

force that models and patterns existence. Ideas, hopes, dreams and aspiration witness to its efficacy. The past is not passé: it is the shape of the present, the historical and biological effect of the historical and biological past. The past is the human equipment (traditions) for present judgment, decision and action. What we find in the past anticipates what we shall find in the future. A meaningless and absurd past anticipates a meaningless and absurd future; a significant past anticipates a meaningful future. Our moral and intellectual habits witness the force of the past giving shape to the present.

## **A Heart Close to Cracking: Preachers Resurrecting the Body in a Roman Catholic Crisis of Plausibility**

Gregory Heille OP

On 6 January 2002, the *Boston Globe* revealed that the Archdiocese of Boston (since 1980) and its archbishop Cardinal Bernard F. Law (since 1984) had repeatedly reassigned the priest John J. Geoghan from parish to parish, in spite of numerous complaints and reports and repeated psychological treatment for sexually abusing children.<sup>1</sup> This essay invites theological reflection on the themes of sexuality and power as they pertain to the ecclesiastical crisis that this story represents and on resurrection preaching at a time of ecclesiastical implausibility.

### **Sexuality, Power, and a Crisis of Plausibility**

As clear as we must be that paedophilia and ephebophilia are about power (“power over”) at least as much as they are about sex, we must also be clear that the crisis of plausibility on the part of the Catholic bishops in the United States, as they presently are perceived by both civil society and the believing church, is also about power. For some twenty years, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has surrendered its internal authority to the controlling authority of the Roman Curia over a wide spectrum of issues ranging from liturgical

practice, to the role of women and laity in Church governance and ministerial practice, to a Catholic understanding of sexual anthropology and theology. What twenty years ago could be characterized as a collegial relationship of priests and people with bishops might often be described today as an adversarial relationship. As a consequence, preachers inclined to speak about volatile issues such as sexuality or power preach by their own authority but often without a sense of solidarity from the bishops or the institutional Church. Rather, this ecclesiastical climate unwittingly endorses a mediocrity of preaching, even as believers desire perhaps more than ever to reflect critically on the meaning of the Gospel in our lives.

Paradoxically, perhaps nothing will speak more redemptively to the Roman Catholic or to the Christian practice of power than a well considered sexual theology of relationality. In consideration of both sexuality and power, it is high time to “resurrect the body” through humble dialogue and plausible preaching about a Christian understanding of human sexuality.

In 1987, the well known theologian Charles Curran delivered an address, “Catholic Ethics in Tension: Sexuality and Social Justice,”<sup>2</sup> in which he makes the point that over the span of one hundred years, the remarkable canon of Catholic Social Teaching has undergone a considerable shift in methodology—a shift from classicism to historical consciousness, with a shift toward emphasis on the person and the freedom, equality, and participation of persons and a shift from law to a relationality-responsibility model of ethics.

The corpus of Catholic Social Teaching, dating back to 1891, can be delineated under several themes, the following of which certainly are relevant to a multivalent consideration of sexuality and power: every human being is a person with inalienable rights and corresponding duties; human beings are interdependent; the human person is the foundation and end of all human institutions; the family is the most autonomous and fundamental human institution; solidarity is the moral response to interdependence and social sin.

The methodological shift to which Charles Curran refers came most visibly in the 1963 encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris* by Pope John XXIII and in the 1967 *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (*Gaudium et Spes*) promulgated by the Bishops of the Second Vatican Council. Whereas John XXIII’s methodology is classical and deductive in the main, each section of *Pacem in Terris* concludes with a short reflection on the signs of the times. Two years later, each section of *Gaudium et Spes* begins with the signs of the times. This shift from natural law to signs of the times as the starting point for articulating a

reflection on Catholic social ethics led to a more tentative and contextual form of expression in later documents. For example, Paul VI wrote in *Octogesima Adveniens (The Eightieth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum—On Human Work, 1971)*: “In the face of such widely varying situations, it is difficult for us to utter a unified message and to put forward a solution which has universal validity. Such is not our ambition, nor is it our mission. It is up to the Christian communities themselves to analyze with objectivity the situation which is proper to their own country, to shed on it the light of the principles of reflection, norms of judgment, and directives for action from the social teaching of the Church” (§4).

Whereas Catholic Social Teaching underwent a significant paradigm shift from classical to historical consciousness in the 1960s and 1970s, in more recent encyclical letters on moral theology (*Veritatis Splendor, The Splendor of Truth, 1993*) and on the relationship between faith and philosophy (*Fides et Ratio, Faith and Reason, 1998*), Pope John Paul II cautions against the steady movement since the 1960s toward historical consciousness and toward dialogue with the signs of the times in culture. In *Veritatis Splendor*, the pope writes:

Today, however, it seems necessary to reflect on the whole of the Church’s moral teaching, with the precise goal of recalling certain fundamental truths of Catholic doctrine which, in the present circumstances, risk being distorted or denied. In fact, a new situation has come about within the Christian community itself, which has experienced the spread of numerous doubts and objections of a human and psychological, social and cultural, religious and even properly theological nature, with regard to the Church’s moral teachings. It is no longer a matter of limited and occasional dissent, but of an overall and systematic calling into question of traditional moral doctrine, on the basis of certain anthropological and ethical presuppositions. At the root of these presuppositions is the more or less obvious influence of currents of thought which end by detaching human freedom from its essential and constitutive relationship to truth. Thus the traditional doctrine regarding the natural law, and the universality and the permanent validity of its precepts, is rejected; certain of the Church’s moral teachings are found simply unacceptable; and the Magisterium itself is considered capable of intervening in matters of morality only in order to “exhort consciences” and to “propose values”, in the light of which each individual will independently make his or her decisions and life choices.(§4)

In *Fides et Ratio*, the pope writes:

The word of God is not addressed to any one people or to any one period of history. Similarly, dogmatic statements, while reflecting at

times the culture of the period in which they were defined, formulate an unchanging and ultimate truth. This prompts the question of how one can reconcile the absoluteness and the universality of truth with the unavoidable historical and cultural conditioning of the formulas which express that truth. The claims of historicism, I noted earlier, are untenable; but the use of a hermeneutic open to the appeal of metaphysics can show how it is possible to move from the historical and contingent circumstances in which the texts developed to the truth which they express, a truth transcending those circumstances. . . . Truth can never be confined to time and culture; in history it is known, but it also reaches beyond history. (§95)

These quotations ring with what theologians call a post-liberal or a neo-orthodox allegiance—no longer content to dialogue with experience in the search for truth, but rather calling upon people to engage their experience in terms of a transcendent and universal standard of truth, expressed normatively for Catholics in the law of nature and in magisterial teaching and church law.

In the face of social and even doctrinal trends toward historicism, more recent magisterial statements can appear to be impeding dialogue. For example, *Veritatis Splendor* begins: “The Splendor of truth shines forth in all the works of the Creator and in a special way in man, created in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gen. 1.26). Truth enlightens man’s intelligence and shapes his freedom, leading him to know and love the Lord” (§1) The rhetorician Dennis D. Cali notes that this first sentence contains the two presuppositions about divinely transcendent and universally normative truth which drive the entire encyclical: “(a) truth is anterior to and transcendent of man’s knowledge and freedom, and (b) humanity is an heir of this truth and tends toward it.”<sup>3</sup> From these presuppositions, *Veritatis Splendor* spells out a law model of ethics, with the magisterium as its guardian:

Only God can answer the question about the good, because he is the good. But God has already given an answer to this question: He did so by creating man and ordering him with wisdom and love to his final end, through the law which is inscribed in his heart (cf. Rom. 2:15), the ‘natural law.’ (§12)

The moral prescriptions which God imparted in the old covenant and which attained their perfection in the new and eternal covenant in the very person of the Son of God made man must be faithfully kept and continually put into practice in the various different cultures throughout the course of history. The task of interpreting these prescriptions was entrusted by Jesus to the apostles and to their successors, with the special assistance of the Spirit of truth: ‘He who hears you hears me’ (Lk. 10:16). (§25)

The rhetorical tone is more a call to assent than to dialogue. While the pope assumes the truth of these natural law and magisterial premises, many of his contemporary readers, influenced as they are by a relationality-responsibility model of ethics and a postmodern scepticism vis-à-vis universal truth, do not assent to the classical premises of the encyclical. Since the encyclical assumes a rhetorical stance of presumption rather than of dialogue or even persuasion, its tone for many contemporary readers is condescending and at once both defensive and offensive.

This view of theological reflection (without mutually critical correlation of the Gospel with the signs of the times in experience and culture) reveals a fundamental ambivalence in the contemporary Roman Catholic encounter with historical consciousness. There is an assumption on the part of the magisterium that a Catholic may not stand alone in the pursuit of truth, and yet the *sensus fidelium* carries little weight. Depending on where a Catholic stands, the question—What is truth?—is answered differently: by a call to obedience under a universal norm, as expressed in the law of nature and by the magisterium, or by a call to persons and institutions for dialogue and accountability within the Christian tradition as experienced in the particular contexts of culture and discerned in theological reflection. John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor* and *Fides et Ratio* has placed himself in the classical consciousness model, thus casting confusion on many Catholics who have aligned their thinking and praxis with historical consciousness.

With regard to a Roman Catholic understanding of human sexuality, it is most interesting that the methodological shift in the 1960s and 1970s from classical to historical consciousness in Catholic Social Teaching was not reflected in Catholic magisterial teaching about human sexuality during the same period. Even though in 1963, John XXIII established a papal commission of scientists, demographers, married couples, and theologians to study the Church's position on marital sexuality, and even though the chapter on marriage in *Gaudium et Spes* (§§47–52) attempted a relational understanding of sex in marriage, his successor Paul VI twice added new members to the papal commission, including many bishops, some say in order to influence the conclusions of the commission. Still, the commission's final report concluded, "It is impossible to determine exhaustively by a general judgment and ahead of time for each individual case what . . . objective criteria will demand in a concrete situation of a couple."<sup>4</sup> This represents a shift from classical to historical consciousness during the precise period of years in which a similar methodological shift was appearing in Catholic Social Teaching, including the encyclicals of Paul VI. In 1968, however, Paul VI issued his encyclical on human

sexuality, *Humanae Vitae* (*On Human Life*). Rejecting the papal commission's conclusions from the signs of the times, the encyclical restated the Church's teaching about human sexuality and about birth control from the first-principles approach of classical consciousness. As much as Paul VI hoped his message would carry the persuasive force of truth, as we know—it did not.

The 1975 "Declaration on Sexual Ethics" issued by the Roman Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith began in a passage which neatly demonstrates what classical consciousness looks like when addressed to the subject of human sexuality: "The fundamental principles which can be grasped by reason are contained in the divine law—eternal, objective, and universal—whereby God orders, directs, and governs the entire universe and all the ways of the human community.... Human beings have been made by God to participate in this law with the result that under the gentle disposition of divine providence they can come to perceive ever increasingly the unchanging truth" (§1).

The same Congregation's 1987 document, "Instruction on Respect for Human Life in its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation," describes itself as deductive and says the unchangeable laws of human nature are "inscribed in the very being of man and woman" (II. B. 4. A). This still, almost twenty years after *Humanae Vitae*, is classical consciousness.

These documents judge sexuality by focusing on the nature of the sexual act rather than the human person. Every sexual act must express the two-fold purpose of the sexual faculty—love union and procreation. No one may interfere with the sexual faculty, either for the good of a person or the good of the marital relationship.

Law also supersedes relationality. The 1975 Declaration states: "In this domain there exist principles and norms which the church has always unhesitatingly transmitted as part of her teaching, however much the opinions and morals of the world may have been opposed to them. These principles and norms in no way owe their origin to a certain type of culture, but rather to knowledge of the divine law. . . . They therefore cannot be considered as having come out of date or doubtful under the pretext that a new cultural situation has arisen" (§5).

Despite the classical consciousness of the teaching of the Roman Catholic hierarchy on human sexuality, provocative work has also been undertaken in the Roman Catholic theological community to develop a theology of sexuality which is historically conscious and supportive of persons in their relationships and in their self-responsibility. In this new way of thinking, relationships and not only biology form the person.

One helpful metaphor is that of language, so beautifully developed by André Guindon of St. Paul University (Ottawa). In a book written

before his untimely death, Guindon says that the old paradigm is a “jurisprudence of sex” in which moralists have spelled out dos and don’ts for “every conceivable and, sometimes, hardly imaginable concrete action.”<sup>5</sup> However, they have not asked the purpose of human sexuality. This paradigm easily resorts to a biblical or classicist fundamentalism which makes God say what the moralists want to hear. But code morality fails to empower those who conform to it to make free and moral decisions and commitments from a basis of internal authority. “The rule of their action is not what *they* think, discern, and will to do, but what someone else thinks, discerns, and wills them to do.”<sup>6</sup>

This old paradigm does not correspond with contemporary knowledge. Fewer and fewer people, using the old language, can make sense of their experience. Ethicists in search of a new paradigm must, therefore, listen to sexual experience to discover its meaning and then articulate a sexual anthropology in light of this experience and scientific knowledge. Only then can believers search for the Christian meaning of sexual experience.

Guindon builds a new sexual paradigm in which body and spirit (sensuality and tenderness) are complementary aspects of the person. Sexual dualism over-identifies sex with the body, to the neglect of the spirit. Sexual integration (chastity) is at stake. “The moral task, on this level of being, consists essentially in sensualizing tenderness, as befits an em (=in)-bodied spirit. Thus, intentionality is incarnated and the word becomes flesh.”<sup>7</sup>

Sexual practice, inseparably sensuous and tender, is a language:

How, indeed, will a carrier of an enfleshed meaning express his or her unutterable experience of personal uniqueness to others without the sensually tender connotations of sexual expression? Any other form of language is inadequate to express human selfhood.

When gestural language is used to express ourselves, not about things, but about our intimate selves, about our experience of tender-sensuous experience, we are speaking the sexual language.<sup>8</sup>

In the new paradigm, sexuality—diversely experienced and expressed in celibacy, friendship, and marriage—is inseparably corporeal and spiritual, sensual and tender. Guindon develops several criteria for assessing the sexual language: it must foster human life; it must foster interpersonal relatedness; it must empower significantly human personalities in others; and it must creatively respond to the context which calls it forth.<sup>9</sup>

If the metaphor of language is so apt to the hermeneutic of sexuality, in which the corporeal and the spiritual interpret and speak to

one another, it is because human speech resonates from within the body, drawing the human spirit outward in its impulse to interpret and communicate its experience. Few people today can accept truth simply on someone else's word. People today want to hear a word that resonates with their experience and calls them continually forward in their journey of transformation.

Jesus' ministry of touch and speech called people forward into life. Christianity today must unmask false consciousness with a word and a touch which resonate in the hearts of human persons and society.

Because unmasking false consciousness is terribly difficult, the Catholic Church faces a crisis of plausibility. The Catholic preacher stands in the middle of this crisis, in the ambivalent position of holding hands with both the teaching Church and the believing Church. Both of these, often from differing paradigms, seek divine power from the sources as they seek to interpret the tradition and to read the signs of the times in light of individual and communal experience.

The journey to transformation is an archetypal journey to which the Church is not exempt. As the Roman Catholic Church wavers between classical and historical consciousness and struggles with a consequent projection of incoherence, it is, we hope, journeying toward transformation. As we can see in briefly examining Catholic social and sexual teaching, this journey is not a direct and simple journey. It is, instead, a journey of subplots, inconsistencies, and struggle, even as it remains an archetypal and Gospel journey.

## **A Heart Close to Cracking**

The British theologian James Alison speaks eloquently to the precise confusion and to the theological opportunity facing the preacher in today's Catholic pulpit:

I would like to create with you something like a space in which a heart might find permission to come close to cracking. It is a space which I am discovering to be necessary for participation in theological discourse. This closeness-to-cracking comes upon us at a moment when we do not know how to speak well, when we find ourselves threatened by confusion. It is where the two principal temptations are either to bluster our way out of the moment, by speaking with too much security and arrogance so as to give the impression that the confusion is not mine, but belongs somewhere else. Or on the other hand to plunge into the shamed silence of one who shows himself uncovered, and for that reason, deprived of legitimate speech.<sup>10</sup>

Alison is one of the most creative thinkers in social-sexual ethics,



with explicit application of these themes to an understanding of power in ecclesiastical life. His books—*Knowing Jesus*; *Raising Abel: The Recovery of the Eschatological Imagination*; *The Joy of Being Wrong*; and *Faith beyond Resentment: Fragments Catholic and Gay*—all approach an understanding of Christian life and Scripture through an applied understanding of the theory of redemptive violence as proposed by cultural-literary theorist René Girard of Stanford University.<sup>11</sup>

Using the cross as its interpretive principle, Christianity critiques even religion by seeing sacred violence or sacrifice from the point of view of the victim who has been excluded. Christian empathy for victims, as expressed biblically in the revelation of the cross, is for Girard the most irrepressible cultural force in the world. As Gil Bailie writes, “The Bible’s anthropological distinction lies in the fact that in it an empathy for victims again and again overwhelms the Bible’s own attempt to mythologize its violence and venerate it as divinely decreed.”<sup>12</sup> This understanding of the Bible requires giving up all pretense of preserving the institution over the needs of the people.

At the Annual Meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Dallas (13–15 June 2002), Bishop Wilton Gregory gave the Presidential Address, titled “A Catholic Response to Sexual Abuse: Confession, Contrition, and Resolve.” It is precisely the credibility of the bishops’ confession, contrition, and resolve that has been compromised—by the sexual abuses of the clergy and the appearance of a long-standing episcopal intent to preserve the institution over the needs of the people. Even if the good news here is that something of the false sacred (sacred precisely at the expense of hidden victims) is collapsing in the Roman Catholic Church, perhaps the bishops in their compromised position cannot be expected effectively to take part in doing the needed theological reflection or strategic thinking toward a more authentically sacred ecclesiology. This thinking may now more likely and more creatively find its impetus in gospel-actualized local communities of faith, especially as victims of ecclesiastical violence and exclusion find voice. It is time for hearts-close-to-cracking and living-out-being-crucified-and-resurrected believers to tell their story, to enter into a much needed dialogue with one another as believing Church, and to make a new and more graced institutional wager on behalf of the Gospel.

The price of a failure to engage in whole-Church dialogue with respect to the signs of these times will be further victimization and resentment—between representatives of the believing and the institutional Church (as laity and clergy) and also between priests (as pastors of the believing Church) and bishops (as custodians of the institutional Church). Alison writes, “Resentment, which is typically incarnate in our world as a

seeking to protect oneself against death, and, because of that, in considering oneself a victim, is exactly the opposite of grace. A resentful presence is exactly the reverse of a gratuitous presence.”<sup>13</sup>

Resentment, with its consequent polarization and violence, is truly the antithesis of the integrity, compassion, and hospitality that Jesus’ teaching, preaching, and ministry of touch manifested. Without dialogue and an integrity of compassion and touch, the Roman Catholic Church or any denominationally institutionalized Christian Church will cease to be the Body of Christ.

However, as Alison writes,

[T]here is another possibility, not so much a theoretical possibility, as one of praxis. And it is the occupation . . . of the space of the heart-close-to-cracking. In the midst of this space the dead and risen Christ offers us the means for the edification of a victimless sacred. A sacred where the ‘we’ creates and recreates the ‘I’ and where the ‘I’ receives its identity as a child of God from a ‘we’ to which it contributes without resentment, learning to stretch out the hand to other victims, yet to be identified. Now this is, I am quite sure, immensely difficult, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. But the Gospel itself, considered as a programme for reconstruction in the midst of the ruins, read eucharistically, offers us many elements for the task.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Koinonia* and Preaching to Resurrect the Body of the Church**

The lay Catholic theologian Richard R. Gaillardetz lists four focal practices at the heart of discipleship, each of which is worthy of examination by a heart-close-to-cracking Church seeking reconstruction. These focal practices are *koinonia*, *diakonia*, *kerygma*, and *leitourgia*.<sup>15</sup> Each of these words can be taken further to a definition of Disciple Community as a community of praxis of person-to-person, mutually transforming exchange involving critical reflection upon a common project:

<i>koinonia</i>	> fellowship >>	person to person
<i>diakonia</i>	> service >>	mutually transforming exchange
<i>kerygma</i>	> word >>	involving critical reflection
<i>leitourgia</i>	> worship >>	upon a common project

In this time of heart-close-to cracking, perhaps we can resurrect the Body of Christ and reconstruct the Church by tending intentionally to being disciple communities of praxis in the gestural language of fellowship, service, word, and worship.

Beyond the metaphorical ability of any words to communicate, and often leading to contemplative silence in the very presence of divine

*Logos*, the spoken words of intimacy, formed as they are from the breath and the inner chambers of the body close to the heart, are an expression of trust and regard. Yet, at this time of ecclesiastical scandal, the *koinonia* aspect of our discipleship—the I-Thou aspect of person to person relationship expressed and experienced most elementally in intimacy and accompaniment—has been most acutely violated.

The experience of intimacy is meant to have all the regard and trust of an embrace. One person, as Subject, faces the other with the invitation of open arms. The other person, also as Subject, freely accepts or refuses this invitation either by turning away or by reciprocally opening arms into embrace. Another essential aspect of the inter-Subjectivity of intimacy and embrace is letting go. Embracing and letting go always result in an open space which honours the Other as Subject and holds open to either Subject the possibility of the next invitation and the next response, the next embrace.<sup>16</sup>

The words *accompaniment*, *solidarity*, or *struggle* suggest another dimension of discipleship at the level of I-Thou embrace—in which we walk with each other in suffering, in search of life's meaning and direction, and in resisting oppression. In accompaniment, the dignity of the human person is affirmed, the powers and principalities of exclusionary violence are exposed, and the world is conformed to a divine vision by actions of inclusivity, stewardship, and nonviolent engagement. This, too, is the beloved *koinonia* of discipleship.

Without *koinonia*, there certainly can be no Ministry of the Word, for critical reflection on the Word of God finds expression only within a gestural context of mutual encounter and trust. If worship—*leitourgia* authentically celebrated in Word and Sacrament—is the paradigmatic gestural language of the believing Church, then liturgical preaching holds a pre-eminent responsibility to raise up the Body of the Church through repeated calls to *koinonia*. Liturgical preaching must invite critical reflection on the subjects of accompaniment and intimacy, especially at times when *koinonia* has been violated and the congregational heart is close to cracking.

*Homileo*, the word assigned in liturgical tradition to preaching, etymologically refers to table conversation and therefore holds close association with sexuality as a gestural conversation both sensuous and tender. Consider the close association of sexuality and dinner conversation, the sensuality and tenderness of the films *Babbette's Feast* and *Antonia's Line*. Whether around the dinner table or the altar table, *homileo* is understood in Jewish and Catholic tradition to be both the summit and the source of the actualization of a believing family or a believing community.

In liturgical scholar Mark Searle's communitarian vision of the *basileia* of God, liturgy is a rehearsal of right relationship—of justice: "Liturgy is the exercise that keeps the Christian vision alive. It is a rehearsal in justice. For most people, liturgy is the only place where all the people come together and rub shoulders. Here for the moment, all people are equal before God. Here we rehearse the roles we are supposed to live outside the liturgy."<sup>17</sup>

Searle challenges liturgy in a communitarian vision of the *basileia* of God to become public. The public ritual of liturgy, by its nature, is ordained to action. The ritual assembly is a community of practice, and the gestural language of Word and Sacrament are both the critical reflection and the means of rehearsal by which faith translates to public action.

In Catholic tradition, three additional ministries of the Word are animated by and also support the liturgical preaching of a gospel-actualized congregation. These ministries of the Word—catechesis, paraclesis, and evangelization of culture—pertain particularly to the three religiously relevant voices that converge in the theological reflection of any Christian community, which are the Tradition, the Believing Church, and Secular Culture.

Catechesis holds a caretaking responsibility for the *traditio*—literally the "passing along" to the next generation of the treasured memory and sacred practices of the believing Church through a process of initiation best achieved in prolonged processes of communal instruction, dialogue, and sponsorship. Surely, at this time of a crisis of plausibility, this Christian formation of catechumens and neophytes in an understanding of the Scriptures and the Sacraments of Initiation is a vital opportunity to recall the radical memory of Jesus Christ and his preaching and healing ministry of care, forgiveness, and mercy.

Paraclesis is a word given to pastoral ministry in its aspect of the Ministry of the Word. As the word "paraclete" suggests, whenever in pastoral conversation we help someone to reframe experience in the light of faith and a vision of the *basileia* of God, we are doing the work of the Holy Spirit. This is the preaching ministry of so many women and men of today's believing Church as they engage in pastoral conversation articulating their struggle of belief and disbelief, their hope and despair, about being believers in this institutional Church.

Evangelization of Culture, as Pope Paul VI called it, or the New Evangelization, as Pope John Paul II also calls it, is a distinct Ministry of the Word from evangelism (more properly considered under the aspect of catechesis) having to do with theological "inculturation"—the mutually influencing conversation between the faith tradition which emerges from culture and the particular cultures in which the faith

tradition is always and everywhere incarnated. This Ministry of the Word applies to the mutual accompaniment of victims and faithful ordained and non-ordained believers in their struggle against oppression and their commitment to systemic and strategic action for social and ecclesial change.

Each of these ministries is a richly gestural language. And each of these encounters creates for believing Christians and requires of them an interpersonal, transformative space in which their hearts might find permission to come close to cracking for the sake of the Gospel and ecclesial dialogue.

The signs of the times call for a vigorous and comprehensive Ministry of the Word—a preaching which speaks from the cracked places of a questioning and resurrecting heart, without resentment; a preaching grounded in *koinonia* and eucharistic community; a preaching bodily and soulfully attuned to the exigencies of right relationship and of power; a preaching which unmasks false consciousness and attends to the voice of the heretofore voiceless; a preaching of a believing Church which is learning from its personal and institutional violence and denial and which with sincere confession, contrition, and resolve once again says, “Never again.”

1. See the *Boston Globe* archives at <http://www.boston.com/globe/spotlight/abuse>, the book by the Boston Globe Investigative Staff, *Betrayal: The Crisis in the Catholic Church* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2002), and documentation from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops at <http://www.nccbuscc.org/comm/restoretrust.htm>.
2. Charles Curran, “Catholic Ethics in Tension: Sexuality and Social Justice,” keynote address at the Tenth Anniversary Conference of Chicago Call to Action, 7 November 1987.
3. Dennis D. Cali, “The Posture of Presumption in John Paul II’s *Veritatis Splendor*,” 52, in *The Journal of Communication and Religion* 21:1 (March 1998): 47–66.
4. See John Mahoney, *The Making of Moral Theology: A Study of the Roman Catholic Tradition* (London: Clarendon Press, 1987), 266.
5. André Guindon, *Sexual Creators: An Ethical Proposal for Concerned Christians* (London: University Press of America, 1986), 4–5.
6. Guindon, 7.
7. Guindon, 23.
8. Guindon, 26–27.
9. Guindon, 67–68, 72, 74, 78.
10. James Alison, “Theology amid the Stones and Dust,” in *Faith beyond Resentment: Fragments Catholic and Gay* (New York: Crossroad, 2001): 27–55.

11. See James G. Williams, ed., *The Girard Reader* (New York: Crossroad, 1996), or Gil Bailie, *Violence Unveiled: Humanity at the Crossroads* (New York: Crossroad, 1995).
12. Bailie, 44.
13. Alison, 44.
14. Alison, 46–47.
15. Richard R. Gaillardetz, *Transforming Our Days: Spirituality, Community and Liturgy in a Technological Culture* (New York: Crossroad, 2000), 92.
16. See Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1996).
17. Mark Searle, “Serving the Lord with Justice,” unpublished lecture at Dominican Chapel/Marywood, Grand Rapids, MI (19 April 1986).

## Compatibilism Irrational

J. C. O’Neill

That the two theses of compatibilism (free will; determinism) are incompatible is hard to show. However, compatibilists always incorporate three irrational moves into their arguments, by committing an endless regress, by begging the question, by asserting without evidence. Each of these moves can be shown to be tolerable in the short run, but their persistence raises the probability that the arguments in which they are employed are unsound.

The supposed contradiction which incompatibilists charge compatibilists with holding is extremely difficult to discover. In the form:

1. x could have not done A
2. x could not have not done A

the contradiction holds. However, when we state the two positions more informally as

3. A person could have done other than what that person did;
4. A person’s doing what that person did is the determined result of all history combined with all the natural laws

it seems possible to formulate aspects under which both propositions hold.

The purpose of this paper is not to make yet another attempt to show that these two sentences are contradictory. The purpose is to show that compatibilism entails