

THE OFFICIAL CHURCH AND THE CHURCH OF LOVE IN BALTHASAR'S READING OF JOHN: AN EXPLORATION IN POST-VATICAN II ECCLESIOLOGY

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RÉSUMÉ — Cet article explore l'ecclésiologie post-Vatican II basée sur la lecture que fait Hans Urs von Balthasar des deux Églises dans l'Évangile de Jean. Balthasar distingue entre l'« église officielle » symbolisée par Pierre et l'« église d'amour » symbolisée par Jean. L'auteur combine l'allégorie de Balthasar avec la notion de médiation telle que comprise par Bernard Lonergan. En retour, l'association fournit un contexte pour deux ecclésiologies de base inaugurées par Vatican II : communion et amour. De plus, des implications pour la mariologie, la relation entre le droit canonique et la théologie, et la mission de l'Église envers les marginalisés « cachés » sont explorées.

Introduction

In the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar (1904-1984) there is a short reflection on the Church that is subtle yet profound in its implications for Roman Catholic ecclesiology. This article fleshes out that significance and begins to develop it in light of previous articles the author has written on two basic theologies of the Church.¹ One cannot be certain whether Balthasar or his students would agree. His entire opus is like a treasure chest, and this author would like to share some of the jewels he discovered by combining these with some ideas from the thought of Bernard Lonergan. The result will be a continuation of the twofold *ressourcement*–*aggiornamento* development of

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¹ John D. DADOSKY, “The Church and the Other: Mediation and Friendship in Post-Vatican II Roman Catholic Ecclesiology,” in *Pacifica: Australasian Theological Studies*, 18 (2005), pp. 302-322; and “Towards a Fundamental Theological RE-Interpretation of Vatican II,” in *Heythrop Journal*, (October, 2008). Currently available on line: <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1468-2265.2007.00345.x>

post-Vatican II Catholic ecclesiology. The resource will be the theology of the Church in the Gospel of John as interpreted by Balthasar; the 'bringing up to date' will consist in incorporating the notion of *mediation*, as the author has developed Lonergan's thought into these two conceptions of Church. In turn, this will ground the twofold ecclesial understanding going forward at Vatican II: *communion* and *friendship*.

1 — *The Two Churches in John*

Balthasar identifies two ecclesiologies of the Church from his reading of the Gospel of John that he calls the *official church* and the *church of love*.² He draws out the distinction between the two as reflected in the figures of Peter (the official church) and John (the church of love) in two separate scenarios: 1) their approaching the tomb together and 2) in the appendix chapter to the same Gospel with the gathering of the fish.

On Easter Sunday, John and Peter run to the tomb together but 'love unencumbered' runs faster, while 'office' approaches more slowly because it has more things to consider. When they reach the tomb, love, seeing 'well what can be seen' lets the office go into the tomb first. The office, because it 'takes everything into view,' enters the tomb and gives a kind of *nihil obstat* based on the evidence present. Love enters the tomb and assents to the evidence that office points to (faith). "This first episode results in a two-peaked church, official church and church of love, in harmonious tension: office working for love, love respectfully giving precedence to office."³

The allegory extends to the appendix chapter of John's Gospel. Peter leads the fishing vessel (the Church) which is unsuccessful without the Lord. They are directed by the 'hidden' Christ on the shore to cast their nets to the other side (the obedience of the Church to the signal of Christ). Immediately following the miracle of the fish, John (love) identifies the hidden Christ and directs Peter's attention to him. Peter immediately dresses himself and runs to the shore to embrace Christ. The disciples follow, eventually joining Peter and Christ on the shore with the catch, an eschatological symbol for Balthasar. At this point Balthasar offers a distinctive interpretation that John's private love for the Lord is transferred to Peter in order to extend that love to the entire

² Hans Urs von BALTHASAR, "Official Church and Church of Love (According to the Gospel of John)," in Medard KEHL and Werner LÖSER, (eds.), *The Balthasar Reader*, New York, Crossroad, 1997, pp. 276-277.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

flock. Jesus asks Peter three times, “Do you love me?” Perhaps, these three questions parallel the three denials and therefore comprise the beginning of Peter’s amends, one which will culminate in his own martyrdom after a lifetime of ministry and proclamation.

Nevertheless, for Balthasar “the unity of love and office is thereby sealed” in Peter. Yet the Beloved Disciple remains and so Peter asks “Lord, what about this man?” To which the Gospel concludes as the last words of Jesus to Peter, “What is that to you?” For Balthasar, the answer must remain veiled from Peter and rests in the “freedom of the Lord of the church.” Peter has been given his marching orders, to love and serve the people of God. “Peter should love; he should thus as far as he can manage be the church of love.”⁴

Therefore, John’s Gospel leaves us in what Balthasar describes as a “suspended middle-point” of “two impossible ecclesiologies.” On the one hand, Peter does not have the liberty to declare that all religions are equal insofar as they are based on love. He should uphold the specific love of Christianity and its salvific implications. On the other hand, Peter cannot espouse the opposite opinion that the visible members of the Church have the guarantee of love and salvation.

Before attempting to develop his reflections on the two theologies of church, I will make some initial observations. The first observation may seem obvious, although stated subtly; it is profound in its implications. That is, by distinguishing between an official church and a church of love, there is the recognition that the official church is *not* the church of love or at least is not always the church of love. Presumably this means that the burden remains on the official church to prove that it is in fact a church that loves. This may have been the part of the motivation for Benedict XVI’s first encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*.

Throughout the Gospels, Peter seems to be the most vocal of all the disciples; he is quick to demonstrate his allegiance by striking the ear of the temple Guard. During the Last Supper, he is adamant about his love for Jesus, but then denies him three times. Along these lines, in the appendix chapter of John’s Gospel, it is curious why Jesus asks Peter three times. Was Jesus unconvinced of Peter’s sincerity? Or is it because Peter replies with ‘words’ and Jesus, in turn, insists upon *actions* as signs of love (feed my sheep)? Or is it because the burden is placed on Peter, if I can invoke a contemporary commonsensical expression, ‘to put his money where his mouth is’ to demonstrate his love to others?

⁴ Ibid., p. 277.

Second, it is interesting to note that John's love is never questioned by Jesus. While John has little to say throughout the Gospels, what we know of him is that (presumably) he is the Beloved disciple. This seems odd in and of itself, because we presume that Jesus loved all the disciples equally. Nevertheless, in the Gospel account John functions as a mediator between Peter and Jesus at the Last Supper (John 13:23-26), he identifies the hidden Christ on the shore and directs Peter's attention to him, he is present at the foot of the Cross when Jesus dies, and Jesus entrusts the care of his mother to him. John has a special relationship with Jesus (and his mother). Therefore, it is curious that John never takes up an office in the early church, but instead is eventually dubbed the patron saint of theologians because the Gospel of John is the most explicitly theological of the Gospels.

Third, this author does not agree with Balthasar that the church of love, as represented by John, is somehow sublated into the Petrine ecclesial reality, at least once and for all. Rather, in a lengthier project he hopes to demonstrate that these two ecclesial realities represent a dialectic (although not the only one) operative in the Church's self-understanding from its inception. Vatican II represents the beginning of the official differentiation of these two ecclesial realities into two basic ecclesiologies: *communion* and *friendship*.⁵ At its best, the official church is the church of love, but this is not *de facto* always the case. One needs only to study the history of Christianity for examples of aberrations. The burden often remains on the official church to prove its love.

2 — *Mediation and the Two Churches*

In previous work reflecting on the basic ecclesiology that is going forward at Vatican II, this author has argued that there are two basic ecclesiologies. One has been identified by the official church, as *communion ecclesiology* in 1986 and the other to be developed would be based on friendship. The latter invokes the Gospel of John as the scriptural basis for friendship.⁶

In terms of the Church's self-understanding, one can speak of an *authentic self-mediating identity* where the Church has a specific identity and mission rooted in the person, event, and message of Jesus with a task to proclaim the truth of this message to humanity throughout the ages until Christ's return. However, what is unique about Vatican II is that, for the first time, the Church

⁵ See DADOSKY, "Towards a Fundamental Theological RE-Interpretation of Vatican II."

⁶ Ibid., "The Church and the Other."

officially recognizes that it also has graced mutual relations with the Other. This is exemplified by the final chapter of *Gaudium et Spes* which is titled “The Church and the World as Mutually Related.” In other words, Vatican II is an unprecedented development in the church’s self-understanding in that it issues forth the foundations for an *authentic, mutually self-mediating* understanding of the Church in addition to an authentic self-mediating one. Therefore, there remains a need in the post-Vatican reflection on the Church for a self-conception that accounts for graced mutual relations with the Other.

The authentic self-mediating understanding pertains to what is traditionally referred to as *ecclesia ad intra*, while the authentic, mutually self-mediating understanding of the Church pertains to the *ecclesia ad extra*. The use of the term *authentic* implies that there can be inauthentic expressions of both of these ecclesiologies as well. A quote from Bernard Lonergan regarding the future of theology on the heels of Vatican II is pertinent here:

There is bound to be formed a solid right that is determined to live in a world that no longer exists. There is bound to be formed a scattered left, captivated by now this, now that new development, exploring now this and now that new possibility. But what will count is a perhaps not numerous center, big enough to be at home in both the old and the new, painstaking enough to work out one by one the transitions to be made, strong enough to refuse half measures and insist on complete solutions even though it has to wait.⁷

In Lonergan’s famous quote on ‘the not numerous centre,’ the ‘solid right’ would refer to those with an ecclesiology that is classicist and *strictly self-mediating*. That is, an ecclesial stance that presumes doctrines of the church as laws or first principles which one mediates, uncritically, to the Other. This can occur when the official church gives priority to being a teacher over that of being a learner, as Frederick Crowe articulates.⁸ Learning involves a mutual self-mediation and it presupposes that one cannot truly learn without being changed, enriched, and challenged. However, the ‘scattered left’ of Lonergan’s quote refers to those who are in danger of losing their identity in the face of pluralistic worldviews and methodologies. They throw out the very traditions that gave them life and their identity becomes diffuse or diluted.

The *not numerous centre* are those few who are ‘centred’ in the tradition of the Church and simultaneously engaging the contemporary context. The ‘solid

⁷ Bernard LONERGAN, “Dimensions of Meaning,” in *Collection*, Collected Works, Vol. 4, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1993, p. 245.

⁸ Frederick E. CROWE, “The Church as Learner: Two Crises, One Kairos,” in *Developing the Lonergan Legacy: Historical, Theoretical, and Existential Themes*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2004, pp. 370-384.

right' clings to their conception of the tradition and tries to communicate it in a strictly self-mediating way. Conversely, the 'scattered left' overly accommodate themselves to the contemporary context and therefore risk their identity by an unfamiliarity with the traditions, or by simply disregarding them. In this way, *the not numerous centre* are those who are both at home in old and in the new. Church tradition, then, is not a preservation of ashes, but the feeding of a fire, continually refueled by the fresh oxygen of ever changing historical circumstances.

In terms of Balthasar's reading of John and the two churches, I suggest that the Petrine, official church, when functioning from the place of 'the not numerous centre,' represents the authentic self-mediation of the church. It is charged to protect the treasures of the deposit of faith given to it by Christ and also to communicate and share these treasures with all of humanity. Likewise, the church of love, which Balthasar associates with John (and I will argue below should also include Mary, the Mother of God) grounds the self-understanding of the Church as mutually self-mediating.

3 — *The Two Churches and the Two Disciplines*

Let us view the distinction of the two churches from another aspect in terms of two distinct roles, the official leadership in the church (Peter) and that of the theologian (John). Again, it is interesting that John, the patron saint of theologians, never takes up the office of Peter. As the disciple whom Jesus loved and as one of the witnesses to the resurrected Christ one would think it would have certainly been offered to him. Did he refuse it in favour of a vocation as a theologian? To extend the question further, are the roles of the official Church and that of the theologian distinct and should they remain so? If so, how should the different disciplines mutually cooperate? The question may seem unusual given that many bishops, especially European ones, are also theologians or ecclesiastical scholars.

Lest we be tempted to the commonsense understanding of the theologian as some kind of 'glorified catechist,' the roles official leadership and the theologian can be quite distinct. Take the historic example of John XXII of the 13th century. He held the belief that those souls in heaven, while waiting for the general resurrection and judgment, did not participate fully in the beatific vision. The faculty of theology at Paris—with significant Dominican support—took issue with him publicly on this point, accusing him of heresy. In response, John XXII clarified his position by stating that this was only his

personal opinion and he was not speaking *ex cathedra*.⁹ In this example, the theologians assisted in correcting (or if one prefers, clarifying) a key doctrine that could have confused many of the faithful by effecting one's perception of the potential fullness and depth of God's love.

Still, what about the relationship between canon law and theology? In the medieval Church with the burgeoning theological centre in Paris, at one point the Vatican deliberately kept a geographical separation between Paris, the centre of theological study, and the ecclesial centre for the study of canon law in Italy. Paris was primary for theological education while Bologna became the centre of excellence for studies in canon law. For a time it was understood that if a young cleric or religious wanted to study theology, he went to Paris; if he wanted an ecclesial career, he went to Bologna. Indeed, Pope Honorius III forbade the teaching of canon law at the University of Paris because he did not want the theological students to be lured away to studies in canon law or tempted by 'careerism.'¹⁰

More recently, Ladislav Örsy has been on the forefront of the attempt to distinguish and interrelate the two disciplines of theology and canon law. He initiated a dialogue between canonists and theologians in the context of a collaborative group called the Peter and Paul Seminar. The group invoked Peter as a symbol of unity and fidelity and they invoked the spirit of Paul for his creativity.¹¹

The Church continues to grapple with residual aspects from the Tridentine context preceding Vatican II. Pius IV had restricted the commentary and interpretation of the documents of the Council of Trent to members of the official church and this set an ecclesiastical precedent. In addition, a context of 'legal positivism' persisted up to Vatican II. As long as there is a lack of harmony between the disciplines of theology and canon law, the remnants of this positivism remain part of the post-Vatican context. According to Örsy such positivism occurs when canon law "focuses on the rules of 'ecclesiastical discipline' and pays little attention to the theological values that give meaning to them."¹² He describes the implications of this disparity for the Church

⁹ Benedict ASHLEY, *The Dominicans*, Collegeville, MN, Liturgical Press, 1990, p. 67.

¹⁰ Friedrich HEER, *The Medieval World: Europe 1100-1350*, tr. by Janet Sodheimer, London, Orion House, 1998, pp. 199-200.

¹¹ Interview with Ladislav Örsy, <http://woodstock.georgetown.edu/publications/report/r-fea81c.htm>.

¹² Ladislav ÖRSY, "Introduction," in *The Jurist*, 59 (1999), pp. 331-334.

as such: “If the laws demand more than what the doctrine requires, an unnecessary burden is put on the community, and some relief therefore is warranted. If the norms do not give enough scope to the wealth of the vision, new structures and rules may be needed.”¹³

Örsy invokes the cognitional theory of Bernard Lonergan in order to distinguish between the different roles of theology and canon law. Similarly, Cathleen Clifford seeks to develop this view in light of the functional specialties that Lonergan lays out in *Method and Theology*. She states: “taking a functional approach to both theology and canon law we might find a more satisfying way to conceive of their relationship as distinct, yet mutually enriching.”¹⁴

Each of these efforts is important and they warrant support for their endeavours. In light of the allegory of the two churches this author would suggest the following complement to their endeavours, especially that of the Peter and Paul Seminar. The roles of canon lawyer and theologian are two roles that can be viewed in light of Balthasar’s distinction between the official church and the church of love. That is, canon law embodies the meanings and values that ground the schemes of recurrence that order many aspects of the structures of the church. However, laws are often open to interpretation and so the creation of those laws and the proper hermeneutical application of them rely on those canon lawyers who are, in Lonergan’s words, religiously converted—those who are in love with God in an unrestricted manner.¹⁵

As Lonergan stated, the foundations for theology are no longer in first principles which are deductively applied to a context from above.¹⁶ Rather, the new context for theology takes its foundations in the horizons of one’s knowing and choosing, and the extent to which grace guides one in that effort. The fruit of this unrestricted loving is manifested in acts of charity motivated by compassion and the desire to do God’s will. Without this unrestricted loving, the interpretation of law runs the risk of legalism. Paul’s conversion perhaps most dramatically demonstrates this point. His view of the law prior to his conversion is very different from his view after his conversion—the guiding principle and fundamental law after his conversion is love. The concrete effects of this are pastoral in their application. This is why he is able to argue

¹³ Interview with Örsy.

¹⁴ Cathleen E. CLIFFORD, “The Collaboration of Theology and Canon Law in Light of Lonergan’s Theory,” in *Studia Canonica*, 40 (2006), p. 130.

¹⁵ See Chapter 4 of Bernard LONERGAN, *Method in Theology*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1988.

¹⁶ See Bernard LONERGAN, “Theology in its New Context,” in *A Second Collection*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1996.

against the circumcision for Gentiles (Acts 15 1:21). One could say, through his conversion, he has transcended his previous legal positivism to that of love and compassion—the spirit of the law becomes more important than the letter of the law.

Similarly, the theologian who does not take the love of God as first principle in his or her own life risks a theological endeavour that is in vain. Presumably this is what Balthasar meant when he said theology should be done on one's knees.¹⁷ For Lonergan, systematic theology delves into the depths of the mysteries hidden in God and attempts to understand them theologically, albeit ever approximately and imperfectly. Without the unrestricted being-in-love, theology will be abstract and irrelevant on the one hand or overly concerned with praxis to the eclipse of intelligent theory on the other hand.

Hence, if we extend Balthasar's allegory to the principle Örsy invokes in naming the Peter and Paul Seminar, it would seem appropriate to incorporate John because he represents the church of love, but also because he is the patron saint of theologians. Hence, at the risk of pushing the allegory too far, perhaps something along the lines of a Peter and John Seminar might capture the spirit of the endeavour more fully. Nevertheless, the initiative of Örsy and his companions is pioneering and should continue.

4 — *The Two Churches and the Two Gifts*

The medieval Church reflected on questions that we have forgotten about, or even may be tempted to dismiss as pious dialogues. Nevertheless, there is one argument concerning the 'two gifts' which is subtle and profound in its implications for developing Balthasar's distinction of the two churches. Benedict Ashley recounts the story of Blessed Christina of Stommeln (d. 1312), a medieval Dominican noted for her piety and knowledge of spiritual matters.¹⁸ Occasionally she would host other friars and they would debate various theological mysteries. A popular debate concerned which was the greater gift, Christ's gift of the Church to Peter, or Christ's gift of his Mother to John? The two gifts give us a glimpse at medieval biblical hermeneutics and also provide a historical point for connecting the two churches. Christ's declaration of Peter as the *petros*, the rock upon which he will build his Church is juxtaposed to a second gift at the foot of the Cross when Jesus gives Mary to

¹⁷ Hans Urs von BALTHASAR, *Explorations in Theology I: The Word Made Flesh*, San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1989, p. 206.

¹⁸ Benedict ASHLEY, *The Dominicans*, p. 43.

John. Regarding the latter event, Balthasar emphasizes that John gets adopted by Mary as well, he gets a mother. In this way, of course, he is saying that we are all adopted by Mary. However, the other side of the coin is that Mary gets a home, and more significantly that mutuality is formed at the foot of the Cross. Hence, one could say that Jesus sanctions a mutually self-mediating relationship between John and Mary that forms the scriptural basis for the self-understanding of the Church as mutually self-mediating.

From this I would further draw out several implications specifically for the church of love and for Mariology. First, the church of love that Balthasar identifies with John must be inextricably intertwined with Mary. In other words, a Johannine ecclesiology must make Mary a central feature just as John takes Mary into his home, so the church of love embodies a love between Mary and John, one of mother and son; one could even add, one of mystical friendship. Because this relationship is mutual the two figures cannot be separated.¹⁹

This does not mean that the official church of Peter does not nurture and cherish the role of Mary. It is the role of the official church to uphold the Marian dogmas; to affirm them as objective truths, to promote devotion, and to protect her unique status in the Church. This has occurred historically in its opposition to the iconoclasts who promoted attacks against images of the Mother of God and also during the Reformation with Protestant attacks against Marian devotion. However, there is a tendency in the Mariology of the official church, especially when functioning in terms of what Avery Dulles identifies as the institutional model of church, to view her in terms that are one-dimensional, i.e. to emphasize her obedience to God and to set her up as a paragon of virtue to which human beings cannot relate. While there remains a need to explicate the role of Mary in the authentically self-mediating official church, in the church of love one is more clearly able to view the deep personal relationship that John has with Mary. In the Johannine ecclesiology the Marian dimension is based on a two-way intimate relationship, one of

¹⁹ There is a sense where Mary is the principle of mutual self-mediation. This is apparent both at the foot of the cross in the sanction of mutuality by Jesus; but even earlier in the account of the Visitation. Mary's "Yes" to God (and to humanity) in accepting to bear the Son of God, leaves her in a class by herself, she is alone. However, when she goes to visit Elizabeth she exemplifies mutual self-mediation. That is, Elizabeth receives the joy of having Mary to assist her in her pregnancy. Mary receives solace from her aloneness in that Elizabeth will bear a special child as well (the Baptist). Together, they can mutually rejoice in the gifts that both of them will bear and are consoled in each other's respective solitary vocations.

mutual love between the child and the adoptive parent. It reflects the tradition of Christian spirituality that views Mary as inextricably related to her Son; as for example, that of St. Louis-Marie de Montfort's (1673-1716) *The True Devotion to Mary*.²⁰ This text with its specific type of devotion was sanctioned by John Paul II in his encyclical *Redemptoris Mater* (_ III, 3; March 25, 1987).

At the foot of the Cross, John enters into a new relationship of love that re-orders and re-orientes his life; he takes his new mother into his home from that day forward. As noted above, Lonergan speaks about unrestricted being-in-love as being the first principle which re-orientes and transvalues our values. In the Johannine-Marian ecclesial reality, a relationship with Mary becomes the first principle in which people 'fall in love' with the Mother of God, not in terms of a deification of her but because, as John Paul II states, "consecration to Christ through the hands of Mary [is] an effective means for Christians to live faithfully their baptismal commitments" (RM, – III, 3). However, this type of intense relationship with Mary is an individual choice to which not everyone is called. The example is meant to demonstrate the Marian dimension to the church of love and as a theological component within the church of love. Nevertheless, while individual devotion to her may vary, one could say a development in Balthasar's reading of the church of love as ascribed to John must inextricably include a central Marian dimension and that together at the foot of the Cross, they set the precedent for the church of love as that aspect of the Church's ecclesial identity as mutually self-mediating, and as I will argue below, as co-sufferers with the marginalized.

5 — *Conceiving the Unity of the Two Churches*

If we extend Balthasar's reflection on the two churches to Luke-Acts we find John and Peter working together, speaking and healing in unison as a team (e.g., Acts 3-4). Therefore, the question arises, if Peter and John represent two churches or ecclesial realities then how are we to conceive of them without creating a kind of split personality in the Church's self-understanding? I would propose conceiving their unity by 1) clarifying the distinct ecclesiology in terms of analogous categories from a contemporary lineage of Japanese Zen and the Diné (Navajo) notion of beauty and 2) then by complicating matters a little by identifying a third ecclesial dimension to the two churches in John's Gospel pertaining to the hidden Christ.

²⁰ St. Louis-Marie Grignon DE MONTFORT, *True Devotion to Mary*, tr. Fr. Frederick Faber, Rockford, IL, Tan Books, 1985.

Amidst the cultural ruins of post-war Japan, Doshin So (1911-1980) attempted to revitalize the cultural values of his devastated country by creating a martial art named *Shorinji Kempo* and a corresponding religious philosophy that was based on the techniques of the art—*Kongo Zen*. Both the martial art and the religious philosophy upon which the art is based are very complex. For the purposes of this paper we need only be concerned with one of the basic tenets, *riki ai funi*.²¹ Literally, *riki* means ‘power’ or ‘strength’, *ai* means ‘love’, and *funi*, means ‘not two.’ The gloss would be ‘love and strength are not separate’ (or they are one). But perhaps it is better to think that they ‘should not be separated’ rather than to think that they are one, at least if one thinks that by oneness is meant that they dissolve into each other.

The rationale for this thought would presumably be that love and strength should not be separated because love without strength leaves love open to be attacked, victimized, violated, etc., and with strength (power) love is offered protection. Conversely, strength alone without love becomes brute strength and open to the abuse of power. Hence one can see how this philosophy of *riki ai funi* would make good sense for martial arts practitioners to prevent them from being helpless victims on the one hand, or abusive bullies on the other. In fact, *Shorinji Kempo* has been very successful in Japan and remains an important part of the post-war cultural movement to transpose the Samurai warrior archetype into a more peaceful and acceptable mode, such as exemplified by the success in the West of Aikido.

For our purposes, the analogy of *riki ai funi* provides an analogy for understanding the distinct roles and the relationship between the official church and the church of love. In terms of the distinct roles, the official church has the function of protecting the church of love. Conversely, the church of love has the role of constantly directing the official church to the hidden Christ, where the official church in turn runs to embrace him on the shore.

5.1 — The Diné Notion of Beauty

The Diné (Navajo) have an interesting category that could provide an analogy for understanding not only how the two churches are united but how they interpenetrate. The foundational animating principle of the Diné

²¹ On *Shorinji Kempo* and a summary of its philosophy I reference the basic manual in English. WORLD SHORINJI KEMPO ORGANIZATION, *Shorinji Kempo Fukudoku-hon (Textbook)*, Tadotsu, Japan, WSKO, 1991, esp. p. 12.

worldview is *sa_a naghái bike hózhó* traditionally glossed by some ethnologists as *long life and happiness* but it also can mean completeness, wholeness. These glosses do not capture the richness and depth of this fascinating and complex notion.²² The phrase connotes two essential elements that make up the entire basis of life. Part of their difference is what I would call a principle of protection (*sa'a naghái*) and a principle of beauty (*bik'e hózhó*). For the Diné, the former is a male principle, the latter a female principle. These two are fundamental to every aspect of life. For our purposes, the ways in which the two are intertwined and united provide a helpful analogy for conceiving the inextricable relationship between the official church and the church of love.

Every aspect of creation is permeated by a male principle (*sa'a naghái* = SN) and a female principle (*bik'e hózhó* = BH). Without SN there is no BH, beauty, harmony. Furthermore, in order to perdure BH must be protected by SN. Conversely, there can be no BH without SN. In this way one can see the similarity to *riki ai funi*, discussed above. But the relationship between SNBH is intricate and not always easy to discern. For example, the earth is a female principle (BH) while the sky is a male principle (SN). The earth is dependent for the rain that falls from the sky in order to produce life (beauty). However, it gets more complex. Each aspect of creation is permeated by both SN and BH, and not necessarily in equal proportions. The sky, although male, when it is a clear blue it is permeated by the female, beauty (BH). The night sky however, is permeated more by the male principle (SN). But night skies can be crisp and clear (beautiful_female) or they can be dark and stormy and even dangerous, as lightening can kill_the male principle (SN). Likewise, the rain (a predominantly male principle) that falls from Father Sky to Mother Earth can be a hard, male rain, or it can be a light, female rain. These examples give a sense of the complexity. Now to extend the analogy, we can view the relationship in terms of how the two work in harmony. When Father Sky rains upon Mother Earth, it is like the sky and the earth are making love. The effect of the rain permeating the earth is that flowers bloom and vegetation grows_fecundity.²³

In Lonergan's terms, *the good of order* (the schemes of recurrence that ensure that the vital needs of a community are met) or societies can be permeated

²² For a more extensive and critical review of this notion in John R. FARELLA, *Main Stalk: A Synthesis of Navajo Philosophy*, Tuscon, University of Arizona Press, 1984, esp. Chapter 5.

²³I am grateful to Harry Walters, curator of the Ned Hathathli Museum of Diné College, Tsaile Arizona for these examples and explanations. I am grateful to the Lilly Foundation for providing the funding for the research on Navajo beauty carried out during the summer of 2005.

to greater or lesser degrees by one or the other of these principles. When BH is predominant there is relative peace and stability in the society. However, when SN is predominant there is chaos and war. One can think of Iraq or the Darfur. Regardless of the context, some form of SN will always be needed to insure the existence of BH.

The complexity of SNBH, its unity, and its perichoratic (if the reader permits the use of this word) interpenetration are helpful as an analogy in order to conceive of the unity and dynamic interplay between the official church and the church of love. Indeed, the relationship between the two churches can be conceived as functioning authentically when the two are mutually enriching each other. The official church yields to the authority of the church of love, directing it to the hidden Christ, while the church of love rests in the stability and ecclesiastical structures offered by the official church. For example, the official church insures the recurrence of the sacraments to current and subsequent generations of the Church.²⁴

Moreover, we can apply an insight from Lonergan's "dialectic of authority" where he makes a distinction between power and authority²⁵: the official church has the ecclesiastical power in terms of structures and governance, while the church of love represents the authority (of the Spirit). In matters of crisis in the Church, the church of love has the *authority*-even if it is not officially sanctioned. Historically, one can think of the mediating role that Catherine of Siena played in trying to re-unify the papacy. What gave her the authority but her saintliness as a woman of prayer, mystically espoused to Christ?

Conversely, when the official church functions without the church of love it runs the risk of power abuse and corruption, just as when the separation of *riki* (strength) from *ai* (love) leads to the misuse of power. In fact, one could say that the constant reforms in the Church throughout its history can be viewed in part as the withdrawal of the official church from the church of love and its subsequent return, when the church of love reorients and redirects the official church back to the hidden Christ (*Ecclesia semper reformanda*). This process of renewal usually occurs through religious communities as they

²⁴ Thanks to feedback I received from Joseph Komonchak, I realize that it is more complicated than this example. There are numerous examples where the laity ground the schemes of recurrence that constitute and insure the future generations of the Church. I hope to work this out in more detail in a lengthier project.

²⁵ Bernard LONERGAN, "Dialectic of Authority," in *A Third Collection*, Mahwah, NJ, Paulist Press, 1985, pp. 5-12.

begin on the margins of society. One is reminded of the early movement of Egyptian monasticism to resurrect the spirit of the age of the martyrs and which ran counter to the rapidly expanding age of politicalization within post-Constantinian Christianity.

In terms of our extended allegory, the authority of the church of love is demonstrated by virtue of the fact that: (1) it recognizes Christ and directs the official church to it, (2) it mediates between the official church and Christ, just as John mediates between Peter and Jesus at the Last Supper, and (3) it remains with Jesus at the foot of the cross as the Beloved disciple and Jesus' Mother exemplify. Nevertheless, if the church of love is to perdure throughout human history, it needs the 'institutions' that the official church provides, its structure and organization, its protection and stewardship. Vatican II was the beginning of the re-conception of some of those official structures with a view toward greater mutuality.

In terms of mediation, we begin to understand how the official church, as authentically self-mediating, is in danger of becoming *strictly self-mediating* when it fails to yield to the graced, mutually self-mediating principle that is foundational to the church of love. In fact, I would venture the thesis that this is the crossroads that the post-Vatican II Church finds itself in. The *Catholic moment* for ecclesiology lies not in the clouds of some idealistic conception of church, or solely in the earth of historical sources constantly revisited and sourced at the risk of the transcendental aspect of the Church. Rather, the moment will issue forth a development in the Church's self-mediating understanding by an integration of the principle of mutual self-mediation into its structures. Therein, the foundational principle of the Johannine-Marian church of love will permeate and 'bring up to date' the structures of the official church of Peter that were set in motion at Vatican II but unfortunately continue to prompt the 'solid right' to dig in their heels and the 'scattered left' to flounder about. Just what impact the integration of mutual self-mediation into the self-mediating structures of the official church will have is beyond the scope of this paper. To conclude, the reader's attention will be drawn to a third 'hidden' ecclesial dimension in Balthasar's reading of John.

6 — *The Church of the Hidden*

In his book *Mary for Today*, Balthasar speaks about the spiritual weapons that the Church must possess in order to struggle for the coming Reign of God. There is an aspect of Christian experience that suggests we are at war,

that our earthly life is a battle ground between the forces of good and evil. This is not to advocate a further *violentization* and *warification* that is currently pervading various cultures and religious groups throughout the world and is exemplified by policies of the United States (i.e., War on Drugs, War on Terror, etc.). Nor does it intend to resurrect archaic ecclesiological images reflective of an earlier time when the Church construed itself in terms of a dialectical relationship with the Other, as in the case of the image of the Church Militant emerging from the Council of Trent. Nevertheless, tradition tells us that Satan hates the Church and Revelation speaks of a woman given refuge in the wilderness: “The Devil’s rage against the Church is as great as it is because it is not able to achieve anything against her [Mary].”²⁶ There is a real dimension of the Church that is lived *hidden* in the wilderness and an evil principle that is at war with her—the witness of the martyrs testifies to this; albeit sometimes the evil manifests itself within the Church through corrupt individuals.²⁷ At the very least this hiddenness is a deep ecclesial dimension of the Church that has not been addressed in a more systematic ecclesiology—one I wish to take up further in the near future.²⁸ The acknowledgement of this hidden reality brings my reflections full circle—Balthasar’s interpretation of the two churches in John. What we find there is a third ecclesial dimension present that is not immediately clear but at the same time is obvious. It is the hidden Jesus on the shore calling out to the disciples. I have mentioned that Peter, the official church, does not recognize the figure as Jesus until John, the beloved disciple, points this out to him. Hence, there is a sense where the official church is dependent upon the church of love in order to identify the hidden Christ.

Balthasar is aware of the importance that the figure of John plays in the mediation between the Petrine and the Marian churches. As stated above, these reflections would depart from Balthasar in that it can be proposed that the church of love is grounded in the mutual self-mediating relationship between John and Mary. Nevertheless, this author concurs with the mediator role of John and rather than suggest that John recedes, as Balthasar claims as Peter

²⁶ Hans Urs von BALTHASAR, *Mary for Today*, tr. Robert Nowell, San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1988, p. 11.

²⁷ See Scott PECK, *People of the Lie*, New York, Touchstone, 1985. He argues that those whom he identifies clinically as *people of the lie* are often attracted to official church structures in order to hide from themselves.

²⁸ James HOUSTON begins to explore this theme in his book *Joyful Exiles: Life in Christ on the Dangerous Edge of Things*, Downers Grove, IL, Intervarsity Press, 2006.

comes to the forefront,²⁹ the church of love continues to mediate between the official church of Peter and what could be called the unofficial church of the Hidden. Suffice it to say that there are several senses of the 'hidden' as an ecclesial reality and they are not necessarily distinct from the official church, though for the most part they rely on the mediation of the church of love, that is, as exemplified by the love of John and Mary who stand at the foot of the Cross with *the hidden* suffering of our world.

The first aspect of the church of the Hidden is the persecuted Church. That is, whenever anyone is persecuted in the name of Christ. Historically, the Christians who were practicing under the persecution of Christianity during feudal Japan were actually called "Hidden Christians." This aspect of the hidden is closest to Peter's experience since he undergoes martyrdom himself and this constitutes his final amends for abandoning Jesus during his last hours.³⁰

The second sense of the ecclesial reality of the hidden concerns the way in which God chooses to be made manifest and this includes the invisible missions of the Son and the Spirit—the Spirit blows where it wills. The *spermatikos* or seeds of the Word and one could add, the fruits of the Spirit, can be 'hidden' in any religion, culture, or media they choose. God's ways are not our ways. The foundation for the ecumenical relationship with other Christian faiths,

²⁹ Balthasar views John as a mediator between the Petrine and the Marian churches. He also sees John's role as one of simultaneously uniting and vanishing. John recedes while Peter comes to the forefront. It is John who "stands under the Cross in place of Peter and on his behalf receives the Marian Church." (Hans Urs von BALTHASAR, *The Office of Peter and the Structure of the Church*, San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1986, p. 225.) My reflections diverge from Balthasar on this interpretation. I see the emergence of two churches, the self-mediating one, Christ's gift of the Church to Peter, and the mutually self-mediating ecclesial reality that is Christ's gift of his mother to John (Mary-John).

³⁰ Fr. William Hart McNichols put me on to this idea when he referred me to read the intergenerational epic *The Tales of the Otori* (Five Volumes), New York, Riverhead Books, 2003, 2006, by Liam HEARN. This work of historical fiction is set in feudal Japan and contains a sub-plot involving the Hidden Christians. However, the author never refers to them explicitly as Christians *per se*, he refers to them simply as *The Hidden*. It is noteworthy that John and Mary as closest to Jesus suffer with him and in this way perhaps one could say they are spared from a martyrs' death in that they have already co-suffered with Christ. Nevertheless, since Peter's role is to be steward and protector, the official church should always be willing to die for the faith in a moment's notice. Albeit, not everyone is called to a martyr's death, and it is fair to say that most Christians are called to *a martyr's life*, that is, one with a continued kenosis of self-interest and one that 'witnesses' to the Gospel if not always in word, necessarily in deed. In this regard St. Francis is the example *par excellence*. Jaroslav Pelican described him as the most significant figure in Christian history after Jesus Christ.

religions and cultures lies in the presupposition of this dimension of Christian experience. That is, sometimes Christ is hidden from the eyes of the official church and the church of love becomes the mediator that identifies and directs the official church to the hidden Christ in the Other.³¹

The third aspect of the ecclesial reality of the hidden is perhaps the most provocative. *The hidden* are the marginalized that society rejects, and at times even those rejected by members of the official church, *when they function without the mediation of the church of love*. The church of love on the other hand, like Mary and John at the foot of the cross, prefer the presence of *the hidden*, just as Jesus did to the dismay of the ecclesial officials of his day. Of course it does not have to be this way especially if the mutually self-mediating ecclesial dimension is integrated into the structures of the self-mediating official church.

In addition to *the hidden* there are *the hiding*. To incorporate the hermeneutical work of René Girard and James Allison will be fruitful here. When *the hiding*, by virtue of the fact that they are hiding, scapegoat *the hidden*, they become *the violent*.³² When *the hidden* suffer at the hands of *the violent* the church of love suffers with them. This does not preclude the official church from suffering with *the hidden*; after all, Peter does run to the shore and embrace Christ without hesitation *once he recognizes him*. However, it is John who identifies Christ on the shore; but more significantly, Jesus never questions John's love. The burden remains on the official church to prove its love.

³¹ This, in part, explains the reason for this author's previous arguments that we need a second ecclesiology that captures the full impulse of the ecumenical spirit of Vatican II. There is a need for an ecclesiology of friendship to complement the ecclesiology of communion in order to ensure not only an ecclesial understanding that is faithful to the full spirit of Vatican II, but also as a *method* to engage the Other, i.e., friendship. Moreover, the importance of discernment should be noted in this endeavour. While I do not have space to develop it here, discernment stands to what Lonergan might have called a *fourth stage of meaning*, as the critical appropriation of one's consciousness stands to the third stage of meaning. For the future of the theology this means that the fourth stage of meaning will necessitate a critical appropriation of one's faith tradition. Among other things, this may mean that the sacraments of initiation will be more individuated. On the three stages of meaning see Bernard LONERGAN, *Method in Theology*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1990, pp. 81-99.

³² It goes without saying that physical violence is one form of violence.

Conclusion

These reflections have explored the possibility of a post-Vatican II ecclesiology that integrates insights from Balthasar and Lonergan. This author remains convinced of the fruitfulness of the jewels that have been taken from the treasure chest of these two, as well as others, in order to provide the foundations for a post-Vatican II ecclesiology that is *centred* in the richness of the authentic spirit of the Gospel message, the tradition that continues to reflect on that message, and the contemporary exigencies of our time.