A Letter to the Confreres*.

[59] "Instrumentum Laboris," n. 47.

[60] Anton Reijnen, "Consecrated Life as a Redemptorist in a Secularized World," *The Apostolic Life of*

The lure of material security, modern amenities and consumerist lifestyle have weakened the prophetic witness of their community living: "We have allowed the radical nature of our vocation to be compromised by a more bourgeois lifestyle in which corporate witness is neutered by personal preference."[61] This also affected the living of their vows, for example the vow of poverty—this created puzzlement from people who see them as religious, vowed to poverty, yet enjoying a standard of living way above the people they call poor.[62]

Globalization also challenged Redemptorists regarding their identity and niche in the church and society. The complex milieu and swift transformations of the contemporary society have shaken their conviction about their identity, as they admit that "we do not always succeed in communicating the real reasons for our consecration and our ministry, answering 'anyone who asks us to explain the hope we have in us' (1 Pet 3: 15)." Because of the global changes, Redemptorists found themselves in search of a symbol: "For many years we have stripped ourselves of any external display of our consecration in favour of a more discreet witness among the people."[63] But in leaving behind old symbols they haven't found new symbols to replace them.

e. Spirituality

Redemptorists also have to wrestle within themselves with the God-question: "For some our basic faith in God is the deepest question facing us."[64] They have even gone through their own crisis of faith, searching for new expressions of their spirituality: "It seems that we have given up the old forms of prayer and have not found new forms suitable to our time or to our mentality."[65] "When we left behind the practices considered unauthentic or unsuited to the present day, there did not arise new ones capable of filling the vacuum produced."[66] Others look for other sources of spirituality beyond the Christian tradition.[67] In

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Redemptorists: Some Perspectives, ed. Raymond Corriveau (Rome: Redemptorist General Government, 2009) 221.

[61] Tobin, *A Letter to the Confreres,* 23.

[62] Ramon Fruto, "One of Them Vows: A Reflection on the Vow of Poverty," *The Apostolic Life of Redemptorists: Some Perspectives*, ed. Raymond Corriveau (Rome: Redemptorist General Government, 2009), 117.

[63] Tobin, *Letter of Superior General,* 56.

[64] "Instrumentum Laboris," n. 26.

[65] Tobin, *Letter of Superior General,* 39.

[66] Tobin, *A Letter to the Confreres,* 21.

[67] Tobin, *Letter of Superior General,* 57.

the midst of this spiritual wrestling, the search for a steady anchor becomes crucial: "To be able to speak convincingly of 'following Christ' in a world which apparently has no one to follow, we ourselves need a steady anchor which prevents us from drifting with the tide and living in a purely superficial manner."[68]

Redemptorists have also shared in the negative experience of detraditionalization which globalization has intensified: "At times we can be doubtful whether the spiritual, missionary and theological intuition of St. Alphonsus, together with the whole tradition that has followed, still has a place in the world today."[69] This has created a sense of meaninglessness in their mission as they are confronted with the fundamental question: "Why are we here?"

C. XXIV General Chapter[70] 2009

In October 2009, Redemptorist superiors from all over the world gathered for the twenty-fourth Chapter.[71] The chapter adopted the words of St. Clement as the theme for the sexennium (2009–2015) of the congregation: "'*To Preach the Gospel Ever Anew' (St. Clement): Renewed Hope, Renewed Hearts, Renewed Structures—For Mission.*"

a. Globalization

The *Instrumentum Laboris* (IL),[72] which was the main instrument for the reflection, discussion and decisions of the Capitulars affirmed globalization as the dominant situation of

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[68] Redemptorist General Curia, *Spirituality: Our Most Important Challenge, Communicanda No. 1* (Rome: Redemptorist General Government, 1998), 11.

[69] Redemptorist General Curia, *Communicanda 1: Called to Give Our Lives for Plentiful Redemption* (Rome: Redemptorist General Government, 2004), 9.

[70] The general chapter of the Redemptorist congregation is "the supreme organ of internal government of the Congregation. It is an expression of the concern and participation of all members in promoting the good of the whole Institute" (Art. 3, n.104, *Redemptorist Constitutions*). It is convoked every six years (n.105). The purpose of the general chapter among others is to carefully examine and "to discover if it remains faithful to its own proper mission, in accordance with the spirit of the founder and its sound traditions. It will also examine whether the Congregation is giving willing attention to the voice of God who is ever challenging it through the Church and the world" (n.108).

[71] The Redemptorist XXIV General Chapter ran from October 19, to November 13, 2009 in Rome. It was attended by more than 100 Provincial, Vice-Provincial and Regional Superiors from the 37 provinces, 25 vice-provinces, 16 regions and 11 missions of the Congregation.

[72] The "Instrumentum Laboris," was the fruit of the pre-chapter consultations from the local communities up to the regional conferences prior to the Chapter. The regional conferences represented the six Regions of the congregation. The Regions are North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern Europe, Southern Europe, Africa and Madagascar and Asia and Oceania.

contemporary world (IL, #5). It acknowledged that globalization's pervasive influence is carried out by its ubiquitous agents such as the internet, advertising, television and communications media (IL, #6). It also identified the homogenizing effect of the unregulated free market economy (IL, #7). Although this globalizing economy brings benefits to many countries, the poor are often left out (IL, #8). This was corroborated by the Report of the Superior General to the Chapter which criticized the dominant market economy for promoting a proliferation of desire, leading to confusion between what we want and we need.[73]

The lifestyle that globalization spawns, especially through urbanization, drowns the spirit and the place for God (IL, #9) leading to "A world that is closed to the newness of God, a world that does not believe in God's love" (IL, #10). This calls for an urgent task of a new evangelization (IL, #10).

This urgent task entails a global perspective in doing mission for the members of the congregation (IL, #11). The image of the congregation that is relevant to this task is that of a network (IL, #12). The challenge and response for Africa and Madagascar was a sign of global response (IL, #17). Thus, the main challenge that the stark milieu of globalization presents to the congregation today is that of restructuring (IL, #13).

The IL identified some present attitudes and perspectives which hamper global thinking in mission. One issue is provincialism which constricts identity to one's nation-states (IL, #20). A clear manifestation of provincialism is excessive decentralization (IL, #22). This also damagingly impacts initial formation (IL, #23) and mission (IL, #24).

Another issue is maintenance and preservation of old structures. The new situation calls for a new presence amongst the poor and questions Redemptorists' clinging to past structures and past successes (IL, #15). IL identified forms of mission that have defined but limited their identity (IL, #32). The challenge of globalization raises questions about evangelization while at the same time asserting the continuous validity of the gospel: Do Redemptorists have a mission also within a secularized society? How can they reintroduce the gospel to those who do not receive it as "Good News" (Constitution, #3)? How can they rethink initial and ongoing formation and manage their resources in order to serve the most abandoned in these regions? Are they able to glimpse the presence of the abandoned poor at

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[73] Joseph Tobin, *Report of the Superior General to the XXIV General Chapter,* 20.

the very heart of a wealthy society (e.g., immigrants)? How can they seize upon the willingness of lay people to help them (IL, #16)? Other challenging issues put forth were: questions about God, Redemptorist identity in the twenty first century, lack of missionary dynamism, neglect of community life, vocation crisis, decline in intellectual formation, lack of leadership, and past structures no longer attuned to the present situation (IL, #26).

b. Restructuring

After examining the present situation of the life and mission of the Redemptorist in the age of globalization, the chapter delegates deliberated on the direction for the next six years of the congregation. The capitulars chose the theme from St. Clement: "Preaching the gospel anew." The chapter delegates further identified that the main strategy towards preaching the gospel anew today, following the suggestion of the *Instrumentum Laboris*, is restructuring. Having established restructuring as the present means of the congregation in preaching the gospel anew in the midst of globalization, it proceeded to define the values, attitudes and key concepts of a spirituality that may illuminate the challenge of restructuring for the sake of the Redemptorist mission.

First of all restructuring is at the service of mission, that is, putting all resources and structures at the service of mission (IL, #28). Restructuring is not an end but a means— restructuring for mission (IL, #27). Mission as the impulse for restructuring will distinguish it more by its missionary dynamism (Const. #14). This was carried over into the final document with the call for all Redemptorists to "diligently pioneer new ways of preaching the Gospel to every creature" (Const. #15). This entails availability for new mission—a call for new frontiers of mission. There is a danger, therefore, in restructuring when it is focused only on structures (IL, #28).

Restructuring entails spiritual conversion (IL, #30). This spiritual conversion is geared towards mission (IL, # 31). Restructuring also challenges the apostolic life of the Redemptorists: Religious consecration is not a privatized devotion but the source of missionary dynamism (IL, #33). There is a need to be freed from pervasive and persistent clericalism (IL, #34) and going back to their explicit awareness as religious (IL, #35), therefore highlighting the value of the religious Brother in the congregation (IL, #36). This clarifies the true meaning of the mission of the congregation.

In the preface to the final document of the XXIV General Chapter, Michael Brehl, the newly elected General Superior of the congregation, stressed the need for a prophetic stance in implementing the direction and decisions of the General Chapter for the next six years.[74] He also pointed to the prominence of hope in the final document.[75]

In the final document, the call to conversion was emphasized as the Redemptorists embarked on following the directions of the Chapter: "Conversion calls all of us back to our first love (Rev. 2,4), to 'keep our eyes fixed on Jesus' (Heb. 12:2). Conversion is a gift not only to individuals but also to our communities and to the entire Congregation (Const. #12)."[76]

c. Some Critical Observations

Although the words of St. Clement were adopted by the General Chapter as the theme of the congregation for the next six years, there was a lack of discussion and retrieval of St. Clement's words: "Preaching the gospel anew." Restructuring was really the dominant theme of the chapter. Based on the deliberations of the chapter, the keywords repeatedly used were: restructuring, missionary dynamism, new availability for the poor, renewal and conversion. The Chapter is saying that the immediate need of the congregation in the midst of globalization is a total overhaul of its system. Although the chapter clarified that restructuring is for mission, it is a pity that the words of St. Clement's were not used on their own merits but to further elaborate the theme of restructuring.

Before and during the chapter, some reservations were articulated by some capitulars regarding the word "restructuring" as it may unnecessarily lead to a focus on structure and systems, rather than the fundamental questions that Redemptorist are confronted with in their daily lives and work. This reservation also included the fear that the deliberations in the chapter might centre more on the internal than the external world in which Redemptorists live and work and the questions they are confronted with.

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[74] Michael Brehl, **"**Preface 'To Preach The Gospel Ever Anew' (St. Clement) Renewed Hope, Renewed Hearts, Renewed Structures For Mission," *Acta Integra Capituli Generalis XXIV, XXIV Capitulum Generale,* Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (Rome: Curia Generalis CSsR, 2009), 799.

[75] Brehl, "Preface," 802.

[76] Message of the XXIV General Chapter, *Acta Integra Capituli Generalis XXIV, XXIV Capitulum Generale,* Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (Rome: Curia Generalis CSsR, 2009), 809–810.

Conclusion:

Both Alphonsus and Clement developed the charism of the congregation amidst insurmountable personal and social conditions. Alphonsus and Clement tackled the problem of speaking about God in the context of their particular situation. Alphonsus proclaimed "*Copiosa apud eum redemptio*" in the midst of his own personal experience of failure, corruption in society, abandonment by the church of the poor and the experience of spiritual and material poverty of the poor. Clement upheld that "the gospel must be preached ever anew" in the midst of the intellectual challenges of the Enlightenment, the secularist environment of capitalism and the persecution and suppression of religious houses.   Both experienced personal doubts, failures and struggles. But these negative experiences did not deter them; on the contrary, these emboldened them to proclaim the gospel in the ethos in which they lived.

Consequently, the preaching of the gospel by Alphonsus and Clement was directed towards the zeitgeist of the everyday life of people of their times, especially the poor and the most abandoned. Both Alphonsus and Clement were children of, and at the same time critics of, modernity.   They did not surrender to the zeitgeist of their time but instead preached the "zeitgeist of Christ" in the zeitgeist of their time. In this way their legacies stood the test of time; their life will be remembered in eternity.

The congregation throughout its history has always thrived when, in the context of insurmountable challenges, they were open to opportunities for the proclamation of God's abundant redemption. They reach the lowest point in their history when their evangelizing ministry has become fossilized and the members become passive and retreat to security and complacency.

The Redemptorists, amidst the transforming events of the contemporary world, have struggled and experienced uncertainty, doubts and lack of confidence in speaking about God. And yet it is within "this very heart of helplessness that their mission as participation in the mission of God is located."[77]   The vulnerability of the Redemptorists in the midst of the ambiguities of globalization is the soil upon which the seeds of the gospel are to be grown.

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[77] Joint Commission on Mission, *Preaching the Gospel Ever Anew*.

CHAPTER II

Return of Apophatic Theology in Preaching

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.
For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my Word that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it (Isaiah 55: 8-1).

A. Crisis in Preaching

The normal focus of preaching is on the preacher speaking about the Word of God.
Preaching, however, is not just a monological process wherein the preacher speaks and the
assembly listens but a dialogical process where both preacher and assembly is involved in a
dialectical process of listening to and speaking about God. Thus, when we say that there is a
crisis in preaching today, it implies both a crisis in speaking and listening to the Word of
God.

The crisis in speaking about God is most felt in Sunday preaching. "There is little
point to preaching and certainly none to listening to preaching unless God speaks to us."[78]
The assembly wants to hear what God has to say but all they hear are "moralism, 'relevance,'
entertainment, conformity, trivialization, moral passion about the preacher's pet project or the
congregation's needy circumstance."[79] It is not that people do not want to hear any preaching
but that they are tired of inauthentic preaching "of the badly garbled, anachronistic, irrelevant
drivel."[80] Some sociologists point out that the low attendance of Catholics in Sunday masses

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[78] Stephen Farris, *Preaching That Matters: The Bible and Our Lives* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 1.

[79] Walter Brueggemann, *The Word Militant: Preaching A Decentering Word* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2007), 4.

[80] John Killenger in Daniel Baumann, *An Introduction to Contemporary Preaching* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1972), 12.

is not the result of modern unbelief or postmodern relativism but the poor and boring sermons of preachers.

This problematic manner of speaking about God, however, is not only spoken and heard in the pulpit; it is ubiquitous in everyday God-talk among the multitudes. We find prevalent today different modes of God-talk—spiritualist, doctrinalist, fundamentalist, absolutist, exclusivist, ideologicalist, relativist, individualist, sentimentalist, literalist—which only serve our purposes, not God's. All too often, we are not aware that they are mere human categorizing of God which poses a high risk of colonizing God.[81]

The crisis in listening to the Word of God, on the other hand, is most felt in the so-called "silence" and "absence" of God. Across the globe millions of innocent people continue to suffer from poverty, hunger, injustice, wars, sickness and calamities, while on the other hand the few who are immensely rich, powerful and influential become even richer and more powerful. This has led to the implausibility of imagining a benevolent God. In this acute scepticism, it is indeed a great challenge to listen to much more to believe in, a God who cares for the poor and will "sent the rich away empty" (Luke 1: 53).

All these have only undermined confidence in listening to and preaching about God today.

a. The Task of Preaching

Today's generation are not alone, however. The struggle to preach and to listen to God has mystified generations ever since the beginning. Indeed, at the core of the task of preaching is the fundamental question of how to speak about God and how God speaks to us. The possibility of this task is premised on the profound quandary—how can a finite human being speak about an infinite God? We often take for granted, for example, that the words we use so often for God such as "love", "existence" and "mercy" are the terms that God would use to reveal God's nature.

The most common challenge of this dilemma is talking about God in our everyday life. William Hill emphasizes the metaphysical dimension of any God-talk by arguing that "We cannot talk about God in the way we talk about objects in our everyday world."[82] On the

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[81] Peter Rollins, *How (not) to Speak of God*, (London: SPCK, 2006), xi.

[82] William Hill, *Search for the Absent God: Tradition and Modernity in Religious Understanding* (New York:

other hand, we cannot talk about God in a manner of *deus ex machina* as an external miraculously intervening power. Too often we blame God for the disasters or praise God for victories even though God has nothing to do with them whatsoever. As Ludwig Feuerbach said: "[Humankind] … creates God in [their] own image."[83]

Indeed, humankind's and God's understanding and language are different; in fact, it cannot be the same unless God wills it. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55: 8–9).

b.   Theology: Dialectics of *Theos* and *Logos*

Because speaking about God is a vital endeavour of theology, preaching is central to theology. David Tracy defines theology from a historical perspective as "the history of the ever-shifting relationship between the reality of God and that divine reality as experienced and understood from within a *logos*."[84] God—the *Theos* in theology—is "the awesome, frightening, interruptive reality of God" whereas *logos* in theology refers to "a particular horizon of intelligibility."[85] The struggle in preaching in the historical periods happens "when ...[the] *logos* of some contemporary intelligibility overwhelms and domesticates the reality of *Theos*."[86] Genuine theology, therefore, as the appropriate way of speaking about God is a threat to the dominance of the *logos* of any period.

Karen Armstrong differentiates between *mythos* and *logos* as complementary interpretations of reality during the premodern period. Armstrong defines *mythos* as "myth: a story that was not meant to be a historical or factual but which expressed the meaning of an event or narrative and encapsulated its timeless, eternal dimension."[87] It is connected with mystery and mysticism and has indications of silence and darkness. On the other hand, *logos* is "reasoned, logical and scientific thought."[88] In ancient times, *mythos* and *logos* lived side

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Crossroad, 1992), xii.

[83] Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot (New York: Cosimo, 2008), 118. This book was originally published in 1902.

[84] David Tracy, *On Naming the Present: God, Hermeneutics and Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994), 36.

[85] Tracy, *On Naming the Present,* 36.

[86] Tracy, *On Naming the Present,* 36.

[87] Karen Armstrong, *Case for God: What Religion Really Means* (London: The Bodley Head, 2009), 349.

[88] Armstrong, *Case for God,* 348.

by side; they were not in conflict.   In modernity, the *logos* dominated and the *mythos* was pushed to the periphery until eliminated. Today we still live with the dominance of *logos* over *mythos*.[89]

Proclaiming the interruption of *Theos* over the *logos*, Hans Metz declares abruptly: "The shortest definition of religion: interruption."[90] For Metz, Christian faith is the narration of the dangerous memory of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, which has broken through the world's assumptions about political power and violence, and opens our eyes to the sufferings of others, particularly the innocent.   Summoning the Jesus story is not meant to legitimize the status quo but to shake the comfortable citadels of the safe haven and security of one's faith. As Mary Hilkert writes, "The function of the church's proclamation of the gospel and celebration of the sacraments is to interrupt the narrative of our daily lives with a vision of what is being offered to us daily by God."[91]

Theology endeavours to clarify what is the appropriate or inappropriate manner of speaking about God. This pursuit is crucial to the task of preaching. For by the proper or improper way of speaking about God, the preacher can incite the assembly to a proper or improper way of speaking about God. Preaching contributes to the credibility of faith, of the church. The church is largely defined by how effectively the preacher has preached the Word of God.

B. Apophatic Theology: The *Via Negativa*

This dimension of struggle in preaching has been recognized from the very beginning in the Christian tradition. One such approach which acknowledges this dilemma is apophatic theology, also called negative theology or the *via negativa*. This method highlights a negative way of speaking about God—that the only thing we can say about God is not what God is but what God is not. In contrast, making positive statements about the nature of God is called cataphatic theology (positive theology or the *via positiva*).   Apophatic theology implies the limitation of human language in speaking about an unspeakable God, thus,

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[89] Armstrong, *Case for God,* 2–4.

[90] Johann Metz, *Faith in History: Towards a Practical Fundamental Theology,* trans. David Smith (London: Burns & Oates, 1980)*,* 171.

[91] Mary Hilkert, "Edward Schillebeeckx, OP (1914-): Encountering God in a Secular and Suffering World," *Theology Today* 62 (2005): 387. Accessed 11 November 2011 at http://ttj.sagepub.com/content/62/3/376.

exposing the impoverishment of humanizing God.[92] We must realize that our speaking of God is just human speaking: "Speaking of God is never speaking of God but only ever speaking about our understanding of God."[93] Our manner of speaking about God will always be inadequate as God is ineffable, mysterious and unfathomable. Henny Fiskå Hägg writes, "God is both greater than, and different from, human knowledge and thought."[94] Even the expression that God exists is misleading as "our experience of existence is based solely on individual, finite beings whose mode of being bears no relation to being itself."[95] Apophatic theology, thus, employs alternative ways of expressing the inexpressible, like parables, contradictions and symbolism.[96]

Apophatic theology insists on the radical otherness of God to make us aware that God is beyond our personal God. We have a tendency to personalize God—God becomes our own security and our refuge. No person or religion has a monopoly of God. This is the God that we worship. "God stands outside our language regimes and cannot be colonized via any power discourse."[97]

The most common illustration of colonizing God is in naming God. Aphophatic theology emphasizes that we cannot name God. Even the most common name we give to God, "In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" cannot capture the full meaning of God's nature. "God is known by knowledge and by unknowing; of him there is understanding, reason, knowledge, touch, perception, opinion, imagination, name and many other things, but he is not understood, nothing can be said of him, he cannot be named."[98] Only God can name God and that name is Jesus. "Therefore God ... gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (Philippians 2: 9–10).

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[92] Alan Richardson and John Bowden, "Via Negativa," *A New Dictionary of Christian Theology* , eds. Alan Richardson and John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1983), 596.

[93] Rollins, *How (not) to Speak about God*, 32.

[94] Henny Fiskå Hägg, *Clement of Alexandria and the Beginnings of Christian Apopathicism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 1.

[95] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 125.

[96] Hägg, *Beginnings of Christian Apopathicism,* 2.

[97] Rollins, *How (not) to Speak about God*, 41.

[98] Pseudo-Dionysius, "The Divine Names,"*Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works, The Classics of Western Spirituality*, eds. Colm Luibhéid, and Paul Rorem (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), DN #596A, 55.

Apophasis is closely connected to *musterion* (mystery). Armstrong explains *musterion* as related to the verb *muen* which means to close the eyes or the mouth. It also denotes an "obscure reality, hidden from ordinary sight that exists beyond the reach of language."[99] It is also linked to the word *myein* which means "initiate" and *myesis* which means "initiation".[100] From these words we get the words sacrament and mystery; sacrament is traditionally called sacred mysteries.

The danger of articulating God according to our human categories is that it may lead us to idolatry. Peter Rollins describe idolatry as "any attempt that would render the essence of God accessible, bringing God into either aesthetic visibility (in the form of physical structure, such as statue) or conceptual visibility (in the form of a concept, such as a theological system)."[101] Armstrong argues that in history human beings have been chronically inclined to idolatry. "The 'idea' that the human mind is a perpetual manufacturer of idols is one of the deepest things which can be said about our thinking of God."[102]

Applying apophatic theology in preaching, in this regard, implies that preaching is first of all the rejection of all idolatrous naming and speaking about God.

a.   Apophatic Theology in the Bible

The apopathic tradition is very strong in the Bible. Some examples of expressions of apophatic theology in the Bible, among many others, are: the strong belief of the Jews regarding the power of God that if ever they see God face to face, they die; God's appearance to Moses in the burning bush, and the ineffable Name of God—the God who cannot be named (יהוה); the theophany to Elijah, where God reveals Himself in a "still, small voice" (1 Kings 19:11-13); the story of Job, Saul's conversion on his way to Damascus where Jesus appeared as blinding light (Acts 3: 3–9) and St. Paul's reference to the "Unknown God" in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 17:23).

In the New Testament, the Gospels are full of references to a God outside of human understanding and expectations of God. The form of the gospels itself indicates an apophatic nature. The gospels were not meant to be historical scientific recordings of the life of Jesus.

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[99] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 349.

[100] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 349.

[101] Rollins, *How (not) to Speak about God*, 12.

[102] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 270.

It was meant to be proclamations of good news. We see this in the whole life of Jesus as he shattered people's illusions about God. From birth up to his death, Jesus is a manifestation of the unfathomable God. The birth of Jesus in the manger in the obscure town of Bethlehem is a far cry from the people's image of messiah. Being born of poor parents is also farthest from people's expectation of a messiah: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?" (Matthew 13: 55). Much of Jesus life is hidden. When he eventually came out in public to begin his ministry, the Jewish people and even his disciples, did not recognize him as the Messiah. Even though Jesus was the revelation of God, not all the things he did were recorded in the Gospels: "But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (John 21: 25). Most of all his utterly shameful death on the cross is the most glaring folly of a God. Thus St. Paul exclaimed: "For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1: 18).

Jesus, however, talked about an apophatic and at the same time an ever-fresh living God. "Christ as the image of the invisible God, both reveals and conceals God: rendering God known while simultaneously maintaining divine mystery."[103] Jesus' image of God was not static and objective but dynamic, rich and symbolic. As in the Hebrew Bible, where God revealed at the same concealed Godself, Jesus proclaimed God who is near to the people but at the same time beyond the understanding of the people. Jesus always forbade the people to tell others that he was the Messiah not because he did not want them to proclaim God but because they would share their limited and false image of a messiah. Jesus persisted in "exorcising" the people of their distorted belief and faith in God. Jesus detested the absolutist and legalistic interpretation of the law by the Scribes and Pharisees; he insisted instead on an ever alive and dynamic law that is at the service of life. Christ taught his disciples to pray not in a formulaic and absolutist way but in humility and commitment which first seek the reign of God: "But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well" (Matthew 6: 33).

Jesus is the fullness of the affirmation (cataphatic) of God and yet appeared for only a short period in history and manifests a preview of God (apophatic). That is why Jesus and

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[103] Rollins, *How (not) to Speak about God*, 25.

the Father sent the Holy Spirit. "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come" (John 16: 12–13). The Holy Spirit will continue to teach the church in a pilgrim journey of apophatic-cataphatic awareness of the unfathomable God.

b. Aphophatic Theology in Christian History

Apophatic tradition appeared not just in the earliest traditions of the Catholic Church but in other world religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. Armstrong argues that this in fact may show a common lineage of the major religions.[104] This is "a recognition that negation is embedded within, and permeates, all religious affirmation. It is an acknowledgment that a desert of ignorance exists in the midst of every oasis of understanding."[105]

In Christian history, negative theology played an important role very early on. The first century early church Father—Tertullian—believed for example, "That which is infinite is known only to itself. This it is which gives some notion of God, while yet beyond all our conceptions—our very incapacity of fully grasping Him affords us the idea of what He really is. He is presented to our minds in His transcendent greatness, as at once known and unknown."[106]

The Cappadocian Fathers of the 4th century articulated their belief that God exists not in the same sense that everything else exists. This means that every creation exists, but the Creator transcends even existence. The essence of God is absolutely incomprehensible; humankind can only know God through His energies.[107]

The fourth century theologian Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, in his Catechetical Homilies says: "For we explain not what God is but candidly confess that we have not exact knowledge

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[104] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 13–34 .

[105] Rollins, *How (not) to Speak about God*, 26.

[106] Tertullian, *Apology*, §17, trans. S. Thelwall (OrthodoxEbooks, 1953), 54. Accessed 12 November 2011 at http://books.google.com.au/books/p/pub-9632288571543958?id=NLhdW4V94zwC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

[107] Hägg, *Beginnings of Christian Aphophaticism*, 264–267.

concerning Him. For in what concerns God to confess our ignorance is the best knowledge."[108]

The greatest Christian theologian of the Dark Ages, St. Augustine says: "We cannot know God as God is, indeed we do not know God; there is in us what I might call a kind of 'learned ignorance'—learned because it is instructed by the Holy Spirit, who helps our weakness."[109]

But the most influential writer was Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, who took the name Denys the Aeropagite referring to St. Paul's first Athenian convert, but was undoubtedly writing towards the end of the fifth and beginning of the sixth century. Denys' theological method was a deliberate attempt to make people conscious about the limits of language in speaking about God.[110] Denys' spiritual exercise was a kind of dialectical process which consisted of three phases: "First we must affirm what God is: God is a rock; God is One; God is good; God exists. .. In the second phase, we deny each one of these attributes… The exercise leads us to apophasis, the breakdown of speech, which cracks and disintegrates before the absolute unknowability of what we call God."[111]

During the medieval period, Denys had a profound influence on almost every major Western theologian.[112] Pseudo-Dionysius is quoted by Thomas Aquinas 1,760 times in his *Summa Theologica*.[113] St. Thomas speaks, for example, about God by way of negation: "Because we cannot know what God is, but only what he is not we cannot study how God exists, but only how he does not exist."[114]

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[108] Cyril of Jerusalem, "Catechetical Homilies, VI §2," *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers,* Vol III, ed. Philip Shaff and Henry Wallace (New York: Cosimo, 2007), 33.

[109] St. Augustine, "Epistulae" in Philip Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1993), 129.

[110] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 124.

[111] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 126.

[112] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 123.

[113] Kallistos Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (London: Penguin, 1963), 73.

[114] Thomas Aquinas , "Summa Theologica, I, q. 3, Introductio ad quaestionem," *The Catholic encyclopedia: An International Work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline, and History of the Catholic Church*, ed. Charles George Herbermann (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 1913), 218.

By the thirteenth century, Denys' apophatic method had become central to the Western understanding of God so much so that by the medieval period, the apophatic approach had become entrenched in Western Christian consciousness.[115]

In contemporary times, the most moving example of apophatic utterance is the story of Mother Teresa. Mother Teresa's own spiritual struggles, contained in her correspondence in the last fifty years of her life, bewail the pain and struggle of an absent God. In spite of the perceived holiness of Mother Teresa, many are not aware that she battled dryness, darkness, loneliness and torture and even, to some extent, doubt about the existence of heaven and of God. She writes, "as for me, the silence and the emptiness is so great, that I look and do not see, — Listen and do not hear — the tongue moves [in prayer] but does not speak."[116] Yet in spite of the "dark night of the soul" and absence of God, Mother Teresa continue to give her life in service and held on to the unfathomable God.

c.   Apophatic Theology and Mysticism

A significant tradition in the church which employs apophatic theology is mysticism. The mystics admonish us about the arrogance and futility of naming God. Important mystics like Meister Eckhart and St. John of the Cross (San Juan de la Cruz), epitomize some aspects of our tendencies towards the apophatic tradition. The medieval work *The Cloud of Unknowing* and St. John's *Dark Night of the Soul* are particularly well-known mystical works of negative theology. Armstrong in talking about *The Cloud of Unknowing* writes, "*Kenosis* is at the heart of the Cloud's spirituality. Instead of seeking special raptures, the author tells his disciple to seek God for himself and not 'for what you can get out of him'."[117]

The mystics emphasize the shift from intellectual ascent to God to a mystical ascent to God. They suggest that "true contact with God involves going beyond all that we speak of as God—even the Trinity—to an inner 'God beyond God,' a divine Darkness or Desert in which all distinction is lost."[118] This mystical ascent requires a stripping of oneself, especially our concepts of God. As Meister Eckhart writes, "Let us pray to God that we may be free of

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[115] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 143 and 128.

[116] Mother Teresa, *Come Be My Light* - *The Private Writings of the Saint of Calcutta*, ed. Brian Kolodiejchuk (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 288.

[117] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 154.

[118] *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s. v. "Christianity," accessed 13 October 2011 at http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/115240/Christianity.

'God.'"[119] This is also accompanied by an attitude of nothingness characterized by self-forgetfulness and self-denial.

Thus, the values that the mystics espouse in the *via negativa* are humility, openness and nothingness before God. We can only speak about God as God through our self-emptying. Applied to preaching, this suggests the descent/ascent of "I must decrease, He must increase" is also the descent/ascent of preaching.

C. The Problem of Evil

If speaking about God's nature by itself is already bewildering, speaking about evil, especially its continuing existence and God's apparent inability or unwillingness to eradicate it, further befuddles it.   This is the fundamental dilemma of theodicy, which has also confounded generations since the beginning: How do we explain the existence of evil, for example suffering, wars and sickness, if there exists a God who is omnibenevolent, omnipotent, and omniscient?[120] Similar questions which point to the apophatic nature of God-talk in the midst of evil are: How did God allowed this to happen? Where is God?

St. Augustine, drawing on Neo-Platonic ideas, defines evil as privation of good.[121] Evil is non-being; it does not exist by itself, except when good is lacking or absent.   This Augustinian definition of evil stands in contrast with the ancient Zoroastrian perspective of a dualistic struggle between good and evil. It implies that only good exists. The indirect existence of evil necessarily orients us towards the attainment of the good and relegates evil under good.

This should not, however, lead us to downplay the wickedness, the ruthlessness and the suffering in our world today. On the other hand, we should not talk about evil in our world in a *daimōn ex machina* manner—blaming the devil for all the poverty, conflicts, injustice, misfortunes and immorality around us rather than ourselves. Nevertheless, this dilemma of evil is part and parcel of speaking about God as it denotes the

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[119] Meister Eckhart, *Meister Eckhart Sermons*, trans. Edmund Colledge and Bernard McGinn (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1981), 200.

[120] Nick Trakakis, "The Evidential Problem of Evil," *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Accessed 10 October 2011 at http://www.iep.utm.edu/evil-evi/.

[121] Michael Warren Myers, *Brahman: A Comparative Theology* (Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon, 2001), 191.

incomprehensibility of evil amidst God's omnipotent love or the incomprehensibility of God amidst pervasive evil around the world.

a. On Job: God's Gratuitousness and Disinterested Religion

A classic example of theodicy in the Bible is the book of Job. The book of Job is a wager between God and the devil about the possibility on God's side—God's gratuitousness and unconditional love—and on the human side—a disinterested religion.[122] The wager made Job experience the most terrible suffering—the loss of properties, loved ones and dreadful disease. In the midst of these sufferings, Job was in a terrible bind whether to believe in God's unconditional love and uphold religion as disinterested. Gustavo Gutiérrez writes, "In Job, the choice is between a religion based on the rights and obligations of human beings as moral agents, and a disinterested belief based on the gratuitousness of God's love."[123]

The book of Job is remarkable poetry about the apophatic nature of God in the midst of terrible human suffering. First of all the book of Job does not claim to have found a rational or definitive explanation of suffering.[124] Yet in spite of this incomprehensible suffering, Job held on to God's unconditional love—God's love for his people is unwarranted and does not rest on certain conditions: merits, good works and law. Despite the horrific human suffering, Job proved that religion can be disinterested—belief in God does not depend on material and physical benefits and prosperity. Job, the victim of the wager between God and the devil, represents the millions of suffering who are innocent. Thus, the book of Job is a call to solidarity with the millions who are poor, deprived and oppressed and the proclamation of a gratuitous God who has a special care for the least in the midst of all the evil in the world.

In the midst of the senseless suffering of the innocent, the book of Job recommends two types of language which bear the correct manner of speaking about God: the language of prophecy and the language of contemplation.[125] Prophetic language cannot be silent in the midst of unjust suffering of the innocent. "Therefore I will not restrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul" (Job 7: 11).

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[122] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *On Job: God-talk and the Suffering of the Innocent* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1987), 15.

[123] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *On Job*, 15.

[124] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *On Job*, 93.

[125] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *On Job*, 16.

The language of mysticism expresses the apophatic attitude of humility and nothingness before God and defies any manipulation of God's name.[126] Both languages are necessary and inseparable as they feed and correct each other.   "Mystical language expresses the gratuitousness of God's love; prophetic language expresses the demands this love makes."[127]

b.   Edward Schillebeeckx: The "Negative Contrast Experience"

Edward Schillebeeckx is one of the theologians in the twentieth century who has appropriated the ancient tradition of apopathic theology in a similar direction to the book of Job.   Schillebeeckx's major dilemma was how to speak about God in the midst of the absence of God and the widespread suffering of innocent millions.[128] While this leads atheists to believe in the absence of God, he utilizes this same context to justify the beginning of faith. He laments this paradox: "Never before in history has God's presence in the world been so intimate and so tangibly real as now, in our time, yet we do nothing but proclaim his absence everywhere."[129]

Schillebeeckx's reappropriation of apophatic theology is best articulated in his concept of "negative contrast experience," which is influenced by Theodor Adorno's work in *Negative Dialectics*.[130] For Schillebeeckx the dilemma of speaking about God is experienced not just in language but also in the real lived experience of suffering.   God is absent not primarily intellectually but in the real life experiences of suffering of the innocent—children dying of malnutrition, women working in sweat shops, people being killed in religious conflict, poverty, famine and epidemic. Thus, Schillebeeckx's apopathic theology is a practical one: God can be found and known above all amidst actions that seek to overcome and overwhelm suffering.[131]

Schillebeeckx points to experiences of suffering as a privileged ground in which it becomes possible to understand the meaning of faith in God.[132] Thus, Schillebeeckx's idea

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[126] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *On Job*, 95.

[127] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *On Job*, 95.

[128] Philip Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1993), 129.

[129] Edward Schillebeeeckx, *World and Church,* trans. ND Smith, Theological Soundings, 3 (Sydney: Sheed and Ward, 1971), 78.

[130] Edward Schillebeeckx, *God the Future of Man* (Sydney: Sheed and Ward, 1969), 205, n.8.

[131] Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, 131.

[132] Kennedy, *Schillebeeckx*, 131.

of negativity is always a contrast experience. For example, we can only understand the justice and peace that the reign of God brings through the experience and longing of those who have suffered grave injustice and the senselessness of violence. "Because the positive element of faith's critical negativity is tied to unrealized future, it cannot be defined explicitly and positively. It can only be partially perceived in a negative way."[133] Thus, the negative contrast experience has both a positive and negative dimension: "It involves the experience of positivity amidst negativity, salvation amidst suffering, liberation amidst oppression."[134]

In contrast experience, Schillebeeckx argues, the poor, the suffering who experience most the "negative contrast experience" have a privileged epistemological position. The poor become the subject of preaching and theology when they speak about God's mercy, compassion, love and grace; they have epistemological priority over experts and established authorities regarding what is wrong and what would count as getting it right.[135] In the context of globalization, the victims of "negative contrast experience" are the sweat shop workers, refugees, political prisoners, the poor in the developing nations, the unemployed, the victims of human trafficking, alcoholics and "shopaholics", who are the first to seek and come to know the meaning of ethics and theology.

Connecting this with the predicament of theodicy, the whole human experience of suffering and evil as privation of good can be seen as the natural process of journeying towards the good. In this sense, the whole human experience is a "negative contrast experience." The whole creation is groaning towards the good, towards God as absolute goodness (Romans 8: 22). The experience of evil in everyday life—the contrast of good, the privation of good, of God—paradoxically proclaims that God is here; the reign of God is in our midst.

Preaching therefore is linked to eschatology, a realized eschatology, that is neither here or there—the tension of already but not yet that only hope can sustain. The everyday is characterized by a tension, not dualistic or dichotomized but a holistic tension wherein the privation of the present time and space is oriented towards the fullness of good in the future

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[133] Kennedy, *Schillebeekx*, 128.

[134] Patricia McAuliffe, *Fundamental Ethics: A Liberationist Approach*, (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 1993), 12.

[135] McAuliffe, *Fundamental Ethics*, 13.

D. Cataphatic Theology: The *Via Positiva*

That God is ineffable, mysterious and unfathomable, however, does not mean that we should not speak about God anymore. Apophatic theology challenges us to critically confront our language about God whether it is of humans or of God. However, God is one subject about whom we cannot be silent as God is utterly explicable. Jesus responding to those who called upon him to stop the people from proclaiming him as king during his triumphal entry to Jerusalem replied, "If these were silent, the stones would shout out" (Luke 19: 40). As Peter Rollins says: "God is the one subject of whom we must never stop speaking."[136] We have before us not a privation of descriptions about God; on the contrary, we have an abundance of them.[137] Thus, the apophatic tradition, ultimately, is not to undermine but to affirm God.[138]

Apophatic theology shows the limits of language in speaking about God. Thus "the desire to get beyond language forces us to stretch language to its very limits."[139] This "opens up the most beautiful type of language available—the language of parables, prose and poetry."[140]

God is—paradoxically—both known and unknown, both immanent and transcendent.[141] "God ought to be understood as radically transcendent, not because God is somehow distant and remote from us, but precisely because God is immanent."[142] Rollins likens God's presence to that of the sun's blinding presence wherein one gets blind when one looks directly at its light.[143] This blinding presence is a type of "hyper-presence"; "it means that God not only overflows and overwhelms our understanding but also overflows and overwhelms our experience."[144]

The *via negativa* cannot, therefore, stand alone in the face of God. "All theology

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[136] Rollins, *How (not) to Speak of God*, xi.

[137] Rollins, *How (not) to Speak about God*, 12.

[138] Rollins, *How (not) to Speak about God*, 26.

[139] Rollins, *How (not) to Speak about God*, 42.

[140] Rollins, *How (not) to Speak about God*, 42.

[141] Hägg, *Beginnings of Christian Apopathicism,* 4.

[142] Rollins, *How (not) to Speak about God*, 24.

[143] Rollins, *How (not) to Speak about God*, 24.

[144] Rollins, *How (not) to Speak about God*, 23.

must be to some extent affirmative, otherwise it would be mere intellectual nihilism."[145] This suggests the tensive dialectic of the utterly unspeakable and the compellingly speakable God. As Charles Williams wrote, "The affirmative way and the negative way, were to co-exist … to coinhere, since each was to be the key to the other."[146] Thomas Aquinas asserts that preaching and theology always involves the movement from the *via negativa* to the *via positiva*.

In this regard, preaching is not just the attitude of humility and nothingness before God but a bold proclamation of the interruptive God. The *via negativa* emphasizes the mystical tradition while the *via positiva* highlights the prophetic and eschatological tradition.

In the end, preaching is not only in the pulpit—in the speaking. "We would never come to know God merely by talking about him."[147] Apophatic theology has exposed the limits of language in preaching, thus, preaching about God needs to go beyond speaking towards proclaiming God in ritual, actual action, witnessing and solidarity. In a beautiful Hasidic story, Martin Buber captures this oneness of story-life, speaking and living, speaking and enacting, word-life:

> A rabbi, whose grandfather had been a disciple of the Ba'al Shem Tov (Master of the Good Name), was asked to tell a story. "A story," he said, "must be told in such a way that it constitutes help in itself." And he told: "My grandfather was lame. Once they asked him to tell a story about his teacher. And he related how the holy Ba'al Shem used to hop and danced while he prayed. My grandfather rose as he spoke and he was so swept away by his story that he himself began to hop and, dance to show how the master had done. From that hour on he was cured of his lameness."[148]

E. Liminality: Between the *Via Negativa* and the *Via Positiva*

The preaching event as the tension between the *via negativa* and the *via positiva* is located between contemplation and prophecy. It begins with listening which adopts the mystical privileging of apophasis and ends in the overwhelming cataphatic proclamation of God's word. This is a special event, "the sharing of the happening of grace."[149] This special

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[145] Hägg, *Beginnings of Christian Apopathicism,* 1.

[146] Charles Williams, *The Descent of the Dove* (Vancouver: Regent College Publishing, 2001), 57.

[147] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 268.

[148] Maurice Friedman, *Martin Buber's Life and Work* (Detroit:Wayne State University Press, 1988), 57.

[149] Radcliffe, "This is My Body Given for You," in *Don't Put out the Burning Bush,* ed. Vivian Boland (Adelaide, SA: ATF Press, 2008), 135.

event is akin to entering into liminality—the threshold, the periphery and the limits of human existence as an initiation into the fullness of human existence and God's reign.

We borrow this notion of liminality from Victor Turner. Turner, in his anthropological study of rituals highlights the notion of liminality and "communitas".[150] Liminality is the experience of "no longer/not yet" status of those engaged in rituals. Turner defines liminal individuals or entities as "neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony."[151] Turner points out that liminal individuals have nothing: "no status, insignia, secular clothing, rank, kinship position, nothing to demarcate them structurally from their fellows."[152] The group of liminal individuals, which he calls "communitas", is not a typical social hierarchy but a communal group in which all are equal.[153] Walter Brueggemann equates the preaching event to an experience of liminality. Brueggemann explains: "Preaching is not only the announcement of the alternative but the practice of that very liminality that does not yet know too much."[154] In this liminality the preacher and the community are "betwixt and between" as they are initiated by the power of God into the reign of God.

In this liminal moment and space, the preacher is a participant and catalyst in the birth of a new world. "The preacher here is rather like a midwife bringing the text to birth such that the text now illustrates the world, which in turn is being disclosed as that which was hitherto opaque. The sermon now is the illustration par excellence of what life in the world is intended to be according to Christian truth." This process of birthing in the preaching event is akin to what Cornelius Ernst called "the genetic moment"—the mysterious transforming grace which beckons before our lives as "dawn, discovery, spring, new birth, coming to the

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[150] The term *liminality* comes from the Latin word "*limen*," which means "threshold." This idea originated in the anthropological study of rituals. It first gained prominence through Arnold Van Gennep in 1909 in his seminal work, *Les rites de passage*. Van Gennep described rites of passage such as coming-of-age rituals and marriage as having the following three-part structure: 1.Separation (pre-liminal), 2. liminal period, and 3. reincorporation or reaggregation (post-liminal). See Victor Turner, "Liminality and Communitas," *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion*, ed. Michael Lambek (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2002), 358–374.

[151] Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969), 95.

[152] Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), 98.

[153] Charles La Shure, "What is Liminality?" Accessed 18 October, 2005 at http://www.liminality.org/about/whatisliminality/.

[154] Brueggemann, *The Word Militant*, 26.

light, awakening, transcendence, liberation."[155]

F. Jesus Christ as *Logos* of God: The Mediator of the *Via Negativa* and the *Via Positiva*

There is no way for humans to be able to speak genuinely about God except through God. God's own revelation of Godself is only through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Word (*logos*) of the Father (John 1). As Hägg writes: "The son is the comprehensible aspect of God, the concrete expression of the abstract … By being the Father's face and name, the Son makes the inaccessible nature of God accessible to [humankind]."[156] "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him" (Matthew 11: 27, NRSV). In this sense, Jesus Christ is the true mediator between the *via negativa* and *via positiva*. The Jesus event—as the God become human—is the definitive language of the *logos* of God. Jesus as *logos* is the only mediator between an infinite God and a finite human being. Jesus is mediator between heaven and earth. Jesus incarnation means that heaven and earth are wedded into one; the reign of God is breaking into everyday life.

John's use of the Greek *logos* to refer to Jesus is brilliant in two ways. First, it implies the pre-eminence of Jesus as *logos* in God's creation, through which all things are made, as divine (*theos*), and further identifying Jesus as the incarnation of the *logos*.[157] "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made… The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1: 1–4; 14). Second, the appropriation by John of Jesus as *logos* to the Greek idea of the *logos* as a principle of order and knowledge and referential point of society's unity suggests that John is proclaiming Jesus as the referential point of unity not just for the Christian faith but also of the whole world. In the same way St. Paul talks about Jesus as the principle of the whole cosmos "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him" (Colossians 1: 15–16).

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[155] Cornelius Ernst, *The Theology of Grace* (Blackrock, Cork, Ireland: Mercier, 1974), 74.

[156] Hägg, *Beginnings of Christian Apopathicism,* 227–228.

[157] William Barclay, *New Testament Words* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1974), 178–188.

Jesus as embodiment of the Word of God implies that Jesus is the origin and model of preaching. This implies that Jesus himself is the content and form of preaching: "Jesus Himself, the Good News of God". [158] Jesus was "the very first and the greatest evangelizer."[159] Jesus is both the *logos* and the preacher; indeed, he is the preacher *par excellence*.

Jesus "talks" about God through his whole being: His words, deeds, teachings, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension. In speaking about God, Jesus proclaims God as good news, gospel. Gospel as good news was used by Jesus always in contrast to bad news and terrible events happening in Israel in his time. "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the reign of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news'" (Mark 1: 14–15).

Jesus' good news was primarily about the coming of the reign of God which he explained mainly through parables. The parables are stories drawn by Jesus from everyday life in his own place and time—in first century Palestine. Jesus told the parables as a re-description of everyday life to reveal to the people the unfolding of the reign of God here and now. Although the full realization of the reign of God is not of this world, we can discover and discern in everyday life the presence of the reign of God. Thus, Jesus incessantly challenged his people to hear and to see the breaking-in of God's reign in their midst. "The reign of God is in your midst" (Luke 17: 21). Jesus spoke in parables precisely to show the mystery of the reign of God and because only through parables can we comprehend its mystery.

That is why Jesus told his listeners to be always attentive to everyday life. "Let anyone with ears to hear listen" (Luke 8:8 NRSV).   Hearing and seeing the reign of God entails a radical transformation of one's life into the values of the reign of God, so many failed to understand the parables. Jesus inaugurated the reign of God which demands a radical new way of seeing the world and life, a radical relationship with God and with one another. This new understanding and living will lead us to a sharing in the cross of Christ.[160] Indeed,

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[158] Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, #7.

[159] Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, #7.

[160] Stanley Hauerwas, *A Cross-Shattered Church: Reclaiming the Theological Heart of Preaching* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 2010), 43.

Jesus' greatest parable is the sacrifice of his life on the cross, the parable which shattered all illusions and fulfilled the true meaning of the reign of God.

God's greatest "negative contrast experience" is to be found in Jesus' paschal mystery: His life, passion, death and resurrection. It is found "in Jesus' resistance to evil, by refusing to turn his back on his mission of proclaiming the reign of God, his fidelity to Abba in the darkness even unto death, and his embrace of solidarity with all those who suffer."[161] Jesus' prayer on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27: 46)—expresses the highest sense of God's abandonment, but at the same time, defiance against worldly powers.

G. Modernity: The Marginalization of Apophatic Theology

Armstrong argues that apophatic theology was forgotten in the late Middle Ages and was eventually lost in modernity.[162] It was replaced by the rational and quasi-scientific Newtonian theology in early modernity. Modernism reduced everything to *logos* to the detriment of *mythos* as generalized in Max Weber's notion of demythologization.

Together with the nature of God, the nature of faith changed in modernity. Faith became practically equated with the assent of dogma.[163] "A credulous acceptance of creedal doctrines became the prerequisite of faith."[164]

The *logos* of modernity was the optimism in science and reason which promoted an unbridled belief in a *telos* of progress for all. In this teleological triumphalism, modernity's greatest challenge to theology is on the very existence of God. The main question of modernity is whether God exists or not. As Tracy argues, "For the modern to think God is to try to find the right abstract name—the right *ism* for affirming or denying on modern rational grounds the existence and nature of God."[165] This is a far cry from Christian theologians who were concerned about the full range of naming God in the scriptures in which for them "the question of God is not first the question of the existence and nature of God but the question of

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[161] Hilkert, "Edward Schillebeeckx," 385.

[162] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 159–185.

[163] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 271.

[164] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 7.

[165] David Tracy, "Literary Theory and Return of the Forms for Naming and Thinking God in Theology," *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 74, No. 3 (Jul., 1994), 304, Accessed: 11 July 2011 at http://www.jstor.org/stable/1204490.

God's identity: who is God as God has named Godself in and through all the forms of God's biblical names."[166]

Due to modernity's God-is-dead and secularization challenge, modern theology, of which liberal theology is its most representative theology, inclined more towards relevance and accommodation. The anthropocentric "religious a priori" became the groundwork for the articulation of the gospel.[167] Applied to preaching, relevance became the end of preaching rather than the means. The content of sermons became exemplifications of the superficial and sentimental pieties of a liberal culture.[168] Bruce Barber writes: "The consequential question for preaching in the modern world was, and is, not so much the matter of the truth of the Christian gospel, as it is its 'relevance'."[169]

Instead of proclaiming God's word, this modern pathos caused a loss of confidence in a God who speaks to us today. [170] In the drive to relevance in modernity we have likewise lost confidence in ourselves as agents of God's Word[171] and in the openness of the people to hear God's voice. Stanley Hauerwas writes, "But we also do not trust those to whom we preach ... We want to preach sermons the congregation will 'like'."[172]

The problem was that relevance became the end of preaching rather than the means. Bruce Barber calls this pathos of modern theology "world verification." Some examples of "world verification" in preaching are: Heavy use of popular psychology ("Jesus my friend"), use of technology and catering too much to a visually driven audience which leads to a "humiliation of the word."[173] In this way, Brueggemann bemoans that the "most 'acceptable' preaching in our society is an echo of dominant culture that remains without critique."[174]

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[166] Tracy, "Literary Theory," 309–310.

[167] Bruce Barber, "Lanterns at Dusk? Preaching After Modernity," *Don't Put Out the Burning Bush: Worship and Preaching in a Complex World*, ed. Vivian Boland (Adelaide, SA: ATF Press, 2008), 56.

[168] Hauerwas, *A Cross-Shattered Church*, 19.

[169] Bruce Barber, "Lanterns at Dusks?," 56.

[170] Hauerwas, *A Cross-Shattered Church*, 18.

[171] Hauerwas, *A Cross-Shattered Church*, 18.

[172] Hauerwas, *A Cross-Shattered Church*, 19.

[173] See Jacques Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985).

[174] Brueggemann, *The Word Militant*, 17.

World Verification vs. Revelation Verification

Instead of "world verification" and relevance in preaching, Barber proposes "Word or revelation verification." He expounds: "Instead of trying to explain the gospel in terms of our scientific culture, we try to explain our culture in terms of the gospel."[175] The important thing to illustrate in our preaching is the world in the light of the declaration of the gospel rather than the gospel in the light of our experience of the world.[176] A "revelation verification" is where "the key term is that of the world's intended corresponding 'identity' with that of its Creator and Redeemer."[177] Preaching is not about the world as defined by the *logos* of a certain period but in reference to God, the *logos* who is Jesus Christ.

Certainly, a certain amount of "world verification" is needed by way of using the language of the times but it does so not to the extent of the subjugation of "revelation verification." The problem is that we have been so beholden to relevance that we have relinquished the power of the text to transform human lives. As Esther Wu writes: "The danger of postmodern Christianity is that we become so focused on making God culturally relevant, hip, cool, and fun, that we run the risk of making the gospel about us—our experiences, our relationships, our needs, our worship preferences, our lives."[178]

Revelation verification seeks to reclaim God's sovereignty and express humanity's futile attempt at relegating God to human categories. Karl Barth echoed a similar plea in the last century when he protested any attempt to manipulate and relegate God to human narrow-mindedness from liberals and fundamentalists alike. For Barth, God is the wholly other: wholly hidden but wholly revealed in Christ: "The Bible tells us not how we should talk with God but what he says to us; not how we find the way to him, but how he has sought and found the way to us ... We have found in the Bible a new world, God, God's sovereignty, God's glory, God's incomprehensible love."[179] The otherness of God is based upon the fact that we cannot know God, that God is totally different from us; God is not like us.

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[175] Barber, "Lanterns at Dusk?", 58.

[176] Barber, "Lanterns at Dusk?", 63.

[177] Barber, "Lanterns at Dusk?", 59.

[178] Esther Jing-Hua Wu, *The Danger of Postmodernism: Making the Gospel about Us*. Accessed 30 September 2009 at http://www.youthspecialties.com/freeresources/articles/postmodernism/danger.php.

[179] Karl Barth, *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, trans. Douglas Horton (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), 43 and 45.

H. Contemporary Situation: The Return of Apophatic Theology

In the wake of the limitation of modernity's secular language in trying to communicate "the other dimension" or the "surplus of meaning" unveiled from the depths of human experience,[180] postmodern theology with its suspicion of modernity's claims, has created openings toward the recovery of apophatic theology. Philip Kennedy, for example, observes that the greatest theologians of the twentieth century were the most negative.[181] They were negative in two senses. First, God is best discussed in terms of what God is clearly not. Second, they were acutely aware of the bleak and harrowing negativity of human (and animal) suffering.[182]   Thus, the first presence of God in postmodernity is absence. Tracy believes that "the affirmation of the radical incomprehensibility of God not only at the limits of our possibilities of comprehending God but as a new place to start understanding God as God may well prove one of the great achievements of the postmodern forms of theology."[183]

In this spirit of the return of apopathic theology, Tracy declares the return of God's sovereignty in contemporary theology: "*Theos* has returned to unsettle the dominance of the modern *logos*."[184]   In many ways in contemporary theology, the power of God is once again the leading partner in the theological connection.[185]

This return is also the plea that is being heard in preaching today—that God return to the pulpit. As Hauerwas affirms: "Sermons, at least if they are faithful to Scripture, are not about us—they are about God."[186] Stephen Farris concurs: "The God who speaks is not a projection into the heavens of our hopes and desires."[187]

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[180] Mary Hilkert, *Naming Grace: Preaching and the Sacramental Imagination* (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 1997), 50.

[181] Philip Kennedy, *Twentieth-Century Theologians: A New Introduction to Modern Christian Thought* (New York: I.B. Taurus, 2010), 11.

[182] Kennedy, *Twentieth-Century Theologians*, 11.

[183] Tracy, "Literary Theory", 316.

[184] Tracy, *Naming the Present*, 37

[185] Tracy, *Naming the Present*, 37

[186] Hauerwas, *A Cross-Shattered Church,* 15

[187] Farris, *Preaching That Matters*, 3.

There is indeed an appeal today in returning to pre-modern cultural and religious expressions like monasticism, icons and symbols which evoke a sense of mystery. In the Catholic faith, there is move to go back to traditional practices that bring back the sense of mystery in the sacraments. The recently controversial new English Roman Missal for the Eucharist, for example, was commissioned in order to have a more faithful translation from the original Latin which uses a more mysterious and transcendent language.

The movement to return to ancient and original sources has been a prominent theme in contemporary Catholic theology. Vatican II was influenced by *aggiornamento* (updating) but also by *ressourcement*, a movement of reappropriation of original sources of theology spearheaded by the *nouvelle theologie*.[188] In systematic theology there is a return to past theologies that were marginalized from the mainstream like theology of mission and a return to Trinity.[189] After Vatican II, religious congregation were called to return to the founding charism of their founders. This led to what Gerald Arbuckle called a refounding of congregations.[190]

I.   Prophetic and Mystical

Tracy believes that postmodernity has helped to retrieve two radicalized and largely marginalized traditions: the prophetic and mystical. [191] Both traditions express God's power and sovereignty and expose any human pretensions of knowing God.   Tracy locates the prophetic speaking of God amongst the marginalized other outside of Western theologies. Their theologies are born out of their "experience of God as a God disclosed in weakness, in the cross, in history as concrete struggle and survival." [192] On the other hand, Tracy locates the mystical tradition in postmodernity "in the typically marginalized figures of our culture— the mystics, the hysterics, fools, avant-garde artists, and dissenters of all kinds."[193]

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[188] Marcellino D'Ambrosio, "Ressourcement Theology, Aggiornamento, and the Hermeneutics of Tradition," *Communio* 18 (Winter 1991). Accessed 15 September 2010 at http://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/library_article/54/Ressourcement_Theology__Aggiornamento_and_the _Hermeneutics_of_Tradition.html.

[189] Stephen Bevans, "Wisdom from the Margins: Systematic Theology and the Missiological Imagination*,*" *Australian Ejournal of Theology.* Accessed 12 July 2010 at http://dlibrary.acu.edu.au/research/theology/ejournal/aejt_5/bevans.htm.

[190] Gerald Arbuckle, *Out of Chaos: Refounding Religious Congregations* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 1988).

[191] Tracy, "Literary Theory," 314.

[192] Tracy, "Literary Theory," 318.

[193] Tracy, "Literary Theory," 318.

Speaking about God, calls for both mysticism and prophecy, which have returned in contemporary theology.   In order to prophesy, the prophet needs to have the mystical stance of nothingness before God. The mystic's unspeakable experience of God needs to be boldly and daringly prophesied.

a.   Mystical

Preaching begins with the mystical stillness of the *via negativa*. As Timothy Radcliffe states, it is only when we beg God to speak that genuine preaching begins.[194] This conveys a confession of human finitude and the sovereignty of God. In the spirit of apopathic theology, there is a humble acceptance of not knowing God's name[195]—the giving up of all tendency to colonize God. There is a struggle to speak, to find words, to find the language, the difficulty of speaking which shows the limits of human language. The appropriate language may indeed be contemplation, a language of non-language. "The beginning of our preaching is embracing that incomprehension, sharing humanity's silence in the face of the gospel."[196] In order that we may not rely on our pride, power and prejudice, Radcliffe asserts, "we must let ourselves be silenced by the text, not knowing what it means, letting it escape our mastery and possession. It is the word that we cannot domesticate and tame."[197]

The silence in the face of God today is found in modernity's assertion of the absence of God and postmodernity's negative speaking about God. This is the struggle of contemporary preaching. "The sharing of the struggle is part of the preaching. The bringing to birth of the word is what we share with our hearers."[198] Preaching is hearing the deepest cry, feeling the deepest anguish of the present generation. It is in the deepest pit of existence that humanity calls for God. Preaching is re-echoing the cry of Jesus on the cross: "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?" (Matthew 27:46).

Thus, the mystical tradition in preaching is "the art of naming grace found in the depths of human experience."[199] In the ordinariness of everyday life, the life giving Spirit of

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[194] Timothy Radcliffe, "This is my Body Given for You", 139.
[195] Naming in the Hebrew Bible implies that the one who gives name has power over the one that is named.

[196] Timothy Radcliffe, "Do Not Put Out The Burning Bush" in *Don't Put out the Burning Bush,* ed. Vivian Boland (Adelaide, SA: ATF Press, 2008), 10.

[197]Radcliffe, "Do Not Put Out the Burning Bush," 10.

[198]Radcliffe, "Do Not Put Out the Burning Bush," 11.

[199]Hilkert, *Naming Grace,* 44.

God works, anonymously, without flair and aggrandizement, bravado and praise, expecting nothing in return. "The preacher is called to tell the Christian story in such a way that people can recognize the experience of grace—God's presence—in their everyday lives."[200] This hiddenness of grace in the world is why it is called a mystery. It is in the everydayness of everyday life that lies the profound mystery of God's grace. On the other hand, the preacher in speaking about the world as locus of grace should avoid any tendency to spiritualize everyday life. Karl Rahner declares: "one needs a mystical outlook in order to name grace" but "such a theology must not assume it should elevate the everyday to a feast day."[201]

b. Prophetic

At the same time, God's hiddenness is a proclamation of resistance against all forms of tyranny and ideologies of power. Preaching is an act of defiance against worldly ideologies and a refusal to be cowed by any form of domination. "In Jesus the communication of God begins with a rebuff, with the exposure of a vast chasm, with the clear revelation of a great stumbling block."[202] Preaching is the proclamation of God's sovereignty over all dominating ideologies in the world. The world has made an idolatry of God and to proclaim the gospel is to announce a message of liberation. [203]

Brueggemann affirms this prophetic dimension in preaching by citing the prophetic tradition in the scriptures. He clarifies the prophetic dimension in preaching as the "redescription of the world, with reference to YHWH by appeal to the text through poetic imagination that is connected to particular context."[204] Brueggemann describes a prophet through the example of Jeremiah as one who "works from a *countertext* enacted through a *counterimagination* that offers a *counterdescription of reality*."[205]

A contemporary prophet —Archbishop Oscar Romero (1917–1980) of El Salvador— who was martyred in 1978 while celebrating the Eucharist, laments a preaching that is not prophetic:

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[200]Hilkert, *Naming Grace,* 37.

[201] Karl Rahner, *The Mystical Way in Everyday Life: Sermons, Prayers, and Essays* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2010), 172.

[202] Hilkert, *Naming Grace,* 21–22.

[203] Barber, "Lanterns at Dusk?," 62.

[204] Brueggemann, *The Word Militant*, 17.

[205] Brueggemann , *The Word Militant,* 16.

A Church that doesn't provoke any crisis, a gospel that doesn't unsettle, a word of God that doesn't get under anyone's skin, a word of God that doesn't touch the real sin of society in which it is being proclaimed, what gospel is that? ... The gospel is courageous; it's the good news of him who came to take away the world's sins.[206]

Preaching the gospel, however, is not just to denounce evil but also to announce God's alternative of life and goodness. Thus, ultimately it is about hope. Hope is the expression of the spirit that never surrenders nor resigns in fatalism but actively struggles to the end.

Conclusion

Preaching begins in the dilemma of how to speak about an ineffable God which the ancient tradition called the apophatic tradition helped to clarify for us. On the other hand it is in this very dilemma of speaking about an unfathomable God that we find the compelling reason and desire to speak about God, who is wholly absent but also wholly immanent. The path in preaching of the unspeakable God is mysticism while the path in preaching of the utterly interruptive God is prophecy. Thus, preaching involves the tensive dialectics between the *via negativa* and *via positiva.*

But the greatest way of speaking about God is through Godself—in Jesus Christ the *logos* of God. Christ is the bridge between the *via negativa* and *via positiva*; the mediator between heaven and earth who is the preacher par excellence by showing us the in-breaking of the reign of God in everyday life.

Apophatic theology was strong in the Christian tradition especially among the early fathers of the church and the mystical tradition. However it was largely forgotten in the medieval period up until the modern period. The postmodern ethos has provided some opening for the return of apophatic tradition in theology.

The return of the apophatic tradition can be seen in Tracy's argument about the "return to God" in postmodern theology. A similar concept is found in Barber's notion of preaching as "revelation verification" rather than "world verification".

The limitation of theology and language, let alone of speaking about God, indicates that preaching is not just the verbal proclamation of the gospel in the pulpit but also the need

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[206] Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love: The Pastoral Wisdom of Archbishop Oscar Romero*, trans. and comp. James R. Brockman (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 64.

for ritual, living and solidarity. It incorporates these significant elements not in a compartmentalized but in an integrative and holistic whole.

CHAPTER III

The *Logos*[207] of Globalization

Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
The calf and the young lion shall browse together,
with a little child to guide them.
The cow and the bear shall be neighbors,
together their young shall rest;
the lion shall eat hay like the ox.
The baby shall play by the cobra's den,
and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair (Isaiah 11: 5 – 8).

It is the best of times, it is the worst of times![208]

Charles Dickens's line reverberates strongly today amidst all the complex and transformative processes in the world which everybody calls globalization. Without denying the danger of its becoming a cliché, nonetheless, globalization accurately captures the zeitgeist of the contemporary situation. "Globalization might justifiably be claimed to be the defining feature of human society at the start of the twenty-first century."[209]

How can we describe the *logos* or zeitgeist of globalization in late modernity?[210] Two of the most celebrated leitmotif about globalization is the greater interconnectedness among nations, cultures and religions in the world and the massive expansion of knowledge and information.

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[207] We use *logos* here to mean unifying principle or spirit of a certain epoch in history as we discussed in Chapter II.

[208] Paraphrased from the opening lines of Charles Dicken's *Tale of Two Cities* set during the time of the French Revolution, 1789–1799.

[209] John Beynon and David Dunkerley, *Globalization: The Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 3.

[210] Although globalization is a twentieth century term, it points to not just a contemporary reality but to past epochs— even if critics objects to its over-broad usage—for example, the Silk Road helping to integrate East & West Asia/Europe after 200BC, the Greek and Roman empire in ancient times, Mongol empire and Islamic golden age in medieval age, the Age of Discovery and European colonization and industrialization of modern times. See for example, Janet Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250—1350* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Joachim K. Rennstich, "Three Steps in Globalization," *Globalization and Global History,* eds. Barry Gills & William Thompson (London: Routledge, 2006); and Andre Gunder Frank, *Reorient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998).

The greater interconnectedness among nations, cultures and religion has led to optimistic claims; such as the world has become "one global village,"[211] a "global *oecumene*"[212] or a "single place."[213] These assertions evoke a sense of universalism with the ardent promise of widespread benefit for everyone in the planet. No wonder these have led many writers to jubilantly trumpet the splendour of globalization. For example, Thomas Friedman declared that "the world is flat" suggesting that we have all become equal.[214] Francis Fukuyama announced "the end of history" claiming that capitalism and liberal democracy has triumphed and there is no other competing ideology; it is the end of history![215]

One can easily suspect, however, that Friedman's and Fukuyama's claims are not necessarily value free; they speak from a Western and neo-liberal capitalist perspective. They see the world becoming flat and one around a neo-liberal capitalist system and world history converging around American or Western values and worldview as the centre. Globalization in this sense becomes another homogenizing totality which is no different from the optimistic claims of modernity and even postmodernity which Michel Foucault described as "more of the same."[216] This is one of the reasons why Pierre Bourdieu persistently attacks globalization as a "false universalism of the West."[217] Similarly, this resonates with Emmanuel Levinas' vehemence against the violence of the West through the subjecting of the other to sameness.[218]

Indeed, these homogenizing and triumphalistic beliefs can be found in the policies and principles of governments and other agencies around the world which have caused so much violence, poverty, human rights violations, injustice and marginalization. One can easily trace these principles in the American supported or sponsored wars in the Third World,

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[211] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967).

[212] Ulf Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity: Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

[213] Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London: Sage, 1992).

[214] Thomas Friedman, *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005).

[215] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

[216] Gary Brent Madison and Marty Fairbairn, *The Ethics of Postmodernity: Current Trends in Continental Thought* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1999), 6.

[217] Pierrre Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance: Against the Tyranny of the Market* (New York: New Press, 1998), 19.

[218] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* (Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1979), 43.

the surmounting debt of developing countries, the disappearance of minor languages, culture and religion, the wanton destruction to the environment by multi-national corporations, and many other instances. If this is what globalization is, it is no different from the power agenda of the past which espoused the trampling of the strong over the weak.

These triumphalistic claims of sameness necessarily create a wedge dividing the world into those who are in and those who are out, those who belong and those who don't belong in a "globalized world" with the West as the unifying power. For example, Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilization"[219] hypothesizes that the main conflict in our contemporary world is between Western Christianity and Islam. Benjamin Barber's "Jihad against McWorld"[220] suggests that the struggle for power in our world today is primarily between Islam and Western capitalism. On the other hand, George Ritzer in his "McDonaldization of society" turns a critical eye on the cultural imperialism of the West and the homogenization or Americanization of the world.[221]

No-one denies that the world has become interconnected through fast, intricate and massive communication, transportation, politics and economic structures. But at the same time this interconnection has revolutionized heterogenization. If sameness is the *logos* of modernity, differentiality is the *logos* of globalization. The interconnection of globalization is not about sameness but the radicalization of differentiality. Arjun Appadurai, argues that indigenization rather than homogenization is the more crucial process of globalization.[222] Globalization despite its homogenizing forces has intensified localization and indigenization more than any other period of history; "the more the world becomes global, the more people feel local."[223] We live in a world in which it is a lot easier for us to recognize our differences rather than our shared collective identity. What is unique about contemporary globalization is its emphasis on the distinctiveness of the different ethnicity, culture, religion of groups and the individual, with the accompanying danger, however, of overly privileging difference.

[219] Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

[220] Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld* (New York: Times Books, 1995).

[221] George Ritzer, *The Mcdonaldization of Society: An Investigation into the Changing Character of Contemporary Social Life* (Newbury Park, CA: Pine Forge Press, 1993).

[222] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

[223] Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity: The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture*, Volume 2 (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), xxiii.

The massive expansion of knowledge and information explosion brought about by new technologies in communications is another unique feature of contemporary globalization. On the other hand this heightened awareness has brought to the fore the limitation of reason, science and language—the more we know the more we know how little we know.

Contemporary globalization blossomed after the horrors of Second World War which saw the belief in utopia, especially the modernist *telos*, crumbled. The lesson from modernity is that reason alone cannot solve all human problems and bring progress, peace and happiness. Modernist optimism was replaced by the postmodernist pessimism about absolute truths and grand theories.

In science, the realization that all scientific facts and truths are true for now until disproven in the future became more widely accepted. "After Einstein, it became disturbingly clear that not only was science unable to provide us with definitive proof, but its findings were inherently limited and provisional."[224] Because of this provisionality, philosophers and scientists were beginning to return to a more apophatic approach to knowledge.[225] Ludwig Wittgenstein, for example, discounted the possibility of absolute and total knowledge and the limitations of language in his preface and last lines of *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*: "About what one can not speak, one must remain silent."[226] Similarly, the physicist Percy Bridgman in the face of the immensity of physical reality says, "We are confronted with something truly ineffable. We have reached the limit of the great pioneers of science, the vision, namely, that we live in a sympathetic world in that it is comprehensible to our minds."[227] Albert Einstein, at the end of all his ground-breaking scientific discoveries can only conclude in mystical wonder: "The most beautiful emotion we can experience is the mystical. It is the sower of all true art and science. He to whom this emotion is a stranger … is as good as dead."[228]

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[224] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 255.

[225] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 274.

[226] Ludwig Wittgenstein and Bertrand Russell, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus,* trans. C. K. Ogden (New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2009).

[227] Percy Bridgman in Huston Smith, *Beyond the Postmodern Mind: The Place of Meaning in a Global Civilization,* 3rd Quest ed. (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 2003), 8.

[228] Albert Einstein in Philipp Frank, George Rosen and Shuichi Kusaka, *Einstein, His Life and Times* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1947), 284.

Thomas Kuhn suggested that the transforming scientific changes in history which he calls *paradigm shifts* were not just a fruit of science and reason but also insight and imagination; "[they] consisted of imaginative and unpredictable flights into the unknown, all influenced by metaphors, imagery and assumptions drawn from other fields." [229] Aesthetic, social, historical and psychological factors along with the rational and scientific all played important roles.[230]

These shifts to radical differentiality and unknowing have weakened and damaged old claims and structures of power and ideological prejudice—patriarchal, political, cultural and religious imperialisms. Old centres of power were demolished: the West—European and American, patriarchy, white, first world, heterosexual and adult—while new centres of identity burst forth—women, gay, lesbians, black, youth and others. [231]

Along with construction of new identities, there have been growing awareness about the numerous ways people from below appropriated, contracted, accommodated and indigenized the perceived globalizing process from the top. Manuel Vásquez and M. F. Marquardt calls this "globalization from below" or "grassroots globalization."[232] Michel de Certeau sees this as tactics of the weak or art of the weak.[233] The individual and the locality did not remain a hapless victim and passive recipients of mighty structures and forces as they appropriated and adapted these structures according to their individual and local idiosyncrasies giving rise to new or hybridized forms. These appropriations became sources of innovation and creativity as well as a medium of protest, defiance and resistance, "even if these negotiations occur under the powerful constraints of neoliberal markets and all-pervading culture industries."[234]

Out of these resistances, negotiations and differentiation, new models and ways of relationship were preferred: Vertical to horizontal; top-down to parallel and pyramid to network or flow. These relationships imply sharing in power and empowerment based on the

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[229] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 273.

[230] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 273.

[231] Manuel Castells explores more deeply these new centres of identity which transforms the landscape of globalization in *The Power of Identity*.

[232] Manuel Vásquez and M. F. Marquardt, *Globalizing The Sacred: Religion Across the Americas* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 3.

[233] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 29.

[234] Vásquez and Marquardt, *Globalizing The Sacred*, 3.

unique identity of each stakeholder. This all the more shows that globalization is not just a top-down process but a bottom-up movement.

Roland Robertson contends, however, that it is not just a question of either homogenization or heterogenization, but rather of the ways in which both of these tendencies became features of life across much of the late-twentieth-century world.[235]   Globalization is both local and global—*glocal*. "Life, as Robertson has said, is now '*glocal*', simultaneously global and local, ecumenical and particular, catholic and congregational."[236] Real globalization, therefore, occurs in the intersection between the global and the local where new structures are emerging, for example, new social movements and new sub-cultures.

Globalization is a movement of inclusion which embellishes alterity and dissents from any form of domination that would promote sameness.   No one system has solutions to the problems of every nation. The time for *sola ratio* or *sola fidei* is past. Globalization is not capitalism; it integrates elements from socialism, capitalism and other economic systems. Globalization is not modernity; it integrates elements from pre-modern, modern and postmodern. Globalization is not Westernization or Americanization; it is polycentric— creates and sustains new centres in the East and South. Globalisation is "a complex set of processes, not a single one"[237] which often "operate in a contradictory or oppositional fashion."[238] These have brought to the fore the limits of reason, science and language. This new mode of being-in-the world of interconnection towards differentiality and unknowing, is the *logos* of globalization.

Globalization and Everyday Life

This *logos* of globalization has often been understood in structuralist perspective highlighting the impact of macro and societal structures upon contemporary everyday life. What has often been overlooked, however, is the fact that everyday changes have also led to global changes. For example, the women's movement which has brought audacious changes

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[235] Roland Robertson, "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity" in *Global Modernities: Theory, Culture & Society*, eds. Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash and Roland Robertson (London: Sage, 1995) 27.

[236] Robertson, "Glocalization," 27.

[237] Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 12–13.

[238] Giddens, *Runaway World*, 13.

to society was not a result of mighty systemic power struggles and revolution but many small steps in education, work and the family.[239]

On the other hand, "globalization also influences everyday life as much as it does events happening on a world scale."[240] Globalization is more than just the world becoming one global village but also the internal systems, values and sentiments happening within the lives of people. Globalization is both and at the same time manoeuvred by mighty global structures on the one hand and by local creativity and ingenuity of individual people, on the other. The intersection of the globalizing, localizing and individualizing forces often occurs in everyday life.

Indeed, it is in the trivialities and banality of everyday experiences—family, time, space, tradition, belief, identity, values and environment—that the most important changes in globalization happen. "Globalization isn't only about what is 'out there', remote and far away from the individual. It is an 'in here' phenomenon too, influencing intimate and personal aspects of our lives."[241] It is revolutionizing not just global structures but also everybody's deepest values and beliefs. "We continue to talk of the nation, the family, work, tradition, nature, as if they were all the same as in the past. They are not."[242] It subverts old cherished meaning-giving dynamics as well as facilitating new ones. It is no wonder, that the swift and confusing changes that globalization brings to our world make us think that it is a world out of control, in Gidden's term—a runaway world.[243]

The *logos* of globalization as lived in the everyday life can be discovered through certain patterns which were intensified in globalization. They form the fabric of everyday life that without them, contemporary daily life would be inadequate. These patterns are what distinguish our current everyday life from the past and which make globalization a new era, indeed.

Let us now look these daily patterns in globalization.

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[239] Ulrich Beck and E. Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization: Institutionalized Individualism and its Social and Political Consequences* (London: Sage, 2002).

[240] Giddens, *Runaway World*, 4.

[241] Giddens, *Runaway World*, 51.

[242] Giddens, *Runaway World*, 18.

[243] Giddens, *Runaway World*, 2.

A. Reconstitution of the Time and Space of Everyday Life

In 1967, Marshall McLuhan foresaw that the world will turn into "one global village" pointing to the new media technologies which are swiftly driving interconnection of places and time. Ever since, globalization has not only intensified interconnection but also a reconstitution of time and space. Primary modes of this, among others, are the decoupling of space and time; the virtual freely intersecting, sometimes taking over, the real; and the privileging of the present over the past and the future.

David Harvey describes the contemporary transformation in space and time as a "time-space compression."[244] He observes that "the speeding up of economic and social processes has experientially shrunk the globe, so that distance and time no longer appear to be major constraints on the organization of human activity."[245] In contrast, Anthony Giddens sees it as stretching of social life across time and space which he summarizes in the notion of "time-space distanciation." [246] By this he refers to "the conditions under which time and space are organized so as to connect presence and absence."[247] It is in this light that he talks of place as phantasmagoric which means that locales are continuously preoccupied by events and social influences miles away from them.[248] This triggers an ongoing rivalry between the virtual and real for attention; sometimes this becomes a tyranny by the distant space and time—the distant always grabs attention until eventually replacing the real live here and now.

A similar notion of this concept of space is *deterritorialization* developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, wherein cultural subjects and objects are disconnected from their original space and time. [249] This is complemented, however, by a reterritorialization wherein these objects acquire new meaning from the host who receive them. This flattening concept of space contributes to the notion of the decline of states and shrinking of the world into one

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[244] David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990), 240.

[245] Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity,* 240.

[246] Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 14.

[247] Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 14.

[248] Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 18–19.

[249] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* (London: Continuum, 2004), 260–284.

global village. "Globalization now can be defined as some sort of common space which has no territorial basis."[250]

Gilles Lipovetsky's take on time is from a historical perspective. He points to the pre-eminence of the present, in a concept he calls hypermodernity, which evokes uncertainty about the future and lack of interest in the past. This temporality which he calls the "euphoria of the now," is tantamount to the disappearance of history privileging the present over the past and the future.[251] In the same way, Harvey argues, "the present is all there is."[252] Nowotny adds: "The future does not exist, or at least does not regulate one's behaviour, and the past is doomed to obsolescence."[253] All these contribute to an anchorless existence and promote a now that does not carry any responsibility for the past and for the future.

A new form of space intensified in globalization is cyberspace. Cyberspace has generated a virtual community and augmented reality. Vincent Mosco argues that cyberspace is a "mythic space," which transcends ordinary worlds of time, space, and politics. He argues furthermore that cyberspace has given rise to three triumphalistic central myths of our time: the end of history, the end of geography, and the end of politics.[254]

B. Telemediation of Everyday Life

The reconstitution of time and space in the global age is most often technologically mediated. Janice Hanson describes the impact of mediated time and space in everyday life as the increasing organization of the everyday around the information that technology gives people—TV, internet, social network and others.[255] This led to a sense of acceleration of time. Everyone's time has become hectic and rushed making life more stressful and time more fragmented. This results in a blurring between private and public space and time.[256]

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[250] Olivier Roy, *Conversation with History*, Interview with Olivier Roy, Hosted by Harry Kreisler, University of California, Berkeley, accessed February 3, 2011at http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people7/Roy/roy07-con1.html.

[251] Gilles Lipovetsky, "Time Against Time or the Hypermodern Times," *Hypermodern Times*, eds. Gilles Lipovetsky, Sébastien Charles and Andrew Brown (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2005), 37.

[252] David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity,* 240.

[253] Helga Nowotny, *Time: The Modern and Postmodern Experience* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1994) 11.

[254] See Vincent Mosco, *The Digital Sublime: Myth, Power, and Cyberspace* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004).

[255] Janice Hanson, *How Cell Phones and the Internet Changed the Way We Live, Play and Work* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, 2007), 4.

[256] Hanson, *How Cell Phones and the Internet Changed the Way We Live, Play and Work*, 3.

John Tomlinson describes this reframing of time and space in terms of speed and calls it a "culture of immediacy". He defines its application to space as "freedom from intermediate agency; direct relation or connection . . . proximate, nearest, next, close, near."[257] And in relation to time as: "occurring without delay or lapse in time, done at once; instant."[258] The culture of immediacy eradicates the distance in time and space which " has historically separated now from later, here from elsewhere."[259] In the same vein, Joshua Meyrowitz talks of how electronic media has "led to a nearly total dissociation of physical place and social place."[260]

Tomlinson enumerates the everyday examples of this notion of culture of immediacy in developed societies worldwide:[261]

- The blurring of boundaries between work life and home life because of networked computers.
- The fast and easy access to information through the internet wherein the first source of information that people go to is no longer a library but a search engine—Google.
- 24/7 shopping hours.
- 24/7 news through both broadcast and online, delivering news in real time from whatever part of the globe, even the remotest part of the world.
- A shift in banking, insurance, utilities, travel and transport services and domestic service from a face-to-face to online or call centres from another continent
- Digitalization of photography and video allowing the majority to have a camera through mobile phones, compact cameras and web cameras.
- Liquidity in career moves during the course of a working life.
- Speed dating.
- 'Multitasking'.
- A global youth culture in which mobile phones have become defining elements both in terms of style icons and as modalities of interpersonal relationship.

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[257] John Tomlinson, *The Culture of Speed: The Coming of Immediacy* (London: Sage, 2007), 74.

[258] Tomlinson, *The Culture of Speed*, 74.

[259] Tomlinson, *The Culture of Speed,* 74.

[260] Joshua Meyrowitz, *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 115.

[261] Tomlinson, *The Culture of Speed,* 72–73.

The ubiquity of electronic and communication mediated activities in today's everyday life, indeed, best represents globalization's *logos* towards interconnection. Following McLuhan's principle, "the medium is the message,"[262] the world wide web or the internet depicts a world where we are all interconnected. The internet is not just about technology; it has become a way of life and a means of sociality, collaboration, interactivity and the chance for participation. Collaboration—a word so often used in the milieu of globalization—is most apparent in the new media through interactivity, open source development of applications like browsers, programs and websites like Wikipedia, blogs, content management systems such as Wordpress and social networks like Facebook, YouTube, Flickr and many others. The internet is giving billions a self, an identity, a bed of their own. The internet is creating a virtual world with virtual citizens called netizens collaborating in almost every imaginable sphere of life. Social media has become the world's largest virtual focus group with millions of participants revealing their un/biased thoughts each day.

While it has revolutionized interconnection, globalization has also intensified localization and indigeneity of diverse culture. It has likewise provided the means for individuals to become not just consumers but producers of media which have helped to unleash tremendous innovation and creativity. This has led to the blurring of the lines between producer and consumer, producer and user in the media technologies as contained in the concepts of "vernacular creativity," "produsers," and "prosumers."[263]

On the other hand, the anonymity and openness of the internet where there is no central authority and contains both rubbish and treasure, propels the need for careful discrimination and handling of the internet's content. The issue of privacy and too much information being collected from everyone, which Siva Vaidhyanathan described as the "googlization of everything,"[264] has likewise fed the suspicion that the internet is the panopticon of globalization. Moreover, social network has created pathologies like narcissism, exhibitionism and amplified voyeurism—"look at me".

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[262] McLuhan, *Understanding Media*, 9.

[263] Jean Burgess describes vernacular creativity as "a productive articulation of consumer practices and knowledge (of, say, television genre codes) with older popular traditions and communicative practices (storytelling, family photography, scrapbooking, collecting)." See Jean Burgess, "Hearing Ordinary Voices: Cultural Studies, Vernacular Creativity and Digital Storytelling," *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 20(2) (2006), 201-214. Accessed 2 May 2011 at http://eprints.qut.edu.au/6243/1/6243.pdf.

[264] See Siva Vaidhyanathan, *The Googlization of Everything: (and Why We Should Worry)* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011).

Telemediation also portrays an overwhelming technologization of everyday life. This is increasingly manifested in the enthusiasm about the latest product, gizmos and technology. Information production is overtaking industrial revolution. Even as we have witnessed the lightning speed of development of technology, technology will become faster; the future generation will grow with more artificial intelligence all around them. This adds anxiety to the possibility of mechanization of life in which technology wields power over humanity in the future through robots taking over humans or humans becoming just a tiny cog in one big machine. In this way, Henry David Thoreau's fear two centuries ago may become true: "Men have become the tools of their tools."[265] And as Martin Heidegger argued, technology has obliterated all distances, but has not necessarily generated any nearness.[266] Similarly, Mosco talks about the immense possibility and threat which cyberspace conveys in his concept of the digital sublime: "Cyberspace has become the latest icon of the technological and electronic sublime, praised for its epochal and transcendent characteristics and demonized for the depth of the evil it can conjure."[267]

The pervasiveness of media—traditional and new media—has led to their dominance as value transmitters, replacing traditional tellers such as elders, parents, church, teachers and traditions. Tomas Halik, speaking about the media, argues, "for many they are the arbiters of truth: what is real and of importance is what can be seen on the television news."[268] Jean Baudrillard, in his theory of *simulacra*, points to this phenomenon where reality is defined through terms of media claims. Baudrillard warns us about the danger of this "hyper-reality" where social reality and its 'simulation' in media can no longer be distinguished: "It is no longer a question of imitation, nor of reduplication, nor even of parody. It is rather a question of substituting signs of the real for the real." [269] This blurring of the line between the real and the artificial has reinforced the seduction of surfaceness.

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[265] Henry David Thoreau, *Walden or Life in the Woods*, Vol. 1 (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1854), 61.

[266] Martin Heidegger, 'The Thing', *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstafter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 165.

[267] Mosco, *Digital Sublime*, 24.

[268] Tomas Halik, *The Shadow of a Dead God?* Accessed 17 May 2010 at http://www.halik.cz/ja/shadow.php.

[269] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 2.

C. Individualization of Everyday Life

The second half of the twentieth century became a fertile ground for an intensive individualization process which led to the decline of basic social and traditional institutions. It put the individual right at the centre of social process which, as Ulrich Beck and Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim argue, made the individual the basic unit of social reproduction for the first time in history.[270]

This process of individualization is an important dimension of what Beck calls the present as reflexive modernity. The contemporary individual is presented with lots of choices, where previous generations had no such choices. But as Nicholas Lash says, the individual needs to make these choices fast; the individual must—as in a reflex—make quick decisions.[271] It is in this sense that Lieven Boeve puts it: "Personal identity is no longer preconceived: it has become more and more reflexive."[272]

This process, however, is not the turn towards the egoistic self in the neo-liberal sense. "The social-scientific sense of 'individualization' should thus be distinguished from the neoliberal sense."[273] It is maximizing one's own potential—self-actualization; autonomous individuals mastering their destiny. In the contemporary world, first of all, I am "me"—not Australian, not Catholic and not "I am because we are."[274]

The transformations in the second half of the century were conducive to this process—the job market, the need for mobility and training, labour and social legislation, pension provisions and others.[275] This involved, however, a complex day-to-day balancing act for the individual. As with traditional society where one was born into its preconditions (such as social estate and religion), in late modernity, as Beck sees it, people are damned to individualization, to use Jean Paul Sartre's evocative phrase.[276]

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[270] Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization*, xxii.

[271] Nicolas Lash in Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, "Introduction," *Individualization*, ix.

[272] Lieven Boeve, *Interrupting Tradition: An Essay on Christian Faith in a Postmodern Context* (Louvain, Belgium: Peeters Press, 2003), 53.

[273] Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization*, xxi.

[274] Fred L Hord and Jonathan Scott Lee, *I Am Because We Are: Readings in Black Philosophy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995).

[275] Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization,* 8.

[276] Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization,* 4.

This has taken a heavy toll on the individual as never before. The drive to be individual amidst today's demands has produced various side effects such as addiction, insecurity, depression, boredom and vertigo. "Addiction comes into play when choice, which should be driven by autonomy, is subverted by anxiety."[277] Previously, addiction referred only to drugs and alcohol, but now can be applied to almost everything—work, exercise, food, sex—or even love.[278] This explains why therapy became so prevalent, especially in Western countries: "This creates the market for the answer factories, the psycho-boom, the advice literature—that mixture of the esoteric cult, the primal scream, mysticism, yoga and Freud which is supposed to drown out the tyranny of possibilities but in fact reinforces it with its changing fashions."[279]

The major impact of the making of the individual as the centre of social reproduction is a decline of traditional forms of sociality: state, class, nuclear family and ethnic groups. People have become unanchored from family, tradition and religion, which were safe anchors during the pre-modern period.

What are some of the most important transformations in the traditional institutions brought about by individualization as bolstered by globalization in the last fifty years?

a. Family

The family in the last fifty years has become the major arena for the struggles between tradition and modernity. The standard 1950's family—where both parents lived together with their children of the marriage, the mother was a full-time housewife and the father the breadwinner—is now the minority.[280]

The everyday life of the pre-industrial family revolved around the demands of work and economics in an intimate environment like the village.[281] In the traditional family, marriage was a bit like a state of nature where for both men and women it was a stage of life that the large majority was expected to go through.[282]

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[277] Giddens, *Runaway World*, 47.

[278] Giddens, *Runaway World*, 45.

[279] Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization,* 7.

[280] Giddens, *Runaway World*, .

[281] Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization,* 91.

[282] Giddens, *Runaway World*, 60.

When society became highly industrialized, the everyday life of the family became more diffused and the identity and roles of each member of the family were drastically altered. The uniform and predictable rhythm of the pre-industrial family's life has been altered by different social institutions—the timetable of kindergarten, school and youth organization, the working hours of the husband and wife, the opening hours of shops, the schedule of public transport and so on.[283]

Because of the scattered nature of the lives of individual family members, the family has become more of "an elective relationship, an association of individual persons, who each bring to it their own interests, experiences and plans and who are each subjected to different controls, risks and constraints."[284] As a consequence, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim contends: "The logic of individually designed lives was thus given a boost, and ties to the family were considerably loosened."[285]

What are the future prospects for the family? Beck and Beck-Gernsheim don't say that the family is breaking up as a result of these drastic transformations; it is only acquiring a new historical form where changes are taking place towards what they call the contours of a "post-familial family."[286] New alternatives to traditional family are rapidly emerging, for example, "without a formal marriage or without children; single parenting, conjugal succession, or same-sex partnerships; part-time relationships and companionships lasting for some period in life; living between more than one home or between different towns."[287] Marriage is not the only option; it can be delayed and just having a baby without necessarily having a partner is often enough.

b. Marriage

Individualization also transformed traditional marriage. Marriage became the project of individual persons. "The why, what and how long of marriage are placed entirely in the hands and hearts of those joined in it. From now on there is just one maxim defining what marriage means: the script is the individualization of marriage."[288] "Today the couple,

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[283] Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization,* 91.

[284] Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization,* 96.

[285] Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization,* 89.

[286] Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization,* 85–86 .

[287] Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization,* 97–98.

[288] Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization,* 11.

married or unmarried, is at the core of what the family is. The couple came to be at the centre of family life as the economic role of the family dwindled and love, or love plus sexual attraction, became the basis of forming marriage ties."[289]   The couple is "becoming visible as separate individuals, each linked to the family through different expectations and interests, each experiencing different opportunities and burdens."[290]

c.   Feminization/Post-Patriarchy

One of the most significant movements of the last fifty years of the last century was the feminist movement. This led to a feminization of everyday life which further altered the traditional family. As women stake claim to greater quality, traditional family systems are under strain, in many parts of the world.[291]

In the nineteenth century, women's vocation was the gentle and ever ready "living for the family"', its highest commandments self-abnegation and self-sacrifice.[292] Today, it is still women who bear the brunt of family tasks, but they more and more display expectations and wishes that extend beyond the family.[293]

A major consequence of this is the gradual breakdown of the patriarchal family. "The inequality of men and women was intrinsic to the traditional family."[294]   We live now in a post-patriarchal family. "The heterosexual, nuclear, patriarchal family built around a long-lasting marriage is today the exception rather than the rule in the United States and in the majority of Western Europe."[295]   The breakdown of patriarchal family not only transformed women but also men. A new understanding of masculinity emerged which liberates men from the burden of their responsibility as patriarchs.[296]

These massive transformations to traditional family unsurprisingly gave strong impetus to fundamentalists. "Equality of the sexes, and the sexual freedom of women, which are incompatible with the traditional family, are anathema to fundamentalist groups.

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[289] Giddens, *Runaway World*, 59.

[290] Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization,* 90.

[291] Giddens, *Runaway World*, 12.

[292] Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization,* 55.

[293] Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization,* 56.

[294] Giddens, *Runaway World*, 54.

[295] Castells, *The Power of Identity*, xxviii.

[296] Castells , *The Power of Identity*, xxviii.

Opposition to them, indeed, is one of the defining features of religious fundamentalism across the world."[297]

D. Secularization of Everyday Life

In early modernity, the three foundational sociologists—Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber—theorized that a process of secularization resulting from modernization will lead to a decline in religion as society relied more on science and technology to control and explain the social world.[298]

Today, there is an ongoing debate on this matter. Opponents of this thesis, like Peter Berger,[299] argue that the secularization theory is flawed by claiming that we live in pervasive religiosity instead of secularity.[300] Others even call the contemporary situation spiritual renaissance, desecularization or re-enchantment.[301] Manuel Castells also argues that religion has served as a source of resistance to the perceived homogenizing and hegemonic tendencies of globalization .[302] Jürgen Habermas talks of the present as a "post-secular society" which calls for greater tolerance in a two-way street: secular people need to tolerate the role of religious people in the public square and vice versa.[303]

Opponents also point to the rise of new religious movements, although these movements that are now "returning" in strength are different from pre-modern and are thoroughly modern.[304] World religions continue to thrive in Western societies, thanks to immigrants who flock to these countries. Jenkins even points to the resurgence of Christianity.[305] Religious fundamentalism is alive everywhere and aggressively promotes the

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[297] Giddens, *Runaway World*, 64.

[298] Anthony Giddens, *Sociology,* 6th ed. (London: Polity, 2009), 695.

[299] Peter Berger is one of many thinkers who retract the secularization belief about the demise of religion. He theorized in the 1960's that religion will eventually fade as modernity enters its advanced stages but recently has recanted this theory.

[300] Peter Berger, "Religion in a Globalizing World," *Pew Forum's Biannual Faith Angle Conference on Religion, Politics and Public Life* (Key West, FL: December 2006). Accessed Sept 15, 2010 at http://www.pewforum.org/Politics-and-Elections/Religion-in-a-Globalizing-World%282%29.aspx.

[301] Charles Taylor, *Dilemmas and Connections: Selected Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 287.

[302] Castells, *The Power of Identity.*

[303] Jürgen Habermas, "A 'Post-secular' Society—What Does That Mean?" *Reset, Doc* 16 September 2008. Accessed 12 May 2010 at http://www.resetdoc.org/story/00000000926.

[304] Taylor, *Dilemmas and Connections,* 146.

[305] Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 5.

move back to earlier, purer forms of religion, beyond the recent compromises of modernism.[306]

Supporters of the secularization thesis, on the other hand, point to many surveys that show a sharp decline in religious beliefs and church attendance of mostly Western countries. They continue to uphold the fact that "disenchantment" continues to hold sway as many simply do not see reality as the abode of spirits, superstition and magic.[307]   There is also the rise of what Simon Hooper calls the new atheism—an aggressive form of atheism. Proponents of this movement include authors and scientists such as Sam Harris, Daniel C. Dennett, Richard Dawkins, Victor J. Stenger and Christopher Hitchens who appeared in the period 2004–2008. They advocate that religion should not just be allowed but should be disputed, critiqued and exposed as deceptive.[308]

Margaret Somerville calls these new atheists "fundamentalist neo-atheists"[309]— fundamentalist alongside religious fanatics—as she objects to their "religion has no place in the public square aggressive approach."[310] Somerville argues that modern societies need to "revalue religion", "even if we are not people of Faith", to see it as a store of traditional knowledge and wisdom.[311]

There is no denying the fact, however, that the face of religion is undergoing massive transformation especially amongst the experience of individual believers. Religion no longer dominates public sphere; it is more and more privatized and there is a decline of public faith and practice. There is diminishing religious allegiance especially by young people. Grace Davie calls this "believing without belonging" in a study of religion in Great Britain since 1945.[312]   Stewart Hoover maintains that religion remains "vital," even if its form, location, and practices of meaning-making no longer occupy the traditional spaces and the institutional

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[306] Taylor, *Dilemmas and Connections,* 146–147.

[307] Giddens, *Sociology,* 697.

[308] Simon Hooper, "The rise of the New Atheists," *CNN*, November 08, 2006. Accessed 2010-03-16 at http://articles.cnn.com/2006-11-08/world/atheism.feature_1_new-atheists-new-atheism-religion?_s=PM:WORLD.

[309] Margaret Somerville, "Should Religion Be Evicted from the Public Square?" Warrane College, The University of New South Wales, 20 July 2011. Accessed at http://warrane.unsw.edu.au/f/publications/podcasts/Margaret_Somerville_Religion_Public_Square.mp3.

[310] Somerville, "Should Religion Be Evicted from the Public Square?".

[311] Somerville, "Should Religion Be Evicted from the Public Square?".

[312] See Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain Since 1945: Believing Without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

church and clerical authority are de-emphasized.[313]   Hoover sees this as the quest by the self in religion: "Without the firm categories and boundaries of received religion, she feels freed to move beyond them into a cultural/symbolic marketplace increasingly filled with resources relevant to her quest."[314] Similarly Robert Bellah equates this to a commodification of Christianity.[315] Berger calls it patchwork religion where people put together different elements of their own tradition and other traditions.[316]

On the other hand, among Catholics, there are a significant and growing number of people returning to practices like Eucharistic adoration, the Rosary, the *Lectio Divina* and other sacramental and Catholic forms of devotion.[317] Is this a return to antiquity, plain neo-conservatism or a going back to the numinous, the transcendent, and the eternal, especially by a generation that has grown up mostly without it?[318] Is this a reaction to the effect of secularization and demythologization—the disappearance and effacement of myth and ritual in daily life? Somerville has pointed out that results of values surveys show that "a longing for transcendence is a rapidly escalating phenomenon in our intensely individualistic Western societies."[319]

Another effect of secularization is that Christianity is no longer the privileged power broker in the world. We live in a post-Christendom era. The contemporary ethos is openness to all religion; secularization created the fertile ground for religious pluralism.   Thus, Berger argues that pluralism instead of secularization is the major consequence of globalization on religion because of "some very basic processes of modernity: mass migration, mass travel, and probably most important, mass communication—films, television, the internet."[320] Globalization is providing fertile soil for attempts at deepening the dialogue among religions. Today most often the glaring differences are emphasized but on the other hand there is a

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[313] Stewart Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 72.

[314] Hoover, *Religion in the Media Age,* 73.

[315] Robert Bellah et. al., *The Good Society* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 183.

[316] Berger, "Religion in a Globalizing World".

[317] Matthew Mirabile, *A Catholic Faith for A Postmodern World*. Accessed 2 October 2009 at
http://www.forministry.com/vsItemDisplay.dsp&objectID=F25A5ED5-85CB-429C-
B257F5622BFA174F&method=display&templateID=C3435351-D45C-4B52-867A3F794D1CD85C.

[318] Frank Senn, "Orthodoxia, Orthopraxis, and Seekers," *The Strange New Word of the Gospel: Re-evangelizing in the Postmodern World*, ed. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 155.

[319] Somerville, "Should Religion Be Evicted from the Public Square?" .

[320] Berger, "Religion in a Globalizing World".

greater awareness that every religion may in fact share common sources.[321] There is also the observation that religions today cross-pollinate.

However, secularization in non-Western countries, especially in theocratic societies, is often seen as an agency of Westernization of local and national culture, the proliferation of western values of liberalism, licentiousness and materialism which undermine non-Western religion and culture.

Finally, secularization betrays the concrete struggle in everyday life by many regarding doubts and hope about the ultimate questions of life: purpose of life, death, life after death and others. As the world moves into a globalized mode, people continue to experience an ongoing struggle with evil within; a spiritual struggle against pride, egoism, conceit, vengeance and other inner demons.

E. Commodification of Everyday Life

Consuming and shopping, window shopping, looking for bargains and announcement of sale, have become major social practices in the globalized economy. Shopping malls have taken over the world. More and more new "needs" and commodities are created. Jean Baudrillard has argued that consumption becomes increasingly based upon desires, not simply upon need.[322] More and more aspects of life are turned into commodities. For example, some pay people to sit with dying parents. Brands have become more important than the product. Advertising is huge, growing 30% faster than production. Shopping has become a major leisure activity, even some sort of therapy— "retail therapy." Brand has overtaken our identity.

This commodification has even acquired a religious meaning. Boeve talks of: "pilgrimages to Disneyland, stock market gurus, bank edifices which rise up like cathedrals and temples, the Christmas of consumption (and the consumption of Christmas) the myth of the self-made man."[323]

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[321] Armstrong, *The Case for God*,

[322] Jean Baudrillard and Mark Poster. *Selected Writings* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), 32–59.

[323] Boeve, *Interrupting Tradition*, 76.

Sebastien argues that we are now in the stage of late modernity characterized by, among other conditions, hyperconsumption and hypernarcissism, wherein luxury "is increasingly consumed for the satisfaction it procures—a sense of eternity in a world in thrall to the transience of things—and not for the status it enables one to flaunt."[324]

Indeed, there is a massive marketization of everyday life. As Lieven Boeve observes, "every area of daily life is ultimately absorbed into the market."[325] This has led to seeing life and the meaning of one's identity in a materialistic way; one's identity is attached to commodity, in the words of Marx, "fetishism with commodity."[326] Marx further argues that the commodification of everyday life will lead to an alienation of human beings from their essence.[327]

F. Democratization of Everyday Life

There is an explosion of democratization today by ordinary people expressing their opinions and protesting authoritarian governments. Ordinary people are making historical changes, knocking down tyrants who were once seen as invincible. This heightened political involvement, ironically, is happening when institutional political parties and politicians around the world are at an all-time low in approval ratings and many people are disillusioned with party politics and democracy like never before.[328] This present manifestation of democratization debunks the idea that today's generation are non-political; they maybe non-party-political, but they are certainly not mere spectators on the sidelines, especially in the face of repression.

The recent uprisings in the Middle East dubbed as the "Arab Spring", which have taken down dictators of African and Arab countries like domino pieces, is the latest glaring example of this profound democratization. No-one ever imagined just a few years ago that this would happen, because of all places, the Middle East has the most ruthless and authoritarian dictators. But not just authoritarian governments, financial institutions like banks and stock markets are taking a beating from popular protests like Occupy Wall Street

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[324] Lipovetsky, *Hypermodern Times*, 10.

[325] Boeve, *Interrupting Tradition,* 75.

[326] Karl Marx, *Capital Vol. 1* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), chapter 1 section 4.

[327] Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* (Eastford, CT: Martino Publishing, 2011).

[328] Larry Jay Diamond in Chamsy El-Ojeili and Patrick Hayden, *Critical Theories of Globalization* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 100.

movement which has already gone global. No wonder that the *Time Magazine* named its person of the year for 2011 the protester, to pay tribute to the millions of ordinary people around the globe who have taken to the streets marching for freedom and democracy.[329]

Giddens may indeed be right in saying that democracy is perhaps the most powerful energizing idea of the twentieth century.[330] But democratization did not happen overnight. We can trace strong roots of democratization from the social movements in the 1960's which triggered various liberation movements—post-colonial, black, feminist, gay and others. As Kurt Andersen writes, tracing the protest movement in the past few decades,

> In the 1960s in America they marched for civil rights and against the Vietnam War; in the '70s, they rose up in Iran and Portugal; in the '80s, they spoke out against nuclear weapons in the U.S. and Europe, against Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, against communist tyranny in Tiananmen Square and Eastern Europe.[331]

Democratization has not only transformed politics, but also information—calling for access to information for everyone. It has also transformed religion as people demand freedom of religion and privatization of religion. It affects even fashion—everybody can have his/her own style. This implies that a desire for freedom to be who I am or who we are permeates everyday life; the inner longing and desire for liberation from whatever that entangles people gushes forth at every opportunity.

But today's revolution is different from the past. For one, there is less blood spilled; civil disobedience and non-violent methods of resistance are favoured while there is a lack of enthusiasm for violent and radical revolution. Secondly, many of these are spontaneous and leaderless movements; the movement comes first, the leader last. For example, the Occupy Wall Street movement, which is still going strong, up to now remains without a leader. Thirdly, today's revolutions are very creative in their ways of protest. For example, Gene Sharp, who helped guide some of the recent revolutions, has enumerated the many ways and means to start a revolution.[332]   Last and certainly not the least but perhaps the most important factor in this age of globalization is the new media.

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[329] Kurt Andersen, **"The Protester: Person of the Year 2011,"** *Time*, Dec. 14, 2011. Accessed 15/12/11 from http://www.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2101745_2102132_2102373,00.html

[330] Giddens, *Runaway World*, 68.

[331] Andersen, **"The Protester".**

[332] See Gene Sharp, *From Dictatorship to Democracy: A Conceptual Framework for Liberation* (Cambridge, MA: Albert Einstein Institution, 2002).

The new media—internet, mobile/smart phones, social media—is the greatest vehicle of democratization. The internet is an effective instrument of democratization and resistance because it is free, anonymous, ubiquitous and fast. New media has facilitated the quick mobilization of individuals for democratic causes not to mention the commenting and sharing of information going around the internet and social network—Facebook, Twitter, Youtube. Indeed, the Che Guevara of the twenty-first century is the network. Some of the celebrated recent revolutions driven by the media were: Arab Spring and Iran uprising boosted by the internet, mobile phones and social media (Facebook, Twitter and Youtube); Orange Revolution in Ukraine and People Power Revolution in the Philippines heightened by the internet and mobile phone and the 1989 fall of Berlin Wall driven by television.

This also shows that the issue of power permeates everyday life in globalization. Absolute power is no longer tenable. The days of the remaining absolute totalitarian regimes in the world are numbered. Shared and participative power is the favoured power relation in a network society.

G. Mobilization of Everyday Life

Mobility is another ubiquitous feature of contemporary everyday life. "Migration, in its endless motion, surrounds and pervades almost all aspects of contemporary society."[333] Beck and Beck-Gernsheim call this the globalization of biography which affects us all: "In the global age, one's own life is no longer sedentary or tied to a particular place. It is a travelling life, both literally and metaphorically, a nomadic life, a life spent in cars, aeroplanes and trains, on the telephone or the internet, supported by the mass media, a transnational life stretching across frontiers."[334] Zygmunt Bauman describes this technologically mediated mobility which allows us to be mobile even when we are at home: "Nowadays we are all on the move even when we are at home ... we are glued to our chairs and zap the cable or satellite channels … jumping in and out of foreign spaces with a speed

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[333] Nikos Papastergiadis, *The Turbulence of Migration: Globalization, Deterritorialization, and Hybridity* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), 1.

[334] Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, *Individualization,* 25.

much beyond the capacity of supersonic jets and cosmic rockets, but nowhere staying long enough to be more than visitors."[335]

Two major waves of migration come to the fore in this global age: One is local migration—migration into cities which results in massive urbanization—and the other is global—migration beyond national borders. According to Castells, two-thirds of the world's population in 2030 will live in cities and three-quarters by mid-century, based on a simple extrapolation of the growth of the current urban population.[336] Global migration from different countries is mainly driven by finding greener pasture because of poverty, misery and dislocation in developing countries. Dislocation is mainly due to religious violence and ethnic conflict (according to UNHCR, at the end of 2011, 33 plus million refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people and stateless people either await repatriation, local integration or resettlement).[337]

This massive movement of people has given rise to multiculturalism, pluralism and cosmopolitanism which celebrates the possibility of those of diverse culture, religion and political persuasion working side by side and living in harmony without obliterating the other. It also puts forward the prospect of a new kind of citizenship which goes beyond nation-states—from being a citizen of one country to citizen of the world. Values such as tolerance, hospitality and ethical responsibility for the other are emphasized in this movement towards global belonging.

On the other hand, the massive migration of people from different countries has strengthened boundaries and border protection. David Morley claims that "the destabilizations of the postmodern period have given rise to a variety of born-again nationalisms, and to xenophobia directed at newcomers, foreigners or outsiders."[338] For example, the erection of a very expensive fence in Europe to try to stop the illegal crossing of

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[335] Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization: The Human Consequences* (New York: Columbia University Press 1998), 77.

[336] Castells, *The Power of Identity*, xxxii.

[337] "Population of Concern to UNHCR," *UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency*. Accessed 10 December, 2011 at http://www.unhcr.org/4ec230f516.html.

[338] David Morley, "Belongings: Place, Space and Identity in a Mediated World," *European Journal of Cultural Studies* (2001), 441–442.

borders in Spain from Africa has raised a question whether this is a sort of return of the Berlin Wall in line with so-called "Fortress Europe."[339]

Bauman describes how in an increasingly insecure world people search for safety in ideas of community.[340] Another defensive manifestation to disruptive forces of globalization are so called identity panics, like the one marshalled in Australia not so long ago, by Pauline Hanson, which often depict whites as the dislodged new victims of the forces of cosmopolitanism.[341] Similarly, Morley describes how a politics of withdrawal and separation, both within the city, and in the flight of privileged groups to the suburbs, or to the countryside, is a way of escape for local residents from the burgeoning multiculturalism of city life.[342] For example, Morley relates an interview by Michael Ignatieff of a German couple who have withdrawn to the countryside outside Frankfurt precisely because the progressively multicultural city itself now appears "foreign" to them.[343]

This raises the question as to who belongs and who is to be excluded? In many host countries, the native or pure are those who belong; the others—the outsider, the foreigner or immigrant—are those to be excluded. Morley suggests that this question "of what is foreign to whom is perhaps best posed experientially and empirically—and 'foreignness' is by no means always a matter of nationality."[344] Morley further adds that what is needed, "is the rejection of any conception of 'imagined community' which depends on the extrusion of alterity in order to bask in the warm of self-confirming homogeneity."[345]

H. Ecologization of Everyday Life

Never in history has the world been under greater ecological risk than in today's globalized world. One of the biggest impacts of the economic development brought by globalization is environmental degradation.   As Giddens asserts: "At a certain point ... very

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[339] Morley, "Belongings," 431.

[340] See Zygmunt Bauman, *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2001).

[341] Ien Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living Between Asia and the West* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 153–154.

[342] Morley, "Belongings," 432.

[343] Morley, "Belongings," 433.

[344] Morley, "Belongings," 438.

[345] Morley, "Belongings," 441.

recently in historical terms—we started worrying less about what nature can do to us, and more about what we have done to nature."[346]

As a consequence of this awareness, environmental risks such as climate change, greenhouse effect, deforestation, impact of non-biodegradable materials like plastic and many others have become a significant part of the everyday discourse by academics, technocrats and the ordinary person on the streets. Along with the risks, the corresponding solutions have gained wider popular discourse—recycling, use of renewable energies, waste segregation, organic farming and many others. This has led to calls for lifestyle changes from lesser to more radical adjustments in daily habits. Lesser adjustments involve trivial things such as conserving water and electricity, recycling or avoiding plastic, avoiding burning of waste and others. The more radical lifestyle adjustment involves going back to communal lives intimately bound with nature. This developed new perspectives and values from ownership to stewardship and the awareness of the transient nature of human existence—we are only passing in this world. This further amplifies our sense of unknowing.

This has also helped to reframe our notion of citizenship beyond national territories towards world environmental citizenship and common patrimony of the environment. Chamcy El-Ojeili and Patrick Hayden imagine this common environmental citizenship where citizens are "belonging to both local environments and a single global environment."[347] This transforms everyone's attitude from simply doing "what one wants, environmentally-speaking, within one's own territory, because of the very tangible global effects of atmospheric pollution, deforestation, and species extinctions."[348] This attitude is actively championed by environmental global civil society "linked by their shared concern for the environment and human development, which results in local groups taking action based on globally embedded ideas."[349]

All these have inspired a re-examination of the scope of interconnection in globalization to include not merely human beings but also animals, plants, sky, mountains, and oceans. Our interconnectedness implies not just living in interdependence with fellow humans but with all creation.

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[346] Giddens, *Runaway World*, 26.

[347] El-Ojeili and Hayden, *Critical Theories of Globalization*, 119.

[348] El-Ojeili and Hayden, *Critical Theories of Globalization,*116.

[349] El-Ojeili and Hayden, *Critical Theories of Globalization,*119.

Our notion of interconnection has even expanded beyond our planet, to include other planets, stars, solar systems, galaxies—indeed, the whole cosmos. Cosmic consciousness has caught on and continues to capture the imagination and wonder of many people as in the days of old. Astronomy is one of the most exciting and promising fields of study. Everyday new discoveries in the vast expanse of the universe are discovered. It may only be a matter of time before we will discover other creatures like us, confirming the belief that we are not alone in the universe.

The information explosion and science has tremendously expanded our knowledge about time and space. Consider for example that the universe is 13.7 billion years old.[350] Looking back now, we can only stand in awe how we have been a fruit of evolution, not just of plants and animal but of the whole cosmos.[351] In terms of space, everyday new findings about the massive expansion of the universe and continuous expansion are discovered. This paradoxically enhances our awareness of the smallness of our planet and yet the decentralization of our lives. The earth is not the only one, possibly just one of the habitable planets; the possibility of the existence of another earth-like planet looks more promising by the day. We are just a tiny dot in the universe. The fundamental stance that ecologization brought to our consciousness is awe and wonder; just the fact of our existence is a source of wonder.

I. Inequality in Everyday Life

In spite of the enormous economic development brought by the globalization of the market economy, the basic experience of everyday life of the majority of the people in the planet is one of economic deprivation. For the majority of the people in the world, every day is a struggle to make ends meet even just the basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, water, not to mention health, education, security, recreation and jobs. On the other hand, the richest elite few in the world live a luxurious life while their wealth grows by the day.

One of the main worries about globalization is that it is not developing in an even handed way.[352] In spite of the promise of progress for all, it is not happening and at worst it makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. Our world is still very much an imbalanced and

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[350] Mike Wall, "The Big Bang: What Really Happened at our Universe's Birth?" SPACE.com Accessed 21 October 2011 at http://www.space.com/13347-big-bang-origins-universe-birth.html.

[351] See Anthony Kelly, *Eschatology and Hope* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006).

[352] Giddens, *Runaway World*, 15.

unfair world. We continue to witness the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor, the First World and Third World, the 1% super rich and 99% poor (as the Occupy Wall Street would call it), the malnourished children in Africa and obese kids in America. While there is famine in Africa, there is so much food wasted on home tables and in restaurants in Europe and Australia. While wheat grains are allowed to rot outside of storage barns in the USA, millions in Africa and Asia go to bed without food in their stomachs. Some developing countries like China, India, Vietnam and Indonesia have enjoyed a steady increase in their gross domestic product and consequently, an increase in the economic capability of the middle class in the past few decades, but prosperity has not really trickled down to the poor majority of their people.

All these have placed under critical scrutiny the global structures and system of the market economy. The sceptics of globalization argue that the present global economic structures create economic disparity where the poor are being left out of their gains and even drive the poor to further poverty and the rich to greater wealth.[353] They point to the serious damage done to the poorer countries as a result of the exploitative practices of global corporations, financial systems and trade agreements which give more advantages to developed countries. As David Mackenzie points out, "There's a school of thought that says that in a fully functioning free market economy everybody makes a good living and nobody struggles. This simply isn't the case."[354] The principle of not tinkering with the market— giving the market the utmost freedom in the hope that it will regulate itself—is under serious question today amidst the persistent global financial meltdown. As Bourdieu sees it, globalization is above all "a justificatory myth" that, while offering utopia, leads only to "the extension of the hold of a small number of dominant nations over the whole set of national financial markets."[355] Thus, some even call for reversing the tide of globalization, for example *deglobalization,* which calls for shrinking interdependence and less integration of economies between nation-states around the world.[356]

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[353] See Joseph Stiglitz's *Globalization and Its Discontents* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002) and Jeffrey David Sachs' *Common Wealth: Economics for a Crowded Planet* (New York: Penguin, 2008). Joseph Stiglitz and Jeffrey Sachs and other sceptics of globalization are not per se against market economy but push for fairer conditions of the market economy and favour some regulations on the market.

[354] David Mackenzie as quoted in Samantha Murray, "No Place Like Home - But No Home to Place," *Swinburne Magazine*, June 2008. Accessed 30 April 2011 at http://www.swinburne.edu.au/magazine/2/64/no-place-like-home---but-no-home-to-place/.

[355] Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance*, 38.

[356] See Walden Bello, *Deglobalization: Ideas for a New World Economy* (New York: Zed Books, 2005).

Indeed, the economic system in globalization is far from perfect and there is an ongoing search for a system that will be fair to everyone. On the other hand, solutions are no longer just local solutions but are tied up with global solutions.

The poor also fall victims to new crimes developed under the auspices of globalization: human trafficking for sex and slave labour, sweat shops for branded products, illegal recruitment which takes advantage of poor people from the Third World seeking greener pasture, mail-order brides, cybercrimes—including pornography and terrorism. This manipulation, aided by the instruments of globalization—internet, transportation and mobile phones—has intensified global criminality.[357] On the other hand, while many condemn the wrongdoing of movie and music piracy and counterfeit goods, others justify it because of the unaffordability of these goods which are out of reach for many poor in the world, especially in emerging economies.

Conclusion

The average person of the global age is a religious doubter and seeker, changes work and career more than ever, is multi-media and technologically literate, lives in both a real and virtual world, is a traveller-pilgrim, is a consumer and shopper, is apolitical but politically aware and highly sensitive to any perceived inequality, is environmentally conscious and is highly perceptive and protective of his/her identity.

Everyday life in the midst of globalization reflects a profound transformation in the most mundane daily activities: communication, relationships within the family, work patterns religious beliefs, family, individual values and attitudes, gender and sexual behaviours, parenting, couple relationship, national and ethnic identities. We recognize in the everyday the importance of democracy, pluralism, tolerance, ecology, technology, the internet, mobility, multiculturalism, religious pluralism, secularity, consumption and so on. These are the daily bread of life in globalization along with eating, drinking, working, sleeping and playing.

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[357] Castells estimates that the whole global criminality 'industry' was worth about $750 billion in the mid 90's. See Manuel Castells, *End of Millennium*, Volume 3 of *The information Age: Economy, Society and Culture* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2000), 169–181.

These patterns in everyday life give concrete illustration to the *logos* of globalization as radical differentiality and ineffability. The icon that best symbolizes this *logos* of globalization is the web, a network which has not one but many centres. This has given some hope to the vision of community-in-difference where the atheist will lie side by side with fundamentalists, the immigrant with the ultra-nationalists, the straight with the gay, human beings with animals. This vision does not assure us, however, that this is finality. The critical issue in globalization is the constant safeguarding that no one dominant power, system or ideology controls the centre, defines the rules of interconnection and runs the interconnection.

In this sense, globalization in its manifold manifestations in everyday life is a new spatiality and temporality for preaching the gospel anew. Globalization raises new issues, challenges, questions and consciousness; it poses both threat and opportunities for preaching. There is a place for preaching in the globalized world, however, as people continue to hunger and seek for meaning in the runaway world of globalization.

CHAPTER IV

Preaching the Gospel Anew:
A Reappropriation of Apophatic and Cataphatic Theology
in Redemptorist Mission and Identity in the *Logos* of Globalization

See, the home of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them as their God;
they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them;
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away.
And the one who was seated on the throne said,
"See, I am making all things new."
(Revelations 21: 3–5).

In 1994, "Chant", an album of Gregorian chant, performed and recorded by the Benedictine Monks of Santo Domingo de Silos at their monastery in Burgos, Spain, topped the Billboard classical division for that year and became the best-selling album of Gregorian chant ever released. It peaked at no. 3 on the Billboard 200 music chart, and was confirmed as triple platinum, that is, three million copies were sold in the United States. Worldwide, the album sold around six million copies.[358] Roger Lewis, head of the classical division of EMI Records in 1994, speculated that one reason for the phenomenal success of the album was that the chant was an antidote to the stress of contemporary life.[359]

A. Reappropriation of Apophatic Theology in Globalization

Despite the scientific and technological rationalization, there is an appeal to return to a sense of mystery and the ineffable God in contemporary society. This is enhanced by the experience of the limits of reason and secular belief which claims arrogantly that human comprehension through reason is determinate of God. The return of apophatic approach in contemporary theology and globalization's favourable ethos of unknowing lays the ground

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[358] "Chant (Benedictine Monks of Santo Domingo de Silos album)," *Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia.* Accessed 12 November 2011 at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chant_%28Benedictine_Monks_of_Santo_Domingo_de_Silos_album%29#cite_note-Indie-0.

[359] David Lister, "Plainsong Soars Up the Charts," *The Independent,* 29 March 1994. Accessed 10 November, 2011 at http://www.independent.co.uk/news/plainsong-soars-up-the-charts-1432273.html.

for preaching the gospel anew, that is, to preach the gospel anew in the global age is to reappropriate the ancient tradition of apophatic theology.

In spite of its technological advancement and information explosion, globalization has intensified apophatic awareness. The return to apophatic stance is not only in religion but in almost all spheres of life where it takes to task all dogmatic postures. The expanding consciousness that we are just one tiny dot in the universe and that we are interconnected with fellow human beings, nature and even the whole cosmos has deemphasized human supremacy and individual seclusion. As we gain more knowledge and information, we become more aware of the smallness of our minds and the bigness of the questions. Applied to preaching—preaching begins not in dogmatic certainty but in awe and wonder about God.

Similarly, the postmodern milieu is favourable to the apophatic tradition as postmodernity undermined any system "that declared absolute authority by claiming to somehow reveal God or expose Ultimate Meaning to the clear light of day."[360] The philosophical aura in globalization is also conducive for the return of apophatic theology, for example, deconstruction, post-structuralism and ethics based on "the Other".[361]

The return to the ineffable God in globalization is due to the realization of the uncolonizability of God's name. This realization came out of the false ways of speaking about God which produced sacrilegious and blasphemous names for God such as God of the colonizer, God of the oppressor, God of the terrorist and God of the fundamentalist and literalist. How many people suffered or were killed, oppressed, discriminated against and humiliated in the name of these gods? One can easily think of the religious wars, the colonization of Africa and Asia, the genocide in Latin America, deadly terrorist attacks and so many others. There are many other thousands of lesser gods, however, that we need to abandon including the god of the politicians, ideologues and sometimes even the god of our own parents, teachers and indeed, clergy and preachers. Thus, preaching is first of all the rejection of all ideological and idolatrous naming and speaking about God.

The ineffability of God is also manifested in giving up all claims about grasping the end. Even as Christians certainly believed that the end is the final return of Jesus, when, how

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[360] Rollins, *How (not) to Speak of God*, 10.

[361] Jacques Derrida's concept of *differance* in his deconstruction is helpful in this regard—which affirms both difference, detour and deference—captures both the concept of differentiality and unknowing. See Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1998), xliii.

and where it will happen is unknowable. This gives space for hope. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11: 1).   It also gives in to the realization that we cannot do all God's work; the final fulfilment of God's project is beyond us even as the grace of God is more than ever present in our world today. Our world is in travail for the continuous birthing of God's reign. "We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now" (Romans 8: 22). On the other hand, this implies the subversion by God's vision of the reign of God over any other anthropocentric *telos*.

　　Moreover, it is only through the power of God that the fullness of the reign of God will be realized. This further emancipates and inspires us to a humble acceptance that the reign of God is beyond human and the church. This conviction is beautifully expressed in a prayer attributed to the contemporary martyr Oscar Romero:

> The Kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is beyond our vision. We accomplish in our lifetime only a fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. Nothing we do is complete, which is another way of saying that the kingdom always lies beyond us… We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realizing this. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well. It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.[362]

The apophatic approach which has made a comeback in postmodern theology has renewed our understanding of theology by freeing it from the shackles of modernity. It sought a theology not bent on rationally comprehending God but which "acknowledges the proper place of doubt, ambiguity, complexity and mystery."[363] The return of apophatic approach also called for renewed understanding of the purpose of dogma. The modern influence in theology has equated dogma with the mind of God; it therefore, becomes the end not as guide. Dogma are guideposts so we won't go astray in embodying our fundamental trust and commitment to an all compassionate God. As William Butler Yeats said: "[Humans] can embody truth but [they] cannot know it."[364]

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[362] This prayer was originally composed by Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw, prepared for a homily by Card. John Dearden in Nov. 1979 in celebration for departed priests. As a reflection on the anniversary of the martyrdom of Bishop Romero, Bishop Untener included it in a reflection titled "The mystery of the Romero Prayer." The mystery is that the words of the prayer are attributed to Oscar Romero, but they were never spoken by him. Accessed 18 November 2011 at http://www.journeywithjesus.net/PoemsAndPrayers/Ken_Untener_A_Future_Not_Our_Own.shtml.

[363] Rollins, *How (not) to Speak about God*, 23.

[364] William Butler Yeats in John Eugene Unterecker, "Letter to Lady Elizabeth Pelham," *A Reader's Guide to William Butler Yeats*, 1st Syracuse University Press ed, [Reader's Guide Series (Syracuse, N.Y.)] (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 6.

This inspired the move to go back to faith as trust and commitment. In modernity, belief became an intellectual assent to a proposition, no longer about trust, commitment and engagement.[365] In the apophatic stance faith is more about trust, commitment and hope. Thus, there is more the longing in the present to see religion as a way of life and a commitment. As Pope Benedict says, "Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction."[366]

The limits of language in preaching, point to the connection of preaching with life— the need for practising what we preach, solidarity, action, witnessing ritual and sacrament. In a generation which hungers for authenticity,[367] the pre-eminence of witness in preaching becomes even more imperative. "[Humankind] listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if [humans] listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses."[368] The life of witness also highlights the importance of joy in evangelization.[369]

The opposite of the apophatic approach is religious certainty espoused by religious fundamentalism. Thus, the return to the ineffable God is different from the fundamentalist and literalist plea to return to God or the neo-conservative appeal to tradition. Rollins describes fundamentalism as "holding a belief system in such a way that it mutually excludes all other systems, rejecting other views in direct proportion to how much they differ from one's own."[370]

St. Paul's reflections about his own preaching experience may serve as a recapitulation of the reappropriation of apophatic theology in preaching in this age of globalization:

> When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your

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[365] Armstrong, *Case for God*, 311–312.

[366] Pope Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est,* no. 1.

[367] Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Vatican, 1975), No. 76.

[368] Pope Paul VI, *Address to the Members of the Consilium de Laicis* (2 October 1974): AAS 66 (1974), 568, quoted in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, No. 41

[369] Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, No. 1.

[370] Rollins, *How (not) to Speak about God*, 26.

faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God. Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory (1 Corinthians 2: 1–7).

B. Reappropriation of Cataphatic Theology in Globalization

The return of apophatic theology is not just the acknowledgement of the ineffability of God but also God's sovereignty. Thus, the apophatic necessarily leads to the cataphatic, that is, the affirmation and proclamation of God. To preach the gospel anew in today's global age is to hear God's voice once again. Preaching is genuine "to the extent that it is not the preacher confronting the people, but God."[371] This is similar to what Bruce Barber calls "revelation or Word verification" and to Tracy's plea for the return to God in theology—the return of *theos* over *logos*. Preaching the gospel anew in globalization summons the return of the interruptive *Theos* after the modernist and postmodernist *logos'* attempt to overwhelm and domesticate the reality of *Theos*.[372]

Thus, to preach the gospel anew in globalization is not to lie low or shy away from proclaiming Christ. On the contrary, it compels us all the more to vigorously proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even as we begin with humility, nothingness and the admission of the limitedness of our speaking about God, we proclaim unwaveringly with wonder and awe about the immensity of God's goodness and love.

Appropriating Schillebeeckx's framework of apopathic theology, the privileged starting point of preaching the gospel anew is the "negative contrast experience" in globalization. This implies that preaching takes off from the atheistic, secularist and the culturally imperialistic ethos; from the boredom, the vertigo of the individual; from the "euphoria of the now;" from despair, uncertainty and the failures of utopia and from pessimism in institutions such as Wall Street, bankers, governments and church. These "negative contrast experiences" lead us to the vigorous condemnation of the wickedness of the suffering of the innocent millions and contrastingly leads us to a vibrant announcement of the reign of God. This also implies that preaching the gospel anew in globalization privileges the victims of globalization as those who have "epistemological priority" in understanding and living the gospel.

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[371] Hill, *Search for the Absent God*, 169.

[372] Tracy, *On Naming the Present,* 36.

The apophatic rebuff to equating God with our human categories declares that only through Jesus Christ can we speak well of God. Preaching follows the heuristic of Jesus in discerning the reign of God in everyday life through parables which challenged the people to see beyond their daily lives the breaking in of the reign of God. On the other hand, Jesus reaffirmed the beyondness of God; Christ proclaimed a God who cannot be identified with any human power, ideology and hegemony.

a. The Gospel and the Reign of God Ever Anew in the Global Age

Preaching the gospel anew today is a refreshed way of speaking about God that is confident yet not triumphal, contextual yet not relativist and down-to-earth yet mystical. It pronounces confidence in a God who speaks to us today in a refreshing way; the word of God which falls like a dewfall (Deuteronomy 32: 2) upon the people and the preacher. This inspires us to boldly proclaim the gospel that is utterly relevant, the gospel that is ever new.

Every period in history reveals the newness of the reign of God. The reign of God and the gospel challenges the *logos* of any historical period while on the other hand the *logos* of a given period reveals something new about the reign of God. In the everyday are pointers, signs and anologies of the reign of God. We cannot fully know the gospel but the *logos* of a historical period serves as an analogy that awakens something new in the gospel and in the reign of God. Globalization helps to unravel the "surplus of meaning" of the gospel of the reign of God. In this sense, the gospel is always new in every space and time.

The gospel is preached anew in globalization not because the gospel is verified according to the *logos* of globalization (world verification) but that the positive and transformative aspects of globalization are verified according to the gospel (revelation verification). It is an attempt to redescribe the globalized world today in reference to God who makes all things new (Revelation 21: 5). It is not primarily about relevance, or a new gospel; "Jesus is the same, yesterday and tomorrow" (Hebrews 13:8). Preaching the gospel anew is hearing God's voice once again in the global age. In other words, the *logos* of globalization as interconnection and differentiality reveals something new about the reign of God which had not been revealed before. It is in this sense that the gospel is "globalized."

Preaching the gospel anew is allowing the sovereignty of *theos* and the interruptive creative power of the *parakletos* to lead us to newness of the gospel in the age of

globalization. What is the newness of meaning about the gospel and the reign of God that everyday life in globalization helps to unravel?

Globalization has given rise to a new sense of belonging which challenges the contemporary notion of belonging that is bound by nation states. Globalization has intensified the idea of a global belonging or a new kind of citizenship that goes beyond nation states, ethnicity and culture. The experience of multiculturalism and pluralism has drummed-up considerable energy towards cosmopolitanism. The new sense of belonging that is based more on the deepest values of human rights, environmental stewardship and democracy has given possibility to the notion of environmental citizenship where citizens belong to both local environments and a single global environment; global citizenship based on the upholding of human rights and network of civil societies based on the value of democracy.

These new senses of belonging give a fuller understanding of the vision of Christ: "That all may be one" (John 17: 21). It indicates that everyone, everything is connected in a dynamic process of interaction towards God and God's vision. As the process theologian Clark Williamson writes: "Everything exists in relation to everything else. Nothing exists in and of itself; everything has a context and is part of the context of other things or persons."[373] This inclusive vision reaffirms the sharing in a common humanity and religious vision which doesn't obliterate but respects alterity. The present world is polycentric, Tracy contends: "There is no longer a center with margins. There are many centers."[374] This demands inculcating new values—empathy, solidarity, dialogue and recognizing the alterity of the other—in a world which has intensified in convergence as well as divergence. These values promote genuine inclusivity based on alterity, as Tracy proclaims, "The others must become genuine others for us—not projections of our fears and desires. The others are not marginal to our centers but centers of their own."[375]

The *logos* of globalization has also helped to evolve newness of meaning regarding being church. Being attentive to the voice of God in this global age implies being open to the call for renewal within the church; for the church to be born anew in every place and time. Preaching the gospel anew inspires a dynamic growth of the church, not simply a static

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[373] Clark M. Williamson, *Way of Blessing, Way of Life: A Christian Theology* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 1999), 6.

[374] Tracy, *On Naming the Present*, 4.

[375] Tracy, *On Naming the Present,* 4.

expansion of the church.   David Bosch, in describing the interaction between the church and culture, writes that it is not so much "a case of the church being *expanded*, but of the church being *born anew* in each new context and culture." [376]

The *logos* of difference in globalization inspires the Catholic church's to regain confidence in her identity while at the same time, avoiding the past triumphal tendency to reduce and imposing her superiority and reducing the other —other religion, culture and beliefs—to sameness. On the other hand the *logos* of unknowing in globalization led to greater humility by the church. The return of belief in the ineffable God has diminished the church's insistence on infallibility.   In recent years the church has asked forgiveness for the sins of her past. Vatican II's image of the church as pilgrim church projects a finite human church in need of constant reform—*eccelesia semper reformanda*—through the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit.

This call to constant renewal of the church, implies what Halik calls a shift from "Catholicism" to "catholicity". [377] The catholicity of the church in a globalizing world is "neither monolithic uniformity nor atomized pluriformity." [378] The church in the global age should welcome diverse theological and spiritual traditions—mysticism, liberation, creation, Asian, African and others—as an expression of her catholicity. As Werner Ustorf pleads,

> Can we afford not to try to combine our thinking with the oral beliefs of African churches with the piety of Western death-of-God theologians, the timeless spirituality of the Eastern Church with the Pentecostal enthusiasm of the black ghetto, and the revolutionary Christ of Latin America with the fundamentalist or second religiosity of post-enlightened evangelicals? [379]

Thus, the challenge to be the Catholic Church is enormously robust and auspicious in today's global times. The privileging of differentiality inspires the gospel to be lived, proclaimed and celebrated in the diverse cultures around the world. Each culture reveals something new about the gospel. One of the finest fruits of mission and of missiological labours is the experience that the message of Jesus Christ not only transforms the cultures,

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[376] David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 454.

[377] *Interview with Professor Tomas Halik for the Weekly Information Service of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Italy*, 2004. Accessed 06 August 2011at http://www.halik.cz/ja/sir_europa.php.

[378] Craig Ott and Harold A. Netland, *Globalizing Theology: Belief and Practice in an Era of World Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 174.

[379] Werner Ustorf, *Christianized Africa, de-Christianized Europe?: Missionary Inquiries into the Polycentric Epoch of Christian History* (Ammersbek bei Hamburg: Verlag an der Lottbek, 1992), 14.

but that other cultures and religions bring out features in the face of Jesus Christ which had not been revealed before.[380] This implies a shift from a monocentric to polycentric church. In this polyvalent character of the church, mission becomes "from everyone to everywhere."[381]

This also brings forth the nature of globality of preaching or glocalization of evangelization. It brings out a diversity of the understanding and listening to one and the same gospel. This makes preaching today both local and global, specific yet universal, personal yet communal.

As the church journeys into the future, it needs to accept that its demographic face has changed, from the North—Europe and America—to the South—South America, Africa and Asia. Even now, we live in a post-Western Church: "Christianity that is emerging now and fully operable will be a Christianity outside of the west and based in Latin America, Africa and Asia."[382] This calls for greater representation of the faith from the experience and perspective of the south; for example, the struggle of the poor as articulated in the liberation theology of Latin America, inculturation into the indigenous cultures of Africa and the triple dialogue with poverty, culture and religion in Asia.

b. Dialogue and Proclamation

The apophatic stance of unknowing adds to the growing reasons for the need for interreligious dialogue. It provides an opportunity for collective inter- edification about God as each religion reveals unique "truth" about God. Thus, the first attitude towards interreligious dialogue is the unknowing of each religion about the unfathomable God.

This implies that pluralism, ecumenism and dialogue are primary areas of engagement now and in the future. Dialogue amongst religions and faiths and breaking down walls of prejudice are values and attitudes of preaching the gospel anew. It avoids any absolutism as well as relativist pluralism but supports a mutual conversion between religions and faiths. As Konrad Adenauer said: "We all live under the same sky, but we don't all have the same horizon."[383]

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[380] Ustorf, *Christianized Africa, De-Christianized Europe,* 52.

[381] Samuel Escobar, *The New Global Missión: The Gospel from Everywhere to Everyone* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003).

[382] Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 2.

[383] Konrad Adenauer, *The Atlantic Community Quarterly* v.14-15 (1976-1978), 200.

This also demands a church in dialogue with the globalizing culture of the world today. This calls more and more for a movement from an insular church to a church in service to the wider world for the reign of God—a real embodiment of the *aggiornamento* proclaimed in *Gaudium et Spes* #1: "The joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of this world are the joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ." This further implies that preaching is meant not only for the Catholic Church but for the world; not just for sustaining and maintaining the church but for proclaiming the reign of God in the world. It goes beyond the pulpit towards social action, solidarity, witnessing and active involvement in the promotion of the reign of God.

Thus, to proclaim the gospel in the age of globalization is not the same as proselytization. Preaching the gospel anew as the proclamation of a God whose Godness is based on service and love will resist any power discourse in preaching to a pluralized world. Although we should not shy away from proclamation, we proclaim the gospel not in a triumphalistic and exclusivist manner but in bold humility.[384]

The new evangelization for the global age is a proclamation that is done in dialogue. Dialogue is no longer a luxury, Vincent Donovan maintains; no one has an exclusive monopoly on God and truth. He asserts: "We must begin to look on others as 'others possessing truth,' so that their truth might become ours, that we all might move out of the isolation in which we have been operating."[385] We have seen the damage that fundamentalism and exclusivism have done in the past. On the other hand, we resist any tendency towards being resigned to the permissiveness of relativism or the despair of nihilism. God as mystery suggests that God may be found even beyond the Christian tradition.[386]

The *via positiva* in preaching leads us to listen, dialogue and be converted by other faith and the culture of globalization as well. Thus, dialogue and proclamation goes hand in hand in our preaching the gospel to the world: proclamation is dialogical, dialogue is proclamatory. The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference affirms this integral bond between dialogue and proclamation:

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[384] David Jacobus Bosch, W. A. Saayman, and J. J. Kritzinger, *Mission in Bold Humility: David Bosch's Work Considered* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996).

[385] Vincent J. Donovan, *Christianity Rediscovered*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1982), 117.

[386] Paul VI, *Nostra Aetate* (Vatican, October 28, 1965) no. 2.

Dialogue and proclamation are integral but dialectical and complementary dimensions of the Church's mission of evangelisation. Authentic dialogue includes a witness to one's total Christian faith, which is open to a similar witness of the other religious believers.[387]

C. Preaching the Gospel Anew: The Path of Mysticism and Prophecy

The emphasis on the sovereignty of God in preaching today is most effective by following the mystical and prophetic path. The gospel which declares God's sovereignty subverts all earthly ideologies while at the same time proclaims that God is near and the reign of God is at hand in the daily patterns of globalization. The language of preaching the gospel anew is prophetic, mystical and hope-filled. The reappropriation of the apophatic theology in preaching the gospel anew in globalization follows the ancient path of prophecy and mysticism.

a. Mysticism: Listening to God in Globalization

Several years ago, Karl Rahner envisaged that the Christian of the future is a mystic or a non-believer.[388] In the past, especially in the pre-modern period, it did not take strong effort to go to church on Sunday or to practise the faith since everyone else was doing this. In other words, faith was closely tied up with culture, tradition and family. But many of us now live in a position where to believe in God and practise the faith is to do it all alone without the support of the majority and at times without the support even of those closest to us, spouse, family, friends and colleagues.[389] In today's detraditionalized milieu, the faith and the church is cut off from the culture, tradition and family and the individual must do it all alone to navigate through his/her quests and aspirations.

On the other hand, Søren Kierkegaard lamented in early nineteenth century about the situation in his native country of Denmark that it was hard to be a Christian when everybody else was a Christian. He attacked what he called Christendom as a total deviation from the Christianity of the New Testament. He lamented a "cheap Christianity" that practices the

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[387] Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference, *Theses on Interreligious Dialogue*, Theological Advisory Commission, FABC Papers, no.48 (Hong Kong, FABC, 1987): thesis 6.

[388] Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigation*, [Schriften zur Theologie, 1954–1984], 23 volumes (New York: Crossroads, 1960–1992), 7:15 in "Christian Living Formerly and Today," 7: 3–24 [article originally published in 1966].

[389] Ron Rolheiser, *Mystic or Unbeliever*, 2008-04-20. Accessed 17 August 2011 at http://www.ronrolheiser.com/columnarchive/?id=405.

faith inside the safe and secure world of Christendom but which has no desire for real commitment and taking risk.[390]

In many ways, Rahner and Kierkegaard foresaw the question of how to be a true Christian after Christendom, in a post-Christian or dechristianized setting. Rahner's insistence that the true Christian in the future is a mystic is to affirm the belief that to be a Christian is to freely commit oneself to the unknowable yet all loving God without the auspices of culture, family and tradition. One is a Christian, not because everybody else is and one can get something out of it but as a free commitment and risk taken for the sacred and God. This echoes Job's predicament and ultimately belief in God's unconditional love and human beings practice of disinterested religion.

To preach the gospel anew in globalization is to accompany believers today towards discovering an inner anchor of faith beyond the support and security of family, community and culture. Preachers need to quench the longing of the present generation for the unknown not through accommodation but through a confident and hopeful proclamation of God's voice in the midst of their longings and anxieties. While recognizing the individual's spiritual search, however, preaching needs to challenge the contemporary generation to go beyond a personalistic and individualistic spiritual brand of faith and religiosity.

In the midst of the anchorless existence in time and space of globalization, preaching the gospel anew is inspiring and guiding people to discover everyday life as graced by God. Preaching the gospel anew is helping people today in what Hilkert calls the "the art of naming grace"[391] in everyday life. Following Jesus' parables, preaching the gospel anew helps people to discern the in-breaking of the reign of God while acknowledging the tensive dialectics between everyday and the reign of God.

The desire to have an experience beyond the rational grasping of God has deepened the desire to return to a sense of *musterion* especially in the sacraments. Experiencing the limits of language, many have expressed the desire to experience sacraments through a renewed interest in aesthetics, symbols and the place of silence in liturgy. This indicates a going back to the traditional meaning of the sacraments as sacred mysteries.

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[390] Søren Kierkegaard and Walter Lowrie, *Kierkegaard's Attack Upon "Christendom," 1854-1855* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 162–168.

[391] See Hilkert, *Naming Grace*, 44–57.

This desire for *musterion* in sacraments is also borne out in their present experience of liturgies. Instead of "interrupting" the ordinary life, many present liturgies accommodated to the modern ethos, in the words of Barber "world verification". For example, liturgies have accommodated to the secular and fast paced hectic life of the city by making shortness the hallmark of liturgy (never mind if the homily was good or bad or the assembly have a meaningful participation, as long as it is short) or minimalization of liturgy—the removal of symbol, icons, gestures, chant. No wonder many complain that liturgies have become mechanized, dry and boring.

To integrate a sense of *musterion* in preaching, preaching the gospel anew should not be the presentation of facts inasmuch as it is the happening of grace. The preacher's role is not primarily to explain the text to the people like a catechist or a teacher but rather to allow the text to "explain" the preacher and, therefore, in the subsequent act of preaching, to "explain" the hearers.[392] Preaching in this way is more about the congregation's experience of the presence of God rather than knowledge of a series of propositions about God.[393]

In this apophatic milieu, imagination and narrative become the prominent form of preaching. Through imagination and narrative preaching becomes "an offer of an image through which perception, experience, and finally faith can be reorganized in alternative ways."[394]

b. Prophecy: Speaking About God in Globalization

Preaching the gospel anew prophetically announces the interruption of *Theos* in the global age where pluralism, democracy, tolerance, ecology, technology, the internet, mobility, multiculturalism, religious pluralism, secularism, consumption and so on are the stuff that defines daily life. We can highlight a few of these prophetic interruptions in daily life.

This prophetic stance, first of all, entails a defiance and protest against all ideologies in globalization—neo-liberal capitalism, totalitarianism, fundamentalism, absolutism, positivism, liberalism, relativism, exclusivism and ethnocentrism. It proclaims liberation from all forms of oppression and domination, and at the same time, announces the alternative

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[392] Barber, "Lanterns at Dusk?", 65.

[393] Farris, *Preaching that Matters*, 22

[394] Brueggemann, *The Word Militant*, 29

path of service towards the coming of God's reign. Preaching the gospel anew communicates this prophetic experience of eternal discomfort with the world in which, in spite of the prevailing evil, there is the tension of the already-but-not-yet realization of the reign of God.

Preaching the gospel anew needs to be aware of the danger and opportunities of individualization as an essential dynamic of globalization's *logos* of differentiality. Although preaching the gospel anew supports the individuals' quest for meaning and fulfilment, this, however, can only be achieved ultimately through the individual's connection with the community, the whole of humanity and with God, not through an isolationist and privatized path. As Bosch asserts, "The individual is not a monad, but part of an organism."[395] Preaching the gospel anew calls the individual into account and situates the individual in its rightful place in the interconnection, in a sense freeing the individual from the tyranny of individualism. As Bosch writes, "The 'psychology of separatedness' has to make way for an 'epistemology of participation'".[396]

The individual suffers from the overarching demand on the individual as a result of the pulling away of old anchors of security such as tradition, religion, family, marriage. Thus, a big challenge is how to speak about God in the midst of depression, addiction, stress and loneliness of individuals in the contemporary milieu.

The new media has created new opportunities for enhancing preaching and connecting it with the people through interactivity, collaboration and innovation. The new media has created possibilities for meaningful dialogue between the gospel and culture.   The atmosphere of creativity and innovation driven by technology and the new media has inspired the creation of preaching and evangelization web sites, blogs, podcasts and a foray into social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube for evangelization.

Even as we incorporate the technology of the new media into preaching, we need not, however, allow technology to take over. We have to be mindful that we control technology rather than it controlling us. We need to think of technology as an extension and not as a substitution of ourselves. We also need to exercise caution in deciphering the material that comes out of the internet.   There is information overload and consequently information fatigue; oftentimes the internet culture is more reactionary than progressive. All opinions

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[395] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 362.

[396] Bosch, *Transforming Mission,* 362.

seem relative; we need to distinguish what is true from the bogus, what is important from what is trivial.

The technology-driven culture has its side effects. For example, the short attention span of today's generation due to technology-driven culture may lead preachers to resort to technology, entertainment, stand-up comedy, performance—singing, magic—just to cater for and get the attention of an image driven audience. In the same manner, a technology mediated culture can easily overwhelm community and human interactions. For example, in today's image-driven world the presentation of the Word is image (print, pictures or video) in contrast to pre-modern period, especially the early church where the basic presentation of the Word was oral—sound.[397]

In pre-modern times, people gathered around their elders and a traditional source of authority (church, leaders) and listened to their stories. Today people gather around the TV, video, smart phone and internet. There is a time when preachers need to turn off the media in order to maximize the power of narrative imagination in redescribing the world from the reference of the gospel.[398]

Preaching the gospel anew in the midst of a consumerist and materialistic culture ought to expose the illusory promise of a sense of identity gained from material things. Without resorting to a fundamentalist or liberal one-dimensional view of the materiality of human existence, preaching recognizes the value of materiality at the service of promoting the reign of God. Although it is a tall order, preaching needs to expose the sacralization and ritualization of consumption, help free the consumer from the tyranny of marketization and prevent consumers from themselves becoming commodities. Preaching the gospel anew must present alternative sources of identity and provide hope to the deepest yearning of the present generation for security and meaning.

Globalization has inspired a new polity which poses new challenges for preaching the gospel anew. Preaching the gospel anew proclaims the sense of belonging and community enlightened by the gospel and not contrary to the values of freedom, democracy and equality.

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[397] Paul Scott Wilson, *A Concise History of Preaching* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992), 17–20.

[398] Heinz Streib, *The Religious Educator as Story-teller: Suggestions from Paul Ricoeur's Work.* Accessed 08 August 2011 at http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3783/is_199807/ai_ n8788980/pg_5/?tag= content;col1. Streib contends that "narrative identity that invites selfhood and subjectivity; particularity and pluralism; subversiveness and difference, has a chance, if we keep the mass media out from religious education as much as possible."

In the same way, it will expose all ideologies that give a mirage of freedom and democracy. In the belief that religion has a place in the public square despite secularization, preaching will actively engage on social issues in the light of the gospel. Likewise, it will challenge the church to be an active participant in the global civil society in solidarity with all the oppressed.

But in order to be credible, it is essential to practise the values of freedom and democracy within the church. The church must be open towards greater and more inclusive participation of the whole people of God, for example, by promoting lay empowerment and women's involvement not to mention the democratization of the structures of the church through giving more voice to the collegiality of bishops, local church councils—parish councils and diocesan councils. To be an agent of Jesus vision that "all may be one" in globalization, the church must be a vibrant witness of a multicultural, pluralist, polycentric Catholic Church.

Globalization has bolstered the consciousness of interconnectedness not just among human beings but of all creation. Preaching the gospel anew in this critical yet broadened environmental consciousness, can help instil in people a greater awareness of living in harmony with nature not going against it or, worse, dominating it. This demands a radical lifestyle change from everyone; we cannot just go on and pretend that there is nothing wrong and nothing can be done about our environment. In this regard, we have much to learn from indigenous religions and diverse native tribes in terms of their relationship with nature.

Preaching the gospel anew today implies that we cannot be silent and indifferent to the global ills of poverty, injustice and conflicts. We need to strengthen our commitment to the values of peace, justice and integrity of creation. True to our prophetic character, in preaching the gospel anew we will denounce all structural and systemic forces which maintain injustice and inequality in the world, and announce God's vision of liberation and peace for all community. We will proclaim a God who hears the cry of the poor (Psalm 34:17) and journeys with them in their struggle towards the promised land (Exodus). Therefore, we will continue to challenge people to share their God-given talents, time and resources in the active pursuit of justice, peace and liberation from all forms of slavery, oppression and injustice in the world. Globalization as an intense interconnection can be harnessed as a positive force in claiming responsibility for what is happening in the whole world, not just in one's own race or land. Everyone is responsible when there is somebody

dying of hunger in Africa, when somebody is driven out of their homes from wars in Afghanistan, or when somebody dies of malaria in the jungles of Papua New Guinea.

D. Preaching the Gospel Anew: Towards a Global Ethics

The greater knowledge and interconnection brought by information technology and advanced communications not only enhances humankind's awareness of finitude but also broader responsibility. Our ethical responsibility is greater today than yesterday. We are responsible for the survival of one another and for the wholeness of planet earth and at the same time we are responsible for the preservation of the heritage left behind for us by the past generation and for the life of the next generation in the future.

The values highlighted by globalization such as multiculturalism, pluralism, cosmopolitanism, global belonging, environmental stewardship, upholding human rights, empathy, solidarity, dialogue, recognizing alterity of the other, inclusivity, humility, diversity, ecumenism, service, empowerment and participation, necessitate the embodying and practice of new ways and conduct—a global ethics. Preaching the gospel anew in globalization needs to advance this global ethics.

This global ethics proclaims a common patrimony of the environment, common responsibility for the suffering in the world, common aspiration for the building of a better world everyday. As Beck proposes, a global ethical order should be based on otherness not sameness—acknowledging the otherness of those who are culturally different, otherness of the future, otherness of nature, otherness of the object and otherness of other rationalities.[399]

E. Preaching the Gospel Anew: Preaching About Hope

Ultimately, the Christian response to the problem of evil is the proclamation of hope. Thus, preaching the gospel anew is preaching about hope. Hope is an essential dimension of the *via negativa*. As Schillebeeckx argues, the most radical form of Christian hope is born "amid the experiences of negativity, darkness, and injustice in which human beings cry out in protest: 'This cannot go on!'"[400] In preaching the gospel anew we invite the people to see behind and beyond their world—with all its sufferings, hardships, hopelessness, injustice,

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[399] Ulrich Beck, *Power in the Global Age: A New Global Political Economy* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2005), 285.

[400] Hilkert, "Edward Schillebeeckx," 380.

violence, enslavements—in anticipation of a possible world full of possibilities. That is why hope is always bold, daring and defiant.

Hope is not optimism but the belief in the things that cannot be seen yet. Hope is not about definitive solutions and definite answers. It is not about knowing when the reign of God will be fulfilled; it is neither here or there, the reign of God is in our midst (Luke 17: 21). Hope, therefore, is not thinking triumphantly about the "end of history." It is rather to remember the future: there's no end, only eternity. Hope serves as a rehearsal of God's eschatological victory by showing how God's reign is breaking into everyday life. That is why the Advent liturgical spirit of patient waiting as well as vigilant preparation is the appropriate attitude towards "the end".

Our proclamation of hope, however, is not abstract hope but concrete and lived hope based on what Pope Paul VI declares as, "the promises made by God in the new Covenant in Jesus Christ."[401] The reign of God as future event that has already begun in the resurrection of Jesus is the overriding source of hope.[402] This entails challenging the prevailing values, attitudes, structures and systems that for so long a time preserved passivity and hopelessness. "Genuine hope has no use for idols."[403] Proclaiming hope in the age of globalization is proclaiming the gospel as the counter text to the idols of modernity and postmodernity. Modernity generated a spiritual vacuum by eliminating any sense of mystery in the world through an exceedingly rational and positivistic outlook. On the other hand, postmodernity exuded despair and hopelessness, engendered by the suspicion of utopias which brought destructive effects in the past. In this spiritual vacuum, Anthony Kelly argues that "hope refuses to see the ultimate meaning of life as simply more of the same."[404]

Preaching the gospel of hope, however, is not individualistic. As Kelly writes, hope can only be lived in solidarity: "It leads neither to an egotistical concern with personal salvation, nor to the conclusion that the individual simply dissolves into some diffuse cosmic

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[401] Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, no. 28.

[402] See Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1967).

[403] Kelly, *Eschatology and Hope*, 5.

[404] Kelly, *Eschatology and Hope,* 5.

process."[405] This demands that in preaching the gospel anew we proclaim the living of hope as a community, a church who is called to be the bearer of hope in the world.

Ultimately preaching hope transcends the Christian church. It looks forward to the unity of all creation that Jesus has proclaimed. It is in this context that Kelly prefers to speak of "inter-hope" rather than "interfaith" dialogue to emphasize the common pursuit in hope rather than the difference amongst all faith. [406] "Inter-hope dialogue would highlight the unimaginable 'otherness' of eschatological fulfilment. It looks beyond what is, to what is to come."[407]   Inter-hope dialogue suggests an accounting of hope "with gentleness and reverence" (1 Pet 3: 16); not power laden nor triumphal.

F. Reimagining Redemptorist Identity and Mission in the Age of Globalization
a.   Apopathic Theology—the Via Negativa—in Redemptorist Mission and Identity

Reimagining Redemptorist mission and identity in globalization begins with the apophatic awareness of their life and mission.

In recent decades, Redemptorists have struggled with questions and doubts regarding their mission and identity: The struggle of wrestling with the God question; the struggle of how to be "faithful and different"[408] in reliving their charism; the struggle to respond to the question of irrelevance regarding the present form of religious life; the struggle to live their vows meaningfully in a postmodernist ethos; the struggle of locating themselves amongst the new poor; and the struggle of preaching the gospel anew.   In the midst of these questions and uncertainties, they have sought the appropriate manner of speaking about God: How should we speak about a faithful and loving God in the midst of seeming irrelevance and dying of religious life; of a life-giving God amidst the loneliness and burdens of missionary life? How should we proclaim the presence of God in an ethos of absence of God?   These questionings somehow diminished their confidence to preach the gospel always anew. This passage into

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[405] Kelly, *Eschatology and Hope* , 20.

[406] Kelly, *Eschatology and Hope*, xi.

[407] Kelly, *Eschatology and Hope*, 16.

[408] See Michel de Certeau, "How is Christianity Thinkable Today?" *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader* (Malden, MA, Blackwell, 1997). Michel de Certeau argues the double movement of being faithful and different to Christian tradition as he writes: "Christianity implies a relationship to the event which inaugurated it: Jesus Christ … the will to be faithful to the inaugural event; the necessity of being different from these beginnings," p. 142.

the "Dark Night of the Soul" or the "Cloud of Unknowing" has led them to a greater awareness of their limitation and "nothingness" before God.

This very quagmire, however, has led them to become more aware of the love of God. In the absence of God they become more aware of the mysterious presence of God's grace in everyday life; in this despair they become more aware of the vehemence of the power of the breaking-in of God's reign; in their marginality they realize the need for change; in their worldly irrelevance they discover the real meaning of their life and mission and in the hostile contemporary milieu they find the confidence to preach the gospel anew.   Indeed, the words of St. Paul become alive in their own experience: "For whenever I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 10).

Humbled by this tensive dialectic between despair and hope, absence and presence, the "negative contrast experiences" of the Redemptorists become auspiciously the *locus* for preaching anew God's goodness, love and grace. These "negative contrast experiences" gave them the opportunity to return to St. Alphonsus and Clement's charism on preaching, for example, God's abundant love for the poor, simplicity of language and persistence, which continue to be appropriate especially in the apophatic emphasis and radical difference in globalization. This opens them more to the promptings of the creative Spirit to speak to the people in the language of today the ever-new message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

b. **Cataphatic Theology—the Via Positiva—in Redemptorist Mission and Identity**

Preaching the gospel anew, is a confirmation of the primacy of proclamation in Redemptorist mission. The logos of differentiality in globalization has inspired Redemptorists to reaffirm their identity as a preaching congregation.   They realize that preaching the gospel anew holds one of the keys to their survival in the global age; they need to preach the gospel in the global age; otherwise, they have no reason to continue.

St. Alphonsus' and St. Clement's charism becomes alive once again. St. Alphonsus' proclamation—"*Copiosa apud eum redemptio*"—about the infinite love of God which preaching cannot exhaust and St. Clement's plea that the gospel must always be preached anew becomes compellingly fresh today. The difficulties they encounter in global times are not an excuse for not preaching the gospel anew. Redemptorists need to proclaim Christ by

all means, echoing St. Paul's cry: "Woe to me if I don't preach the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16).

St. Clement's plea for persistence in preaching the gospel is utterly compelling—stimulating the Redemptorists that they should never give up preaching the gospel. The gospel is our hope, our salvation, for in the gospel we can discover the reign of God amidst all the privation of good in the world. On the other hand, every preaching is an experience of Alphonsus' theme of "*copiosa apud eum redemptio,*" the proclamation of God's overflowing and infinite salvation. One cannot preach the totality of God's infinite salvation; no period can ever exhaust the infinity of God. It cannot contain everything that can be said about it. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away" (Luke 21: 33). In this sense every time that Redemptorists preach, they preach anew; their preaching is new.

Redemptorists today, while faithful to their tradition, need to explore new ways and means of appropriating the original charism of the congregation in the midst of globalization. They need to discover the fresh vitality of the Redemptorist charism that interrupts them in the age of globalization. Thus, preaching the gospel anew is to re-imagine the fundamental charism of the congregation as inspired by St. Alphonsus and St. Clement in the context of the global milieu and to stop clinging to identity and traditions with which they have been comfortable in the past that may no longer be missionary in the present. Redemptorists need to do in the global age of the twenty-first century what Alphonsus and Clement did in the eighteenth century. St. Alphonsus and St. Clement lived in challenging and transforming times just as we do. Indeed, preaching the gospel anew is just as urgent a call of the times today as it was to St. Clement during his times.

Preaching the gospel anew today means that Redemptorists have something new to say in the global age. The Redemptorist charism remains relevant to preaching amidst the zeitgeist of globalization. Preaching Jesus' infinite salvation continues to be a meaningful message despite the advancements of globalization. The new message that the Redemptorist proclaims is not primarily an attempt for relevance in globalization, rather an attempt to hear the voice of God anew in the midst of the global age.

On the other hand, the global milieu offers a clearing for developing new meaning for the Redemptorist mission. The new spatiality and temporality of globalization, while containing both opportunities and threats, is redefining Redemptorist mission. It offers fertile possibilities for new ministries, new methods and new programs, indeed for preaching the

gospel anew. Thus, globalization is both an exciting and exacting time and space for Redemptorist mission. It is a make-or-break, a *kairos* for Redemptorist mission.

The *logos* of interconnection in globalization challenges Redemptorists to connect with the world especially with the most abandoned. Redemptorists, to be faithful to their charism, need to be where the most abandoned are, whether in the field or in the virtual world of the internet. Redemptorists should locate themselves among the victims of globalization. This implies a continuous search for locations where they can be missionary in the midst of globalization, for example, mission amongst those left behind by globalization, mission to the most vulnerable victims of globalization—the new poor, migrants, indigenous people and mission of reconciliation. Redemptorists are called to be *avant garde* missionaries by pioneering new frontiers of mission in globalization.

What are these new mission frontiers in globalization? In the midst of the vast movements of people, especially the massive urbanization, Redemptorists may have to organize more urban missions. This implies adapting the mission methods and content to the complexities and particularities, as well as the multicultural and fast tempo, of the city. The challenge of connecting with and finding youth either in the real and virtual world also serves as a big challenge and prospect for the Redemptorist mission.

St. Alphonsus has always envisioned mission as liminal experience; the Redemptorists always cast their lot in with the outcast and most abandoned. In this way, Redemptorists become agents of liminality in the mission. This is particularly true in the preaching event, when Redemptorists lead the people to see in their world the ushering in of the reign of God. Furthermore, Redemptorist mission becomes an effective liminality when their life and work becomes a witness to the gospel and the reign of God for the church and the world. This is very much akin to Hiebert's suggestion that "missionaries are 'inbetweeners,' standing between different worlds, seeking to build bridges of understanding, mediating relationships, and negotiating partnerships in ministry."[409]

As their traditional form of mission may no longer fit the changed landscape of the daily life of the people, a review of existing mission programs and structures is essential. For example the traditional Redemptorist *missio ad gentes* may no longer be effective to respond to the challenges of globalization particularly in the area of inculturation, pluralism and

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[409] Ott and Netland, *Globalizing Theology,* 34.

interreligious dialogue. The importance of dialogue may require *missio ad gentes* to be complemented by *missio inter gentes*.[410] With the massive movement of peoples, urbanization and explosion of information technology, Redemptorists discover that the concept of space as "frontiers" of mission, for example, may no longer be geographical but more cultural and spiritual. The traditional structure of the sending church and the receiving church is transformed as mission is carried out "from everyone to everywhere". The traditional vertical relationship of missionary and the people may be transformed by a horizontal relationship emphasizing the mutual conversion of the missionary and the people.

The ubiquity of the new media calls for a more dynamic presence in the web and at the same time opening up possibilities for evangelizing through the media. But the traditional media—radio, TV and print—remain effective tools for evangelization. Besides having their own dynamic and interactive website, Redemptorist can still foray into radio, print or broadcasting media integrated into the online platform. In their foray into the new media, they need to explore who are the most abandoned and how can they apply their missionary dynamism in this new mediated world.

Globalization gives the Redemptorists plenty of opportunities to become more involved in the public square. For example, globalization has seen the explosion of ethical questions. This includes abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, cloning, "designer babies", human embryo stem cell research, same-sex marriage, the creation of embryos from same-sex adults, proposals for "manimals" (embryos with both human and animal genes), business ethics and so on. In this complex ethical milieu, Redemptorists are called to exercise the Alphonsian charism of moral theology by helping people to discern and practise the Christian norm of human behaviour amidst globalization.

Redemptorists need to explore how as a global and local unit they can respond, based on their charism, to the global ills—poverty, war on terror, human trafficking, climate change, unfair trade, religious tolerance, migrants, sustainable development, micro-finance, and so on and how can they make some concrete constructive efforts in political and economic development, for example becoming involved with civil society and in the realization of the UN Millennium Development Goals.

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[410] See Jonathan Tan, *Missio Inter Gentes: Towards a New Paradigm in Mission Theology of the Federation of Asian Bishops Conference*. Accessed 27 August 2011 at http://www.jonathantan.org/essays/Missio%20Inter%20Gentes.pdf.

In the global milieu, dialogue is an essential dimension of Redemptorist mission; Redemptorists are called to be missionaries of dialogue, especially in the three major areas: dialogue with the poor, culture and religion. Every area and culture is different so the same module for preaching the gospel anew is never repeated. This implies a shift from "mission to" to "mission with" and "giving mission" to "doing mission".

Redemptorists must accept that they are indeed in a pluralistic society. This implies that preaching and mission is not just among Catholics but addressed more and more to a pluralistic, multicultural, multi-religious, secular, postmodern society.

Preaching the gospel anew is more than translation, adaptation, accommodation or contextualization of the gospel in the global milieu. Past experiences have shown that these strategies lack constructive dialogue between the faith and culture and were not always free from prejudices. This also entails that Redemptorists need to abandon any absolutism and superiority and consequently, enter into uncertainty and vulnerability with the people. There is a real need today to recognize that evangelization should be done in vulnerability, in humility, with a sense of being open to be evangelized by those whom we are evangelizing— a kind of "mission in reverse,"[411] a shift from a "mission from a position of power to a mission from a position of weakness."[412]

Amidst the ambiguities and confusions towards the future, an appropriate missiological direction for the Redemptorists in the context of global age is vital. An appropriate missiological direction is one that reinvigorates the Redemptorist charism of proclaiming the good news of Jesus to poor, a proclamation that is holistic and eschatological.

Ultimately, this also calls for an expanded horizon of their mission: from mission for the Catholic church to mission for the reign of God in the world (*missio Dei*). Christian mission is indeed beyond the Redemptorist congregation and the Catholic Church; its ultimate goal is the reign of God. As John Paul II said, "mission is only effective if it is done at the service of the reign."[413] In mission for the reign of God, preaching becomes more

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[411] Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 489.

[412] See Paul Yonggap Jeong, *Mission from a Position of Weakness*. Accessed November 20, 2007 at http://journal.asianmissiology.org/MFPW.pdf.

[413] John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (Vatican, 1990), n. 20.

about the radical values of the gospel of Jesus about the reign of God than the insular concerns of the church.

c. Newness of Redemptorist Identity

To preach the gospel anew is for the Redemptorists to be born anew. This will demand personal transformation and conversion, creativity and innovation both in their personal and collective way of life. This implies a constant effort to leave behind their security, comfort zones, certainty and complacency. This will also demand a stronger life of witness and re-strengthening of the Alphonsian tradition of living a life closer to the people. In the midst of the influence of individualisation on the once traditional corporate way of doing mission they may need to find new ways of living and sustaining a communal way of life. They must be vigilant about the lure of material security, modern amenities and consumerist lifestyle which have extinguished the prophetic witness of their community living. In their vulnerable experience of wrestling within themselves with the God-question, they find themselves alongside the people of this generation in their quest for new expressions and symbols of their spirituality and theology.

To be born anew, they need to ask themselves the question: What does it mean to be a Redemptorist today? What new ways of being Redemptorist and mission are demanded by the *logos* of the global times? What story of their lives as Redemptorists will they tell the world?

The face of the congregation has changed in the midst of global transformation. It will continue to do so in the future. This is what the 2009 General Chapter's insistence on the need for restructuring emphasized. However, restructuring should not just be insular but outward; a sending off, an inspiration and revitalization for mission. This does not posit an abstract and uniform way of preaching the gospel in every place; on the contrary, this inspires original ways of preaching in the diverse context and cultures of the people to whom they are sent.

Indeed, the manner by which Redemptorists perform their preaching in whatever situation they may find themselves is to be characterized by creativity and dynamism. This is affirmed by the Constitution of the Redemptorists:

> Indeed the apostolic work of the Congregation is distinguished more by its missionary dynamism than by any particular forms of activity … they cannot allow themselves

to settle down in surroundings and structures in which their work would no longer be missionary. On the contrary, they will diligently pioneer new ways of preaching the Gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15).[414]

In the end, just like the apophatic attitude of the mystics, the future of the Redemptorists will be beyond their grasp. Redemptorists must, in fact, never be content with finality about their charism and mission. Redemptorists never arrive. They are in a sense, to borrow a term from Michel de Certeau's reflection on mysticism, in "perpetual departure," a "perpetual pilgrim." [415] A Redemptorist is, in Victorino Cueto's appropriation of de Certeau's words, a traveller who "navigates the in-betweenness of being a pilgrim, someone sure of his/her destination and a wanderer, someone who allows his/her feet to lead the way and do the walking."[416]

This way forward is like a journey into the unknown. But this is providential in the sense that Redemptorists do not remain complacent and fixed in the security of the past which prevents them from being open to the ever-present unfathomable God. Redemptorists are always called to faith as a way of moving forward and the constant taking of risks. They are always on the way yet always basking in the presence and grace of God who is always breaking into the world. "See, I am making all things new" (Revelation 21: 5).

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[414] *Redemptorist Constitutions*, n.14.

[415] Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable: The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, trans. Michael B. Smith (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 299.

[416] Victorino Cueto, *"Tactics of the Weak": Exploring Everyday Practice With Michel De Certeau, Towards a Theology of Everyday Life* (Louvain, Belgium: Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Faculty of Theology, 2011), 345.

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