



Catholic Church: crisis, reform, and hope

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Three reflections for Message magazine by Mr. Sergio Micco, Lawyer-Doctor in political science, professor at the Universidad Chile

I.-Catholic Church and the contemporary world

Clarifying and essential introduction

I want to begin by clarifying that this exhibition is done in my double quality of political scientist and believer. And both identities converge, but they also diverge. Well, the reason for the modern social scientist could betray me, for not all rational is reasonable, nor is all reasonable is friendly. When we rationally reason we worry about the formal logic of our arguments. They must be clear, precise and consistent. The reason calculates and seeks harmony between means and ends, costs and benefits. But there are reasonings that are unreasonable, for they are ethically reprehensible. It may be rational to kill three people to save six, but that's unreasonable.

There are also times that the reason is not friendly, because it is not worthy of love on the part of our heart. Because there are reasons for the heart that reason does not understand. There are times when you have to know how to listen to the heart and let it govern our emotions and decisions. The Peruvian writer José María Argüedas expressed it: what we know is much less than the great hope that we feel. Because to understand the mystery of this world we need to believe before we know. But understanding the above implies stepping out of the closed and narrow walls of instrumental rationality, the one that calculates and calculates.

Pope Leo the Great once said that to understand a little about this church, one had to get rid of it before the darkness of earthly thoughts and the smoke of worldly wisdom.

We live in a modern western society that is born with the disenchantment of the

world. This society has condemned as superstition all those symbols, myths, stories and signs that survived the reign of the goddess reason, proclaimed by the Renaissance and winner with the French Revolution. The Sacred and the holy, the divine, the luminous and the heavenly must remain silent. Why? Because we believed that the light of calculating reason would overcome that other supernatural light of eternal grace and salvation. Religion was thus condemned in many ways. Opium of the people and heart of a world without a heart. Projection of our unconscious claiming parents to govern us. Simple will of power of the priestly class to manipulate the ignorant mobs. The temple, place of the sacred, will be replaced by the factory and the laboratory. The cathedral on Sunday of our childhood will be replaced by the mall of our maturity. The religious feast, the time of the divine and the holy, will be replaced by the secular, profane and worldly holidays. Isn't that what we do, at easter?

All this was torn by the old man afflicted with Parkinson's Disease that was John Paul II, the last years of his pontificate. I must admit that I often did not understand that old man who was no longer standing and wanted to continue traveling. I did not understand the symbol, i.e. the sign thrown into heaven, of seeing a man become a true living prayer seeking his lord. I did not understand the decision to keep governing, when what was rational to be resigned. "Happy those without seeing have believed". I saw I did not want to believe because my knowledge told me not when the heart affirmed the "yes".

The children and the elderly were the first to understand the last message of the pilgrim Pope. It's not weird. It is they who are closer to the limits of this earthly and natural world. The children come just from that other world of which nothing will know if we continue to throw confidently to the arms of the calculator reason. The elders approach the end of that world that saw them coming at birth and will fire them when they die. They understood because they believed and believed because they loved first. They did not let themselves be deceived, like me, by the goddess reason of modernity that should silence the sacred and the mystery. Poor me, I arrived late. But I do not fall into despair, for hope has again governed our hearts by contemplating grateful the life and death of a consecrated servant wholly to his lord. And so Joseph Ratzinger came, today Pope. What are their challenges and, in general, a new stage of the universal Church?

The European secularization and the declericalization of the west and Latin America

The Message magazine, in its editorial of July of the year 2005, has had harsh but truthful words for the present moment that the Catholic Church lives. I quote: "In Chile, cultural patterns and values are changing in a dizzying way. The greater appreciation that chileans give to individual freedom has made it more difficult to offer a persuasive ecclesial discourse. (...) (...) Many think that catholics are not responding to the concerns, searches and problems of today's world. Nor are we perceived with a reflection that from the faith proposes new answers to the

challenges that present the cultural changes (...) (...) This and the accusations of sexual abuse have meant slow but constant wear of our credibility, evangelizing capacity and presence as a people of God ”.

What cultural changes are affecting the presence of the Catholic Church in this way? Chile is compulsively projected forward-looking to mimic lifestyles and development models that come from the north rich what does the religious experience of developed countries teach us? To respond to this concern we can provide some lights a study on social capital covering Great Britain, Sweden, Australia, Japan, France, Germany, Spain and the United States. His coordinator, Robert Putnam, notes the sustained descent of the churches. “For tens of millions of citizens of these constituted democracies, churches, unions, and parties once represented a basic source of identity, social support, political influence, community participation, and friendship; in summary, a primary deposit of social capital. The universal decline in commitment to these institutions is a striking fact in relation to the dynamics of social capital in advanced democracies”. These institutions provided opportunities for the poorest and least educated sectors of the population. They promoted broad social objectives that seek to transform societies and the lives of those who followed them in solidarity. Its decline would be the product of the crisis of social confidence observed in the developed capitalist world. Who replaces them? They make personal, fluid and informal forms of social linkage, what Rothstein calls “solidarity individualism”, and Wuthnow “flexible linkages”.

Let's look at more arrests now the changes in the identities of French and Spanish. Jean-Marie Donégani notes a profound change in the religious landscape. In the first national surveys, in the early 1950s, regular practitioners, who declared going to mass every Sunday, accounted for more than 40 per cent of the french over fifteen years, 28 per cent of men and 49 per cent of women. In the mid-nineties, several compared measures lead to a percentage of 9 to 10 per 100 (5 per cent of men and 18 per 100 of women). Only 2% of those under the age of 25 went to mass in 1994. However, it is interesting to note that 79% of the French were declared in 1993 Catholics, although 51 percent said to be non-practicing. Statements of religious belonging remain strong, but practice sinks.

In Spain, the five-year study on young 2000 and religion commissioned by the Santa Maria Foundation, shows that while 66% of respondents are declared catholic, only 5% of them claim to share the ecclesial doctrine. 38% is declared practicing catholic; 28% are non-practicing catholic and 32% as agnostic, atheist or indifferent. Young people in 66% believe that the Church demands more than it is willing to give, a figure that increases to 90% among those who believe that the Church has an outdated stance on sexual liberties in general. Regarding religious practice only 12% claim to attend mass once a week, being the stratum of 13 to 14 years who mostly participate in the Sunday mass. 79% believe that the Church is too rich; more than 50% believe that the Church is committed little to the poorest and weakest.

The European Union has just sanctioned its Constitution. And there will be no reference to their judeo-Christian roots. Such a decision, against the view of the Vatican, only comes to endorsing a double temporal process: the secularization of Europe and the deinstitutionalization of religiosity. The first points to that historical process of Church withdrawal of certain functions (political, educational, sanitary, cheerleading, charitable) that are being assumed by secular organizations or by the State. Deinstitutionalization, others speak of declericalization of the religious phenomenon, testifies to a loss of influence of religious institutions in private life. The production of moral norms and the meaning of the religious are increasingly reserved to the believer's intimate conscience, not to theologians, clerics or hierarchy.

Another disturbing edge is given by the current crisis of priestly vocations. She must also call us to reflection. In France, in 1965 there were 40,000 diocesan priests; today there are 25,000, whose average age is sixty five years. In the early twentieth century there were 15 priests for 10000 Frenchmen and will reach 2010 with one by 10000 inhabitants. In 1965, in the United States there were 36 000 priests, today they are calculated in less than 20000. In 1965 there were 40 million Catholics; with the surges of Latinos, it is estimated that they will reach 75 million the year 2005. In Latin America there are 50000 priests, thirteen percent of the world's total clerics to cover what is already 43% of the total number of catholics in the world. In the 1980s, some 22 000 men were withdrawn from the priesthood, 80% of them between 30 and 45 years.

Chile amid the storm

Two observations for Chile.

The first is that Catholics Chilean are a minority. Yes, minority. It is true that more than 72% of Chileans declare themselves catholics. But only 14% were declared as observers in 1998, on the map of religiosity in 31 countries released by the CEP. Chile is located at levels very similar to Europeans, a continent that has been called postchristian. Even worse. It is true that only 50% of the French are said catholic, but 23% of them are observant. And in Latin America Chileans are the least observant, only surpassed by the very secular Uruguayans. That yes, Chile is a country of very high religious beliefs, only surpassed by the Philippines, the United States and Cyprus. He believes a lot in God, in life after death, in heaven, in hell and miracles. But another thing is everyday practice.

The second is that catholics differ in important aspects with the official discourse of the Catholic Church. Divorce is a case. In 1999 we knew that 79% of Chileans agreed to legislation that would authorize divorce in certain cases. The observant catholics declared the same in 66% and the observant evangelicals in 60%. We know that Chileans get married less and fewer, each time later, they have fewer children and increasingly out of wedlock.

Is Christianity dying? Has God failed?

It is not uncommon then that the french theologian Christian Duquoc speaks to us of a disturbing, pressing rumor according to some: Christianity has aged, Christianity is dying. The undeniable cultural and social decline obliges it to raise the question. Benedict XVI recognizes it harshly. Thus it says: "In a city like Magdeburg there are only eight percent of Christians, - let's understand: adding up all the Christian confessions". He tells us without ambiguity: the fatigue of the Church exists, of course. The Church can even get tired in whole cultural areas and also fall. In the letters to the seven Churches, which exemplarily points to the future, the Apocalypse warns 'be careful, or I will take the candlestick away from a push'. In fact, under the storms of Islam, not only did the flourishing Church of Asia Minor disappear, which was once part of the essentials of the Church, but also that of North Africa (...) (...) the promise of Christ- "See, I will be with you every day of this world" -not means also that each diocese has the assurance that it will last forever".

Some go farther and speak of divine failure. The idea I've taken from Jewish theology. I am based on a text by André Neher. See. It is nothing less than of the cowardice of Adam, of the murderous violence of Cain, of the indifference of Noah, of the rebellion of the builders of the tower of Babel, of the weakness of the followers of Moses in the desert, in short. What a series of clattering failures.

This human experience is so strong that in the Old Testament we find the Quohélet. This seems to us a song to cynicism and more radical skepticism. This is a teacher- Solomon in his old age or a collective editor? -which holds that "I have seen everything in my vain existence. There are honest people who fail, in spite of their honesty, and there are wicked who triumph, despite their iniquity" (7, 15). And the worst thing that happens under the sun is that there is a common destiny for everyone. The pure and the unclean, the righteous and the one who was not, the good and the sinner, the one who pinched and worked and the one who loafed, finally all have to die empty hands. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" (12, 8)

Beyond biblical references, we know that not always unfair will be punished. The rich are fed up in their wealth and the poor in their poverty. The evil that crushes the innocent is powerfully painful. Eight hundred million humans are suffering from hunger. 500,000 women die each year in pregnancy or in giving birth, 99% of them in developing countries. It horrifies the poverty that literally kills another 500, 000 Latin American children annually. There is definitely something wrong with this world that the believer claims created by God.

Well, what do you do about the failure of humanity and the Church? Some fall into despair, others flee the world in intimate religious meditation and others seek small satisfaction in the pleasure of drinking, food, family, and work. Finally, poor people will always they will, they say some.

The hope principle

The other attitude to failure is that of hope. That which claims that this failure is only apparent. That it is an invitation to understand that one has to know how to wait and not to immediately reach the object of desire, in this case, a more just world. The sower who trusts the seed to the earth, to the water, and to the sun is the man of hope.

And where to seek that supernatural force that is hope? On Earth and in heaven.

On earth since the real root of the failure of mankind is in the freedom of man and woman. And this freedom of man is also the root of hope. We are free and that is our law. There is no astrology, superstition, or science that determines human work. There is no peace or tranquillity. Man and women in every moment and place are making themselves and their world. And by the way, together with doing good, they can do evil. We are not doomed to injustice or misfortune.

It is the same man who kills the innocent is the one who dies defending the weak. It is the same woman who treasures wealth and who can give everything to others. It's the human condition. We are free and therefore responsible, we answer for this world.

And finally, seek hope in heaven. What is a failure for man can be a victory for God. The Portuguese proverb quoted by Claudel is largely known. "God writes straight with crooked streaks." And catholic doctrine affirms that "the renewal of the world is irrevocably decreed, and it begins to take place in a certain way in the present tense" (Lumen Gentium, n^o 48) God, as a loving father, regresses and lets his son grow and act. He knows the mistakes he'll make. But this is what he wanted because that is the price of human freedom, divinely founded. That's not his failure, it's his glory.

Two keys to a new stage of the Catholic Church to the contemporary world: person and community

That is why Christián Duquoc warns of entry that "it is not dominating the world based on social or cultural realizations, nor on the basis of ecclesial grandeurs, as faith assures its future, but remaining attentive to the Word of the One whom no unforeseen can ever disconcert or perversion will be able to impress". Thus making a turn in this article, let us accept the invitation of the theologian and say that it is the time since the world of the empirical evidence disperses keep silent and begin to speak the faith that illuminates these social and religious processes.

In sum, we live in times of crisis, as always. An old-world does not end in death and a new world is not born. Duquoc tells us that it is nothing new to the Judeo-Christian faith. Abraham died without having seen the promise of a land, descent, and blessing for all. Moses caught sight of a promised land that far from offering milk and honey, meant wars, deaths and conquests. Exile to Babylon and the books of Job and Qohélet tell us about the sad realization that in this world the

righteous is not justified nor the sinner punished. Horror was what the disciples who fled before the arrest of their Master felt. The first Christians died waiting for the advent of a Kingdom of Heaven that did not arrive. Those who believed in the conversion of the Roman Empire and the possibility of Christianity in the likeness of the Kingdom of the Lord died in the disappointment of the religious wars.

Will we not be attending at the end of a stage of our European and world church that believed that by political order could create in this world a reflection of the Kingdom of Heaven? Is it not the beginning of a new stage, post-Constantine, anticipated in the Second Vatican Council? We do not know, but we do know that the future of the Church is the subject of hope against all hope and not a question of futurology. Suprarrational hopes that it is stated in a careful reading of the signs of the times that we must interpret as symptoms and provocations.

The Church must change, what doubt it fits. As a community it must dare to open up to the service of the world; Becoming more universal and ecumenical; build on the basis of free initiatives and partnerships; to democratize in the sense of recognizing a right to participate deliberately of their laity, in a graduated and differentiated form and to take a critical attitude towards a world of injustices and inequalities contrary to the evangelical message. This is the first invitation.

The Catholic Church must be more open to personal autonomy. That is the second key to discern. More and more contemporary men and women value their dignity, rights and personal liberties. How can we not see here a precious fruit of the Christian message? Today's successful human communities accept this data and create more individual, liberating and fragmented horizontal movements of participation. Such movements do not renounce the other or the service of the transcendent, but they do it differently. Our countrymen may not go to mass regularly, but they do concur for hundreds of thousands to revere the Virgin Mary. Our young people do not accept moral doctrines that feel far away, but they do add up to thousands of youth pastoralists and volunteers.

Christianity is not dying; on the contrary, it is reborn. But for that, their structures must change.

II.-Catholic Church: the time of the reconcile reformation

Introduction

The Catholic Church is charged with years of silence and impunity for those who sexually, physically and psychologically abused children. Fathers and mothers have been betrayed in the United States, Europe and Latin America. Those who trusted their shepherds, delivering their sons and daughters for their care and elevation, now suffer and claim. Even more serious if such abuse was made under the protection of the One who said " let the children come to me " (Mt 19.14) and condemned " whoever makes a sin of these little ones who believe in me" (Mt 18.6). John Paul II asked for forgiveness, but this was not enough to change the

attitude not only of the perpetrators but of some, who invested in authority, continued to make a deaf ear to this scourge. Benedict XVI has sent a Pastoral Letter to the faithful of Ireland and in Fatima, he has spoken of the pain of the Church in the face of the abuses perpetrated by it.

The victims must be welcomed and the perpetrators judged by the Church and the secular courts. By the way, it's not about looking for "scapegoats", throwing them into the desert, waiting for them to carry all the sins of God's people. The relationship between the perpetrator and the victim arose as a result of an institutional and community link to which I am a member. All catholics must answer for what happened, to the extent, by the way, of our dignities and capacities. Many Chilean laics have been proud of the Church of Raúl Silva Henríquez, Chlothar Blest and Alberto Hurtado, Saint by the will of their community, and today they feel ashamed, but they are still part of the same community.

I want to insist again that this article is written from a double dimension: the politológical and the believer. And both conditions converge, but they also diverge. Well, the reason for modern social scientist can betray the believer and viceversa. Pope Leo the great once said that, to understand a little about this church, one had to get rid of it before the "darkness of earthly thoughts and the smoke of worldly wisdom". Dr. Ricardo Capponi, reflecting on pedophilia, wrote that he intended to be a partial contribution to a subject of great complexity, aware that this issue was not exhausted in a psychological dimension. This article adds to this effort, thinking from a social discipline of power, why the catholic hierarchy underestimated the extent and dimension of the abuses that were made under his protection, it took so long to react and so badly did. For this reason, western political thought can not only provide reasons for the diagnosis but rather proposals so that these facts never again acquire the dimensions that in this case reached.

Power and abuse of power

All power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corruption absolutely said Lord Acton in a letter sent to Bishop Creighton. This catholic, discriminated against in the Anglican England of the nineteenth century, facing Vatican Council I, as opposed to the doctrine according to which the Pope or the King cannot be judged. Lord Acton lost the battle and after this council, the Pope is endowed with enormous authority. It is a perpetual institution and its universal sacred primacy is endowed with infallible magisterium, when it exercises it in certain subjects and with certain solemnities. You can't give up on that charge. There is only one precedent of sad memory and to exert size power the Catholic Church gives to the Roman Pontiff the dicasteries of the Roman Curia, which must watch for the good of the universal Church. She exerts enormous power.

Thus, the Catholic Church is not democratic and does not belong to it. Institutionally it is an elective monarchy since the third Lateran Council in 1119. Its

truth is revealed and cannot and should not be subject to consensus or vote. A Supreme Pontiff is named for life and when he dies, the Cardinals, "the princes of the church", appoint another. Today it is a total of more than 120 cardinals in a school Eurocentric. This organization has given it two thousand years of life and has made it spread to the whole world, being the most powerful of the Christian churches. With strict hierarchy, clear dogmas, severe rites, and universal doctrine have been a formidable pillar in the construction of the west.

However, this is a power scheme that is exhausted. Why? For the moment, such centralization is not typical of the primitive Church, nor of the exercise of power within it for much of its history nor is it today following the signs of the times that we must know how to interpret in the light of the Gospel. Moreover, the concentration of all power in the hands of a person or group of people, however inspired by them, constitutes a potential for error, despotism and arbitrary arbitrariness. I believe that the slowness and hesitation in the denunciation, control and punishment of sexual abuse perpetrated by religious and clerics is another proof of this potential negative.

How to control the power?

The politologist Alois Riklin reviews the procedures through which western men and women, from classical Greece, have tried to avoid the abuse of power. I write them down: first, constitution and laws that force both governed and rulers; second, division of power through a mixed political regime; third, establishment of inviolable fundamental rights; fourth, moderation of power in such a way that the ruler can only use just and proportional means for the attainment of a legitimate purpose; fifth, citizens participation in power; and sixth, diminishing barriers of entry to power, avoiding the existence of real abysses between privileged and marginalized. I add a seventh principle that the European enlightenment has theorized to diminish the potential despotism of power: the principle of publicity according to which "all actions relating to the right of other men, whose maxim is not compatible with advertising, are unfair".

Each of these procedures and institutions can enlighten the institutional reform of the Catholic Church that has, from this painful episode of silence and impunity, opportunity for change and hope. Indeed, the hierarchical constitution of the Church is not an obstacle for the successor of Peter to be one in school with the Bishops, the successors of the Apostles. In this way the Church would gain in universality, pluralism and ecumenism. This is what the conciliar fathers of Vatican II wanted. The faithful Christians, clerics and lay members all of the people of God and called upon to fulfil, in their own way, the priestly, prophetic and real function of Christ, should know not only their duties to the hierarchy, but also their rights. Among these faculties is the right which is the duty of manifesting to its pastors everything that belongs to the good of the Church. It is obvious that the ecclesiastical courts must win not only in authority but in independence, becoming real power in respect of the legislative and immediate executive power that falls to

local Bishop. In relation to the greater participation of the Christian faithful in the constitution of the Catholic Church, it is good to remember that under the system sanctioned by León I, "Each bishop was appointed by the local clergy, accepted by the people of his diocese and consecrated by the Bishops of their ecclesiastical province". That more publicity would do us very well demonstrates the fact that the secular media and the opening of this painful reality, decreed by Pope Benedict XVI, have been essential elements to begin to cure this wound. Anyway.

The structural reform that urges

The institutional reforms proposed, within the universal doctrine and historical tradition of the Catholic Church would help to avoid abuses of power, such as those that shock us today. However, none of it will suffice. To the concentration and ostentation of the power that many times the Catholic Church shows in the western world, we will have to respond with the return to the humility of the small ones and to the preferential option for them, the poor.

Given the magnitude of the threats that affect the Church, Pope Benedict XVI has written that we must think that the Church of the future is "small, you will have to start again." That little Church would be like the first, that of the Apostles, the one to which Jesus told him that "it would have to be leaven and salt of the earth. There is a presumption of smallness. But also the responsibility for the whole." Let us also remember that the Church is all that make up the people of God. Just as Benedict XVI says "Thank God, when the authority (ecclesial) is weakened by diplomatic considerations, there are always the martyrs who protest, so to speak, with their own flesh" Before a tired Church may arise the unexpected renovation of a Holy Spirit who "shames us by suddenly sending the necessary renovation of a completely different place. The renewing forces of his time arose then in Teresa de Ávila, in Juan de la Cruz, in Ignatius of Loyola, in Philip Neri and in some others "and-why not?," those trifling saints there are, simple people, especially as I met in my childhood, those old and kind peasants, those good and kind ladies who consecrated their lives to the children, the family, the Church, and also the rest of the people of the town. "

This long final quotation should not be read as a call to practice extreme and naive humility, which is not of this world and less of an institution that wants to influence it. Without command the Catholic Church would crumble, said Karl Rahner. It's true. Even more. If Lord Acton were to be with us again, he would observe Pio Nono's paradoxical triumph. It is true that Vatican Council I meant a centralization of its power. Nothing else could have happened to the advancement of republicanism and modernity. Self-declared prisoner of Rome lost Papal States, regiments and bureaucracy. But what he lost in economic and military power earned him in universal cultural influence. What has made a major American politologist advise the rulers of his country to look more at the enormous power exerted in the world the smallest of States: the defeated Vatican Pio Nono. The Catholic Church is questioned by the sexual abuse perpetrated by some of its members. It is occasion then for its reform, sanctioned in the Second Vatican

Council, of becoming more collegiate and apostolic, scrutinizing in-depth the signs of the times. So, descending, it will rise more to the sky.

III.-The Church of the future

We have written that the Catholic Church is experiencing an undeniable crisis. Accusations of abuse of power are nothing more than the visible part of a much more widespread and deeper phenomenon. It is for this reason to simplify our lives to believe that problems are reduced only or mainly to sexual morality on the part of the clergy and to an aging institution, centralized in Rome and hierarchical around the papacy. As important as these two factors actually are. Jean Delumeau, professor at the College of France, wondered in 1977 whether Christianity would disappear from the face of Europe. Today he returns to the load, in the dusk of his life, not saving adjectives or data. Remember that in Europe there is a climate of "intellectual agnosticism, cultural amnesia and religious aphasia". They increase those who declare themselves to have no religion. A belligerent secularism is expressed in intellectual and communicational means. Religious practices expressed in attendance at Sunday worship, baptisms and marriages are sunk. Opinion polls show an average Christian who takes a huge distance from the morale preached from the pulpit. The systematic fall of priestly vocations is another painful symptom of this crisis.

The crisis comes from the world questioning the Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church. It is Benedict XVI himself who writes that at "the beginning of the third millennium, and precisely in the realm of its original expansion, Europe, Christianity is immersed in a deep crisis"... For a prefect for the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, the crisis arises because a non negligible part of contemporary science, philosophy, and critical exegesis question or in parenthesis the truth claims of the Christian religion. Many scientists seek in the chance and in the necessity the origin of the universe and the human being, by discarding by unnecessary the "hypothesis God". Western philosophy holds that no proof of God's existence has succeeded in overcoming enlightened critique. No theodicy has acceptably justified the presence of evil in this world, created by an infinitely good and almighty being and silent in the face of the slaughter and unjust pain of the innocent; particularly of "children, children" as exclaimed Dostoevsky. Critical exegesis stirs the naive beliefs of the past about Jesus, not his existence, but his childhood, miracles, resurrection, and the early church. It is the reason of the man who questions the silence of God and the beliefs of the church.

The internal causes of the crisis and the role of the Second Vatican Council

The crisis also comes from within the Catholic Church itself. For some, the traditionalists, the post Vatican II period has created confusion, demoralization, and defections. The cause? A sort of surrender of eternal catholicism to the world and modernity. Massive abandonment of religious who did not know how to distinguish between being consecrated nuns and priests, radical servants of peace

and justice or lay committed to this world; doctrinal and theological confusion in central aspects of the interpretation of catholic dogma and the Sacred Scriptures; resigned acceptance of a contradictory and rebellious mobilization of the laity, more concerned about their freedom than of the truth; disappearance of frontiers with protestant churches and non Christian religions, culminating in a postmodern religious syncretism and finally the total surrender to the secularization of the emancipated contemporary world of its Creator. The Church would have renounced to proclaim its truth and ended up accepting to be one of the offers of sense that are sold in the postmodern burger of the religious mystery.

For others, the problem is exactly the opposite. It is the slowness in the fulfillment of the Second Vatican Council, or its frank inobservance, which exacerbates the described crisis. Progressives polemically ask: does anyone think they would be trump cards for the European Church black priests, with their backs to the assembly of laymen, speaking in Latin, condemning modernity and using secular power to prevent the progress of the secularization? "Neither possible nor desirable", they respond. On the contrary, it is the application of truth of the "johannine" turn, initiated by John XXIII, who will revive the central Christianity. We must leave behind the previous "turn", the year 312, when the roman emperor Constantine began to change the Church of Jesus in the pontifical state, governing theology and triumphant religion. We must overcome this long historical period, which in its worst times meant that Grace seemed to nullify nature, faith felt superior to reason and the papacy wanted greater than the empire. The Second Vatican Council invites us to take the liberating step of the hierarchy to the people of God; of the Church as institution to the Church as communion (*koinonia*, communion); from the State to service domination (*diakonia*, *servitium*) from the community; from the scandalous division of christians to ecumenism with the separated brethren; from the colonial missions to the fruitful interreligious dialogue in favor of peace and justice in the world, and from the eurocentric church to a truly Catholic Church as universal, the third millennium, mostly latin american, african and asian.

Ten new commandments in response to today's crisis

What to say as a layman without incurring the imprudence of contrary to theology and its beautiful daughters: the Christology and the ecclesiology? For daring to be secular old or modern, not medieval or renaissance, using our real knowledge and understanding, illustrated and critical, as precarious as they are. Then barter the prudence misunderstood by the strength that is required in times of crisis. We know from Dante Alighieri that those who declare themselves impartial in times of moral crisis have reserved a place in hell. And we live a crisis of sense and reason for the existence of this twice millennia institution that is our catholic community. We must open doors and windows of the church, leaving the fresh wind of the world, which brings knowledge that illuminate an environment, at times, obscured and rarefied. To return to the political science that teaches us that the institutions,

to be powerful and to survive the passage of the centuries, must possess stable organs and procedures in time, wisely regulated by the norms and legitimate for those who are governed by them, knowing adapt to changes. Its members are also welcomed with affection; they receive benefits in exchange for their delivery to a common cause. Common cause is a social function that is valued positively by the community. It must be considered that the existence of that institution is valuable and necessary, not only for it, but for all.

If we are aware of the foregoing it seems extraordinarily fertile the proposal of a swiss capuchin and expert in missions called Walbert Bühlmann. This asks us to have “eyes to see” and welcome the call to know lookout the signs of the times. It is a matter of taking between our hands the task of putting to the day *aggiornamento*-the ten commandments of the primitive community. The one who believed in something that was a scandal for jews and madness for greeks: a single God who enters the story liberating his people; God who had a Son named Jesus and who became a Messiah; Christ who died crucified for the love of the world and rose on the third day; resurrected that formed a community of service called to liberate the prisoners, to emancipate the poor, to bring life in abundance and to announce the good news of the arrival of a Kingdom of Heaven that will begin with the return of the Messiah; endless kingdom in which the dead shall rise in flesh and bones, in which there will be no more pain, evil, sickness, or death.

When the Christian truths, very hard to hear for the men and women of Antiquity and the Middle Ages, are brought back to the written reason, we cannot be surprised that few truly believers are. Thus Jean Delumeau holds that before, in the times of Christendom, God was not so close to us as the nostalgic ones believe; neither now, in the modernity born of the revolutions of the eighteenth century, is as far as the pessimists believe. But now it is nothing less to make these truths present in a secular and enlightened, scientific and technological context.

Return to Bühlmann and its ten new commandments. These are not individual bans but proposals made to the whole community. Concerning the problems of the Church proposes us the first three commandments: 1) Let that the healthy reason of man prevails: the autonomy of the sciences; 2) you forfeit in earnest as a people of God: the laity in the Church; and 3) You will have the hand of your brethren in Christ: ecumenism. Then, when he analyses the continental problems, he calls us to each of the different catholic nations, who have happily renounced to be the Catholic States, to assume the four following mandates: 4) You will put on the side of the poor: justice (Latin America); 5) You will admire the breadth of the Creator: inculturation (Africa); 6) Recognize the “Here I am ” of all peoples: dialogue with religions (Asia); and 7) You will accompany to religious nomads: secularization (Euroamérica). Finally, we have all the human world problems that compel us that catholics, believers and non-believers work together around the last three commandments of all humanity: 8) Reinforce the ranks of the peacemakers: justice et pax; 9) You Hill develop the earth to make it a paradise: ecology and

eschatology and 10) go out to the encounter of the God of history: mysticism and politics.

The crisis of always and the eternal return to the origin

If we fulfilled these commandments would arise a Church that is a "Sign and promise of salvation for all men" and "constitutes on earth the germ and the beginning of the Kingdom of God" (Lumen gentium 5.2). A community where equality between men and women is practiced laic and consecrated because "There is no longer a Jew or a Greek; there is no longer a slave or free; there is no longer a man or woman, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus". Servant Nation for "If I, the Master and the Lord, have washed your feet, you too must wash each other's feet" (Jn 13,12-14). Ecumenism that opens to his separated brethren because in "This they will know all that you are my disciples: in that you have love with each other" (Jn 13, 34). Church that dialogues with other religions because everyone has the power "to become children of God" (Jn 10.34; 1, 2). Community which, in saying of Karl Rahner, carries out a "mysticism of the everyday", which teaches in real testimony to the unbelievers or of which the Church has gone away that the one to "whom we call God is always present as infinite offers, like silent love, as an absolute future, and which is always accepted that a man by fidelity to his conscience demolishes the walls of the prison of his selfishness" surpassing the sense of absurd and empty existential to which it tends to lead atheism in its ravish version, individualistic and hedonistic.

Crisis of the Church as always. But for the man and woman of faith of this Church it is written that it will be accompanied "Every day until the end of the world" (Mt 28.20),