Christian Self-Identity in the Face of Globalisation

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In reflecting on ecclesiology in the face of globalisation I realise that how we as the disciples of Christ encounter the world, in this case globalisation, depends to a great extent on how we remember who and what we are. The Czech novelist Milan Kundera in his fascinating novel *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*[1] states: "the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting."

What I would like to do is to explore some of our recent remembering of who and what we are as Church and begin to reflect on whether that remembering may make a difference to how we begin to approach economic and cultural globalisation and its implications. I intend to explore something of the present state of ecclesiology in its postconciliar forms and reflect on what sort of identity or identities emerge capable of enabling serious engagement with contemporary approaches to globalisation. My method is anamnetic, looking back from the present to a remembered, celebrated and shared past in order to better understand the present and move towards possible options for the future.

Vatican II and its Aftermath

Returning to the texts of Vatican II today I am more aware, than I was as a student, of their political nature as compromise texts fought over sentence by sentence. In the early years after the council I was conscious of a before and after. As a young Catholic in England in the 1950s I saw the Church as Rome centred, focused on the Pope and the Bishops. There as a strong sense of changeless tradition, isolation and independence from secular society, typified by the regular singing of "Faith of Our Fathers", with a vigorous apologetic in response to other churches and, of course, religions. The greatest ideal put before us as young people was that of priesthood and the religious life. The focus was radical dedication to Christ and service of his people with the more heroic going off to foreign parts to save

[1] Kundera, M. (1980), *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*, London: Penguin Books, p. 3.

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the souls of those who did not yet know Christ and to draw them into the safety of the dragnet of Peter's trawler.

Then after the Council we were suddenly the People of God, on a journey in history, pointing to the kingdom of God and its signs in other churches, other faiths, and indeed even in the journey of integrity of the convinced atheist. The Church was now a multi-faceted mystery to be explored using the whole of the tradition, scriptures and fathers, worship and prayer. Our own contemporary language and culture was thought to enable us to realise this vision better and indeed the council set us on the way with its opening of worship to the vernacular. As a student I had read the accounts of the great debates in Vorgrimler[2] but in my naiveté I read these in terms of the triumph of enlightenment over obscurantism with the Spirit on the side of enlightenment. The Barque of Peter was no longer a Noah's ark of salvation rather more of a powerful pilot tug lighting up the lanes and pointing the way in an increasingly busy and confusing channel.

Underneath all of this I was aware of a battle for hearts and minds, a struggle to find an identity that could be owned and shared in the modern world. Biblical and patristic images were searched notably in *Lumen Gentium* chapter 6. In his encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam*, Paul VI brought some of the key themes together around the idea of the Church as essentially a divine mystery located within the very life of the triune God. We are becoming familiar with the idea of the Church as icon of the Trinity and Rublev's beautiful icon is egregiously everywhere. But this was not then normal fare and nor, in the collective consciousness of the local Church, is it yet.

Images of Church

The three images of Church the council particularly focused on out of the 95 available in the New Testament were the new People of God, the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit. The first reminds us that our identity is tied up with the original people of God – Israel – and deliberately builds on Paul's refusal to develop a unique Christian identity without Israel. This is still a remarkable development as the image of People of God has little historical warrant within the greater part of the surviving literature of the 2000-year Christian tradition, outside of the more marginal radical traditions. The background influence here was the development of a renewed theology of salvation history in the 40s and 50s within Protestantism. In particular the work of Oscar Cullmann[3] and his

[2] Vorgrimler, H. (ed) (1969) *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vols. 1–5, London: Burns and Oates.

[3] Especially *Christ and Time*, London: SCM 1950.

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re-examination of the nature and status of the Jewish Scriptures and of Israel's history as uniquely revelatory.

The underlying dynamic, emphasised in a remarkable intervention at the council by the Patriarch of the East, Msgr. Hakim, is of a radical engagement of God in History.

> Western theologians have always the tendency to modalism (and today alas to "deism"...): an abstract God, subjected to analysis by reason; not the living God, in whom the inaccessible mystery of the Father (*theologia)* is revealed by and in the Son, and communicated to men in history (*oikonomia*) through the presence of the Spirit.[4]

The use of a collective term "people of God" had the further effect in countering the abiding sense since Vatican I of the Catholic Church as a primarily hierarchical reality. An egalitarian note was sounded with the emphasis on our shared filial reality as sons and daughter of God in Baptism, brothers and sisters in Christ. This much vaunted shift from the pyramid to the circle so cheerfully bruited abroad by radical commentators was sadly offset by the strong emphasis in the chapter immediately afterwards in *Lumen Gentium* on the hierarchical nature of Church. Werner Jeanrond sees this as a tragic inability by the Council to acknowledge one Priestly character of the baptised with diversity of function and instead remaining with two ontological qualities, of the ordained and the not, resulting in two functions one representative and one not. The danger being that as *societa*s rather than *communio* power remains in the part of the community which is self selective and indeed ontologically different.[5]

The second chosen image of the Council was the "body of Christ". This is an image of venerable usage which had received a powerful push in Pius XII's 1943 Encyclical *Mysticis Corporis*. The Pope had attempted to balance Vatican I's emphasis on the institutional hierarchical Church with a reflection on the inner divine aspect of the Church. However, the very real benefits of this, especially in devotion and spirituality, were somewhat reduced by the exclusive identification of the body of Christ with the Roman Catholic Church within which it alone exists. Vatican II picked up the image but gave it a different spin. The council emphasised the corporate nature of unity in Christ. The Christian is never body of Christ alone. The Pauline material is drawn on to explore the body of Christ as that of the risen and glorious Christ now present to the world in his body, the Church,

[4] Cited in M-D. Chenu, "The New Awareness of the Trinitarian Basis of the Church," *Concilium* 146 (1981), 15.

[5] Jeanrond, W. G. " Community and Authority: The Nature and Implication of the Authority of Christian Community," 91–93. In *On Being the Church: Essays on the Christian Community*, edited by Gunton, C. & Hardy, D. (1989) Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 81–109.

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which participates in his Spirit poured out on the original community of disciples at Pentecost. This Christic presence is now potentially global. Post-resurrection, the Lord is not bound by time and space but moves within the limitless reality of the divine life and so offers a global, indeed cosmic, relationship, as in the Christ image of Ephesians and Colossians, the Word in the prologue of the Fourth Gospel and Christ the high Priest in Hebrews.

However, the image when applied to Church has a tension in it. If the reality of Church is primarily to incarnate the Spirit of Christ and bear witness to it, then it is clear that not all that has been and is Church always serves this end. What is it that we experience as Church today? Have we access to that tangible Christ that Paul speaks of, encountering him in the words and actions of the community of disciples: a community where the sinner, the failure, the frail is accepted and helped to live again? The Church, then, is body given for others, a real extension of its eucharistic remembrance of Christ's body given for us and our salvation. When the Church is the locus of reconciliation the place where the kingdom is coming now, then always Jesus' paschal mystery is real, not only in liturgy, but in the very dynamic of the communal life of the disciples.[6] *Alter Christus* here is not primarily Priest or Bishop so much as whoever walks the way of Jesus alongside those who are exploited, oppressed or excluded. A message the church in South America has enabled us to appreciate powerfully in its own development of orthopraxis as the appropriate focus for orthodoxy.

Any contemporary models of Church have to deal with what the French Dominican theologian Christian Duquoc in an essay in 1993[7] calls the Church as "a broken mirror" which reflects the Christ she exists to bear witness to in fragments. No one model or even collection of models can encapsulate the mystery. Indeed the New Testament itself is like a series of mirrors whose images complement one another but never to the point of one dominating the others.

Indeed where one reflection has dominated, as for example the Logos image in the third, fourth and fifth century Greek fathers, there has always been an imbalance in the theology that followed. So much of the work of von Balthasar, Danielou, de Lubac and Congar was an attempt to open up again a richer range of images within the scriptures and tradition; perhaps most brilliantly with the reappraisal of *doxa*/*glory* in St. John in von Balthasar's multi-volume *The Glory*

[6] Cf. the fine treatment of this in Dych, W.V., (1999) *Thy Kingdom Come: Jesus and the Reign of God*, NY: Crossroad, pp. 86–89.

[7] Duquoc, C. "Jesus Christus, Mittelpunkt des Europa von Morgen," in Huenermann, P. ed., (1993), *Das Neue Europa, Herausforderung fur Kirche und Theologie* (QD 144), Frieburg i. Br., p. 105f.

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of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics.[8] Nearer home Oliver Davies has done a similar retrieval with his systematics of Compassion.[9]

What Duquoc and the ecumenical movement have realised is that if this is true of the New Testament communities, it is also true of the body of Christ in its multiple polycentric forms in our world. We are body of Christ not the head hence the Council's use of the People of God as a metaphor that could balance too strong an identification of Church and Christ. The Pentecostal Spirit of the risen Christ, like the Kingdom which Jesus lived to bring into being are bigger concepts capable of being partially realised and mirrored but never encapsulated in some definable social reality.

These images self-consciously point to the graced, given, called nature of the community of disciples. The Church in its various forms comprises the variety of communities that have responded to God's call in Christ and the Spirit. And for all the abiding fragility and at times bloody-minded stubbornness of its leaders and members, like the Israel of old, it remains still the Spirit-endowed body that actively remembers the living God in history and time; enacting this memory in the murkiness and mixed motives of contemporary politics and economics within which it is variously entangled, like the wheat and the darnel, till the Lord comes.

It was with the image of Temple of the Holy Spirit the Council sought again to balance the Western Church's traditional Christo-centric ecclesiology symbolised above all in the vestigial epiclesis of the Roman rite. Although as Catholic Christians we should not be too apologetic about this, since the basis for the WCC up to the fifties was also strictly Christo-centric. The recent opening to the Spirit and the beginnings of a renewed pneumatology has been well served by Congar's three-volume compendium[10] where he emphasises the Church's origin in the two divine missions of the Son and the Spirit, recalling Irenaeus' metaphor of the two hands of God. The Charismatic Renewal movement and the phenomenon of worldwide Christian Pentecostalism make it possible to speak of a new age of the Spirit in the Church. But it is to the Eastern Church's faithful remembering of the Spirit that Catholicism has turned in recent years to refresh its own remembering. What the present Pope calls breathing with both lungs. The Greek Bishop Theologian John Zizioulas speaks of Christ instituting and the Spirit constituting the Church. The model of institution is clear enough in western canon law, sacramental theology and ecclesiology but it has its limitations, which anyone who has tried to argue for the historical institution of the seven sacraments will be aware of.

[8] *Herrlichkeit I–III*, Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag 1965–69. English Translation, Vols. I–VII, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark. 1982–91.

[9] Davies, O. (2001) *A Theology of Compassion*, Michigan: Eerdmans.

[10] Congar, Y. (1983), *I Believe in the Holy Spirit* vols. 1–3, London: Chapman.

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Constitution is a more inclusive term. Constitution and communion, the model of theology which has developed out of this emphasis on the Temple of the Spirit, co-involves us with God in the reality of Church in its coming into being but also in its unfolding and development in history. The relevance of this to the Council's image of Temple of the Holy Spirit is clear enough. The constituting of Church is precisely through the Spirit's on-going indwelling of the holy space that is Church. That indwelling is a life-giving presence which enables the life of the risen Christ to be effective through this community, at this time, in this world. The gift of the Spirit is for the world, at the service of the kingdom, the reign of God. The impulse of Pentecost is outward not inward. The disciples return to those who had plotted the death of the Lord, the Sanhedrin, to proclaim to them their victim as their saviour.[11] The first Spirit-inspired mission is into a real world of violence and corruption, of fear and hate. A world of Empire, the logic of whose rule and very particular mechanisms (the manipulation of need and greed, of fear and insecurity) Jesus had challenged with his practice of the Kingdom. The disciples are led by the Spirit into the suffering of the world to take up their stance in solidarity with their crucified and now risen Lord, alongside the little ones whose cause he had made his own.

Office and Charism

We have inherited in the Catholic West a stress on office rather than charism. The office of Bishop, Priest and Deacon has often been given a christological focus. But office in the Church, according to Vladimir Lossky, is the charismatic first gift of the Spirit on Easter Sunday when the not yet ascended Lord breathes on the disciples and says: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any they are forgiven: if you retain the sins of any they are retained." (Jn. 20:22–23) The apostles are here called to a particular ministry, to bind and loose, to reconcile. This is not conferred on all the disciples and this will eventually be formalised in the passing on of this role through the Episcopal college. But Lossky has the second gift of the Spirit in Acts 2ff come down on all the redeemed. From then, all Christians are seen as, Spirit-bearers. In the words of John's first letter 2:20 "you have been anointed by the holy one, and you all know."[12]

[11] Beautifully pondered in Rowan Williams' *Resurrection* (1982) London: DLT pp. 7–28.

[12] This paragraph is based on Limouris, G. "The Church as Mystery and Sign in Relation to the Holy Trinity in Ecclesiological Perspectives" p. 29 in Limouris, G. ed., (1986) *Church-Kingdom-World: the church as Mystery and Prophetic Sign*, Faith and Order Paper 130, Geneva: World Council of Churches.

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How this is actually worked out in practice has not always been easy. Gennadios Limouris in a collection of Faith and Order documents says:

> In any association on the purely human level there will always exist a tension between individual liberty and the demands of corporate solidarity. Only within the Church, and through the gift of the Spirit, is the conflict between these two things resolved. In the kingdom of the Holy Spirit there is neither totalitarianism nor individualism, neither dictatorship nor anarchy, but harmony and unanimity.[13]

Limouris here speaks out of the liturgical contemplative tradition of Orthodox ecclesiology. There, in the eucharistic epiclesis, the Spirit is called down over the gifts of the community sanctifying them and it in an anticipation of the final Parousia. But few of us are able to live this sense of the in-between in the ordinary moments of each day. A purely charismatic community of the Spirit is, as James Dunn has pointed out, a one-generation ideal.[14] It was fine when Paul and the early disciples thought the Lord's coming was immanent. In 1 Thess. 4:13f and 1 Cor. 7:29f structures seemed somewhat superfluous in the face of the self-evident power of the Spirit.

However, we have inherited a corrupted tradition more familiar with a depreciation of the Spirit's presence and an exaggerated dependence on hierarchy, on defined doctrine, on clerical authority and power at the expense of the universal expectation of the Spirit's presence, and of a living sense of the gifting of all the baptised and the difference that might make if the baptised were encouraged and enabled to respond.

Church as Temple of the Spirit is no separate, holy enclave but seeks to replicate the theophany of Exodus revealing the presence of the unimagined and unexpected God – "Yahweh" – "I am who I am" or "I will be where I will be". Precisely not the God we kindly locate where it is convenient for us that God should be. A renewed pneumatological ecclesiology does not allow an aesthetic withdrawal into the beautiful, as in some contemporary reflections on Church. The *doxa*/glory John speaks of in his Gospel is indeed a beautiful but also a terrible thing. Jesus' revealing of the Kingdom brought healing and reconciliation but also opposition, hate, fear and death. The solidarity that we have in the Spirit as Church draws us into just such complexity. To quote a modern disciple who lived this to the end:

[13] Ibid.

[14] Dunn, J, (1998) *The Christ and the Spirit*, vol. 2, Pneumatology, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark p. 252.

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> The hour when the Church today prays for the coming of God's kingdom drives it for better or for worse into the company of the earthlings and worldlings, into a contract to be faithful to the earth, to its distress, its hunger and its dying.[15]

Sacrament of the Spirit

We are familiar with the idea of Church as sacrament of Christ but Kasper and others have more recently begun to speak of Church as sacrament of the Spirit.[16] Church is here seen as Sacrament of God's creative spirit in the world drawing the creation, over which the Spirit originally moved, to its fulfilment in the new creation of which Christ is the first fruits and pioneer. The horizon here is bigger than institutional Church. It sees the Church as crucially bound up in the process of highlighting the presence of the Reign of God already actualised so as to highlight just where that reign is not yet.

This pushes the community of disciples into a constant engagement in the real world for the sake of the new creation, it heralds and sacramentally anticipates. Social and political involvement in the broad sense are not then, nor have ever been, optional extras. The reign of God that broke out in Christ in faithfulness to the call of Israel, to be sign to the nations, continues today. The difference being that the context is no longer Roman empire, nor feudal Europe, nor colonial empire but globalised markets and the new internationalism, the world of cyber-reality, and a planet of many faiths. The implications of Kingdom were always greater than Church and always potentially problematic for the powers of the earth. Whatever the relationship of Church to globalisation, it is not going to be one without tensions.

Post Vatican II and the emergence of Communio/Koinonia

It is only in the light of reflection on the People of God, the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Spirit and its renewed pneumatolgy that the churches have been able to arrive at the remarkable consensus over *communio/koinonia* as the currently preferred shared model of church.[17] That is, in the words of John Fuellenbach:

[15] Bonhoeffer, D (1958) *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol.3, Muenchen: Kaiser Verlag p. 274, cited in Fuellenbach, J. (2002), *Church: Community of the Kingdom*, NY: Orbis p. 62.

[16] Kasper, W. 'Kirche als Sakrament des Geistes', pp. 13–55 in Kasper, W. & Sauter, G. (1976) *Kirche, Ort des Geistes*, Freiburg: Herder.

[17] Although it's worth noting the careful caveat of Clare Watkins in "Objecting to Koinonia. The Question of Christian Discipleship Today and Why Communion is not the Answer", in *Louvain Studies* 28 (2003) pp. 326–343.

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> ... the communion of the faithful united by the Holy Spirit, joined to Christ, and called together with the whole of creation into the Kingdom of God the Father. The church is viewed as sacramentally expressing here and now the mystery of the communion of the Trinity.[18]

There is a consensus among theologians as different as Forte, Kung, Kasper and Ratzinger[19], that People of God, Body of Christ, Temple of the Spirit, woven through the 16 documents of the Council, echoing the consistent tradition of the Eastern churches, now form an essential grid of reference for a trinitarian and pneumatic framework for the mystery of the Church. Through the Council the foundational metaphors for church shifted from institution and hierarchy to people of God, the basic Spirit-indwelt reality of the communion of all believers. And so another step is formed along the centuries old path to realise in everyday life what Paul saw had already been achieved in Christ "no longer Jew nor Greek ... male nor female but all are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

Whatever differentiation there is of function, ministry and service is secondary to this common gifting with the Spirit. Though how this *koinonia* is experienced is still to say the least patchy. The three core images reinforce this sense of community and of the Church as icon of the Triune God. That this is not transparent to the majority of Christian faithful should perhaps cause us to pause. Where can it be remembered, brought to mind? Is it just too complex and removed from the experience of most communities? Or does it just take a shift of perspective to see?

Church and Kingdom

Gaudium et Spes, 3, 92 speaks of the Church's role in the world as one of service, in particular the service of unity among all peoples. The perspective is outward looking and the Church is seen as working alongside others to build a better world. In doing this the Church points, in the middle of strife and struggle, to the Kingdom inaugurated in Christ but still coming. In the pursuit of this, alongside its commitment to proclaim the Gospel and celebrate the sacraments, the Church is called to a *diakonia* that includes the struggle for a new social order. The understanding here is that the kingdom is transformative of all reality and the Church is to serve this transformation.

Debate since the Council has gone to and fro over whether the Council underwrites this priority of the Kingdom. In its 1984 document: *Selected Themes of Ecclesiology: On the occasion of the*

[18] Fuellenbach, J. (2002), C*hurch: Community for the Kingdom*, NY: Orbis, p. 64.
[19] Cf. the useful survey of Dennis M. Doyle (2000), *Communion Ecclesiology*, NY: Orbis.

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eighth anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council, the International Theological Commission made it clear where it stood:

> it is clear that in the Council's teaching there is no difference so far as eschatological reality is concerned between the final realisation of the Church (as *consummata*) and of the Kingdom (as *consummatum*)

and

> Belonging to the Kingdom cannot *not be* belonging – at least implicitly – to the Church".[20]

For the ITC, Church and Kingdom, while distinguishing between the historical Church and the fully realised eschatological Kingdom, identify the two here and now.[21] This same understanding is made more clearly in the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (nos. 865, 541, 670–71, 768–69)

> The Church is ultimately *one, holy and apostolic* in her deepest and ultimate identity, because it is in her that 'the kingdom of Heaven', the 'Reign of God', already exists and will be fulfilled at the end of time. (no. 865)

This is a selective reading of the conciliar texts. Article 5 of *Lumen Gentium* and Article 45 of *Gaudium et Spes* place the Church in a clear relation of subordination to the Kingdom:

> Whether it aids the world or whether it benefits from it the Church has but one sole purpose – that the Kingdom of God may come and the salvation of the human race be accomplished. (GS 45)

Any simple identification leads precisely to that triumphalistic model of the Church which the Council rejected.[22] Karl Rahner would go much further:

> The Kingdom of God itself is coming to be in the history of the world (not only in that of the Church) whenever obedience to God occurs in grace as the acceptance of God's self-communication. . . . For [of] this Kingdom of God in the World, which of course can never simply be identified with any particular objective secular phenomenon, the Church is a part, because of course the Church itself is in the world and in its members makes world history. Above all, however, the Church is precisely its special fundamental sacrament, i.e., the eschatological and efficacious manifestation (sign) in redemptive history that in the unity, activity, fraternity, etc., of the world, the Kingdom of God is at hand.[23]

[20] *International Theological Commission: Texts and Documents 1969–85*, ed. Sharkey, M. (1989) San Francisco: Ignatius Press p. 302 and p. 303.

[21] For an excellent short critique of the clerical and hierarchical centred nature of the ITC cf. Munoz, R. "The Ecclesiology of the International Theological Commission" pp. 37–43 of *Concilium* 188, (6/1986).

[22] CF. Schnackenburg, R. "Signoria e regno di Dio nell'annuncio di Gesu e della Chiesa delle Origini," *Communio* 86 (1986), 41–42.

[23] "World and Church", in *Sacramentum Mundi*, 8 vols., ed. Rahner, K. (1975) NY: Seabury, 1:348.

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Globalisation as Economic and as Human[24]

The Hebrew Bible opens with a universal vision of all earthlings (Adam plays on *adamah* the malleable rich ground of the great river deltas) as created in the image of God. Not only Kings as in Egypt, but all the sons and daughters of Adam are *imago dei*. Jesus renews this universal insight in his metaphor of God as Abba and in his practice of recognising the truly human as valid wherever it might be. Then in the resurrection, humanity is taken into the divine life itself such that human and divine cannot be separate ever again. So at the heart of Judaism and Christianity is a perception of the truly human as the locus of the presence of God.

At present we work with rather different universal perspectives. Economic globalisation is based on a perception of the human as *homo consumptor*. An artificial construct based on the subverting of previously held values as in moderation, saving, working to live and not vice versa. The gospel of consumerism deliberately creates false expectations and offers to satisfy them. Rifkin in his *The End of Work* reminds us that Coca Cola was originally designed as a mild analgesic. Cadler bought[25] the patent from the Atlanta based pharmaceutical business and cleverly set in motion one of the most effective globalised consumerist movements with the words: "Only some people have headaches and only for some of the time; on the other hand there is something everyone has all the time: thirst".

Globalised consumerism elevates competition as a given of the human order. This has the consequences we see daily in the shifting of business and factories from the developed world to the developing world, where labour is young, cheap and unprotected and where legislation on health and safety, on ecological and social issues, is virtually non-existent or merely rudimentary. In the process, human values are put to one side: democracy, human rights, equality. Where security lies in possession, then the threat to one's possessions is a threat to ones security and, indeed, identity. The dispossessed are therefore a threat, as in migrants – economic, political and other.

But who can change this? Jon Sobrino proposes globalisation's victims.[26] Sobrino suggests that what has increased through the process of globalisation is not the included but the excluded. There is no easy, optimistic emergence of a one-world family but rather further cruel divisions between the haves and the have-nots. Although interestingly, the haves may be the young consumers of

[24] I draw here on ideas developed by Jose Ignacio Gonzalez Faux in his article "The Utopia of the Human Family: The Universalisation of the Truly human as Real Globalisation" pp. 91–98 of *Concilium* (5/2001).

[25] Rifkin, J. (1965) *The End of Work*, NY and London pp. 42ff.

[26] Sobrino, J. "Redeeming Globalisation through its Victims" pp. 104–114 of *Concilium* (5/2001).

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the new Peking and the have-nots the unmarried black mother on a Chicago ghetto estate in the midst of one of the wealthiest cities on the planet.

Sobrino, recognising that globalisation has a certain ambiguity, speaks in terms of the need for a principle of redemption that might turn the dynamic of globalisation into a beneficial salvific reality. Salvation in the scriptures comes from the little ones: a sterile old woman, the liberated slaves that become Israel, a marginal Jewish craft worker from a village that never appeared on a map. For Sobrino, "Weakness and littleness are at the heart of the dynamic of salvation: they are its bearers and not just its beneficiaries" (p. 106). He draws on the theme of the suffering servant in whom fragility, poverty and victimhood coalesce in order that the servant can wipe away sin and bring salvation. Sobrino asks whether it might not be possible for the victims of globalisation to be its redemption. What is clear is that if these victims are not kept within the discussion there will not be a globalisation that respects human being as such. Sobrino is exploring the possibility of a new theological insight: "since the servant of Yahweh has not been viewed historically as a present, collective and historical reality, while the salvation he brings to the world today has even less been considered in historical terms" (p. 107).

For Sobrino the crucified peoples are today's servants carrying the sin of the world, in part globalisation, on their shoulders. Echoing words of the late Archbishop Oscar Romero, he sees the victims as "the Pierced God".[27]

In this context the suffering servant is simultaneously the suffering people and Christ the liberator. It is not enough that the poor act as the judges of those who oppress them, they must also offer them salvation (Cf. Peter's speech before the Sanhedrin in Acts 3:12f). Aloysius Pieris develops the same theme[28] in a 2001 article where he sees the mission of the powerless and rejected to save and free the rich and the strong. The first Jesuit from Cameroon, M Veng, assassinated in 1995 has a similar message:

> *The Church of Africa, because it is African, has a mission to the universal Church. The Church of Africa is the pierced heart of Christ in this torn body of the universal church . . . through its poverty and humility it must remind its sister churches of the essentials of the Beatitudes and proclaim the good news of liberation to those who have succumbed to the temptation of power, wealth and domination.*[29]

[27] Words Romero used in a homily of 19th June 1977 to the surviving men and women peasants of Aguilares whose fellow inhabitants had been massacred.

[28] Pieris, A., 'Cristo mas alla dei Dogma. Hacer Cristologia en el contexto de las religiones de los pobres' *RLT, 52* (2001), p. 16.

[29] Veng, M., 'Iglesias y solidaridad con los pobres de Africa: empobrecimiento antropologico' in *Identidad Africana y Cristiana* (Estella 1999), pp. 273f. cited in Sobrino op.cit.

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This is not a simple process when we have contemporary examples of the leaders of the poor colluding with the very forces that destroy their people, as in African Bishops' unwillingness to address the moral use of condoms in the Aids crisis in their continent.

But in what way can the victim's of globalisation be seen to have, or exercise, a dynamic or potential for redemption? Sobrino suggest three points of reflection: "truth, solidarity and the civilisation of poverty" (p. 108).

Truth

The logic of globalisation assumes that those who are saved are those with economic power. Scripture suggests, however, that it is the victim who summons to salvation, as in John's crucified Christ who "draws all things to himself" (Jn. 12:32; 19:37). It was the assassination of Fr Rutilio Grande in El Salvador in 1977 that brought to the attention of the world the unknown truth that catechists, workers, students and peasants were being brutalised, tortured and murdered on an horrendous scale. Rutilio Grande and many victims since have been "the light to the nations" (Is. 42:6; 49:6) condemning and unmasking the political lies that hid them.

So unmasking the truth and accepting it as truth is a first step (cf. Rom 1:18). Sobrino goes on:

> A globalisation without truth – worse, contrary to truth – cannot humanise and, furthermore, cannot "globalise" but can only "exclude". Lies and deceit deny the very reality of the situation. And so "Africa does not exist": it has been excluded from reality by the counter-globalisation of silence. Lies and deceit also produce divisions and antagonism, and so Cuba cannot be a nation open to others: its way is blocked by the counter-globalisation of untruth. Lies and deceit are absolutely no help to making human values universal. (p. 109)

Who will remember the stories of the victims, if not the Church?

For Sobrino this massive suffering of the innocent, which for its continuance depends on the collusion of the powers, be they economics, political, the media or the academy, is the *mysterium iniquitatis*. And of course the victims are not all saints. The child victims of Congo without home and family become child soldiers and kill to eat.

Sobrino in opening up this line of thought is all too well aware that his fellow theologian Michel Novak sees the suffering servant elsewhere. Novak's reading of Is. 53: 2–3 is somewhat different:

> He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces . . . " I should like to apply this text to the modern business corporation, an excessively despised incarnation of the presence of God in this world.[30]

[30] Novak, M. & Cooper, J.W. (eds), (1981) *The Corporation, a Theological Enquiry*, Washington, p. 203.

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I would like to come back to this idea of the Church as a truthful space in relation to the shared hearing of the word in the liturgy.

Solidarity

There is an image of globalisation in the Gospels in the eschatological banquet where all rich and poor will have a place. This is anticipated in Jesus' own remarkable open table fellowship. This sense of shared fellowship cannot easily be seen writ large on the world stage. UN statistics show a growing discrepancy between the income and culture of rich and poor. The relative earnings of rich and poor were 30 to 1 in 1960, 60 to 1 in 1990 and 74 to 1 in 1997.

Solidarity involves mutual support among unequals such that the world becomes a home for all. This involves the experience of gift or grace which Jesus taught in his stories, and enacted in his healings and meals: we become human not just by "making" ourselves but by allowing ourselves to be "made" by others, as in the story of Oscar Schindler and the Jewish workers he saved from the holocaust. The Church bears witness to this dynamic of gift in its sacraments where we discover ourselves Christian by grace not virtue.

The civilisation of poverty

Through its history of saints, of religious life, of communities of outreach and care the Church bears witness to a civilisation of poverty, in contrast to the civilisation of wealth. Here the Church often appears as a contrast society. The tramp has as much right to a place within the eucharistic assembly as the headmistress, the theologian or the Pope. This shift of perspective bears remembering and becomes necessary because of the growing global awareness of the lack of correlation of populations to necessary resources, and the clear message that the civilisation of wealth cannot guarantee its vision of life to all. Necessary also because the civilisation of wealth has not self evidently humanised peoples and nations.

The often destructive dynamic of capital-wealth needs a different saving dynamic to supplant it. Such a dynamic will focus on the shared universal satisfaction of fundamental needs and the enabling of freedoms, personal and communal. It will not be stifled by the stimulated desire to possess the unnecessary when so many desperately need so little. The result would be a flourishing of a new human spirit at present stifled by the false stimulation of wants as needs.

What is at stake here is a more human globalisation. For Sobrino this will involve:

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1. the truth that summons the many
2. the solidarity of mutual support among unequals
3. the civilisation of poverty that brings humanisation with it

These principles while utopic are, Sobrino believes, already to be found naturally among the victims of the world.

But where can ideas such as these be rehearsed, revisioned, renewed? I suggest that it is in the remembering that is at the heart of all Eucharist but which has so often forgotten its cosmic and universal dimension in its all too parochial settings. "Blessed are those who are called to his supper" is a reference to all those who have gone before us and all those who are yet to come. Precisely not blessed are we – this little holy huddle of the just. In every Eucharist we are one with the victims of history, who are, as Walter Benjamin reminds us, the makers of history. Our remembrance of them alongside our remembering of the dangerous memory of Jesus is the continuation of their redemption in history, as we refuse to allow their memory to be annihilated.[31] In the Eucharist we weave new bonds of solidarity across time and place.

Within the Eucharist we try to grasp the ever-changing moment in a wider horizon of shared significant memories. We remember the exodus of the Hebrew migrant workers from oppression in Egypt to freedom in a new land. We recall the words of the prophets, renaming the memory rekindling its vision of freedom for all the powerless: the widow the orphan and the stranger. We celebrate the life and dying and rising of Jesus, spelling out that freedom in one human life. We recall the coming of the Spirit to enable the struggle for life, for freedom and dignity to continue. How we remember all this reflects our understanding of life's meaning. If time is equal instants expressing eternity in traditional formal liturgy, then all time is equal and history is going nowhere, history is meaningless.

In George Orwell's terrifying vision of the future, 1984, the slogan of the Party, which controls everyone and everything, is:

> Who controls the past controls the future:
> who controls the present controls the past.[32]

With no developed sense of memory we are helpless before the forces of domination, we lose any sense of solidarity and of the possibilities of collective social transformation for ourselves, for those who come after us, but also for the victims who went before.

Paul Ricoeur in his 3-volume work *Time and Narrative (1985)* argues that it is narrative, the significant stories we tell again and again, which

[31] Benjamin, W. (1969) *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, NY: Schocken Books, p. 255.
[32] Orwell, G. (1983) *Nineteen Eighty-four*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, p. 34.

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enable us to find meaning in time. In Eucharist we bring our remembrance of our time and the remembrance of the story of God in Christ together. In this dual remembering, his story and ours merge and mutually interpenetrate one another provoking us to find renewed shared meaning in the time in which we live. We do this remembering in a variety of loci and groups: our unions, the community of scholarship, our families, but above all the weekly Eucharist.

Our remembering of the past in liturgy is of a past still present, a *kairos* time whose influence and effect still endures. The memory enkindles hope that the reality of life in Christ can be made real in the present and in the future that together we can construct. The remembering that takes place in the Eucharist makes the psychological arrow of time point in two directions, "remembering his holy sufferings and his resurrection from the dead and his return to heaven . . . and his glorious fearful coming again" (Eucharistic prayer of St. Basil). Our vision remains open-ended.

Christian remembering defies the scientific and industrial mechanistic focus of time and the seemingly all-embracing and defining reality of globalised economics. We remember the future. Those who have gone before us are ahead of us in the life of the ever-present God. Liturgy remembers the future as present. In liturgy time and eternity are present to one another and the Christ life is renewed in the present. The kingdom continues to break in and out of the present. The frame of "time as money" or "time as productivity" is broken open to the feel of a different rhythm, a more contemplative vision of the world. In this shared vision, constantly struggled for and always in need of renewal, men and women freely co-operate with God's Spirit in the incarnating of Christ's freedom in all times. This can happen in the most prosaic of local contexts as in this reflection of an American workingman:

> Do not think of me as a spiritual man whose every thought during those twenty five minutes is at one with the words of the Mass. Each morning I try, each morning I fail, and know that always I will be a creature who, looking at Fr. Paul and the altar, and uttering prayers, will be distracted by scrambled eggs, horses, the weather, and memories and day-dreams that have nothing to do with the sacrament I am about to receive. I can receive, though . . . at Mass and at other times, moments and even minutes of contemplation. But I cannot achieve contemplation, as some can, and so, having to face and forgive my own failures, I have learned from them both the necessity and wonder of ritual. For ritual allows those who cannot will themselves out of the secular to perform the spiritual, as dancing allows the tongue-tied man a ceremony of love.[33]

[33] Dubus, A., "*A Father's Story*" in Breslin, J. ed., *The substance of things Hoped For*, New York: Doubleday, 1987, p. 152. Kindly shared with me by Rev. Dr. Philip Caldwell of Ushaw college.

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This ritual remembering with its powerful open symbols allow the secular and the sacred to intermingle with all sorts of unforeseen conclusions. And the tongue-tied find a new language of performance and action. The ways we remember, the stories we tell of ourselves as we gather around the eucharistic table are always potentially subversive and transformative events. They provoke us to see our times with new eyes and enable us to engage the world with clearer vision and renewed hope.

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