



Networking Cedara



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Monday, 19 February: Institute Free Day- NO LECTURES

Tuesday, 20 February: Institute Liturgy (5 pm, Paul De cock OMI presiding)

Friday 23, February: Special Day of fasting and prayer for peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan

Tuesday, 27 February: Institute Liturgy (5 pm, Luigi Morell M. Afr. presiding)

Friday, 2 March: Academic Council (10:30)

SPECIAL DAY OF FASTING AND PRAYER

Pope Francis has called for a special day of fasting and prayer for peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. Both countries are experiencing severe violence and South Sudan is in civil war.

BOOK SALES

Pauline Sisters: Tuesday, 27 February—Wednesday, 28 February—Thursday, 1 March. A wide variety of books in theology and philosophy will be on sale.

Cluster Publications: Monday, 5 March (10 am—Hall): very affordable contextual theology books

Cluster Publications will be hosting a book sale on Monday 5 March during tea break in the hall.

Books will be reduced as we are clearing out our stock.

Please come and have a look and don't forget to bring your cash.

“Big discounts “ see you there.

WELCOME
NEW STUDENTS!

FROM THE STUDENT FORUM

1. Next Friday, 23 February 2018, will be the first student body meeting (all students) in the auditorium @ 10:20. This meeting will coincide with the elections of new leaders of the various Institute committees.
2. From next Tuesday, 20 February 2018, and onwards, popcorn will be on sale.
3. Those interested in SJTI tracksuits to contact Sr Nelly Iyese @ the Student Forum office.

FROM THE HOD OF THEOLOGY

Archbishop Denis E. Hurley OMI, after whom our library is named, passed away on February 13, 2004.

He was a lecturer at St. Joseph's at its very beginnings, in 1943, and was the Superior of St. Joseph's from 1944 until the end of 1946. He was ordained as Bishop for Durban on March 19, 1947. Among the many memorable events in his life was the court case of the South African State against him for accusing the South African Army of atrocities in Ovamboland and the Kavango. The court case attracted worldwide attention. Among the many people who sent messages of support at the time of the trial was also Sam Nujoma, who later became the first president of Namibia:

Sam Nujoma, president of the South-West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO), to Archbishop Denis Hurley OMI, 20 February 1985 (telegram):

SWAPO OF NAMIBIA WISHES TO EXTEND TO YOU OUR FULL SUPPORT DURING YOUR TRIAL WHICH BEGAN ON MONDAY. ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF NAMIBIA WE EXTEND TO YOU OUR WARMEST CONGRATULATIONS AND APPRECIATION FOR THE STAND YOU HAVE TAKEN IN EXPOSING THE TRUTH OF KOEVOET'S ACTIVITIES IN NAMIBIA. YOUR COURAGE AND COMMITMENT IN EXPOSING ATROCITIES BY SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES IN NAMIBIA WILL BE REMEMBERED BY OUR PEOPLE. WE EXTEND TO YOU OUR BEST WISHES FOR YOUR SUCCESSFUL DEFENCE ON THE CHARGES AGAINST YOU.

IMPOSSIBILITY TO POSSIBILITY: PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL SURVEY .

Kelvin Banda OP & Felisberto Dumbo SCJ

It is a fact that systematic theology is very close to philosophy. There is not much demarcation between philosophy and natural theology. It is the way that scholasticism articulated and engaged with the crisis during Medieval times. Today, the doctrine of the Trinity, Incarnation and Dogmas of the Virgin Mary became the issues of demarcation between philosophy and theology – of course Christian philosophy is still applied to justify the Truth about God. But, the concern here are philosophers who use philosophical tools to claim for an evident demarcation and impossible proximity between philosophy and theology.

Contemporary philosophers forget that reason can assist faith ‘by enabling it to construct apologetic argument and theological systems. Faith assists reason by extending the sphere of reason into the realm of supernatural mysteries and by delivering reason from errors’ (Dulles 1992:135). It would be worthwhile to recall philosophers of the impossibility like Kant and post-Kantian philosophers who stress the impossibility of reasoning to perceive metaphysical transcendence, who confine the competence of theoretical reason to the order of phenomena that without secularisation of Christian thought, modern philosophy would not have come into existence. As Hans Urs von Balthasar states, (1993:165) ‘modern philosophy is a kind of refuse product of formerly Christian (more precisely, theological) intellectual contents-and this, not merely in a subordinate sense, at margin, but essentially and in its kernel’.

There should be a movement from the impossibility of understanding the mystery of Incarnation, the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary by applying philosophical speculation and its methodological criteria to the possibility of believing that God does things in the unity of his being. Therefore, philosophy by meaning literally love of wisdom implicitly embraces an ethical element. That is; decision. Decision of thinking of the revealed truth. That is, of a Being who is eternally opening out onto the mystery of an Absolute Being – God. Hence, the impossibility to the possibility of reason - faith can help us to see how the dynamic dialogue between philosophy and theology is required to get into the mystery of light and wisdom.

Faith as the highest reason can help humanity to understand the concept of Revelation [the mysteries of the Incarnation or Blessed Virgin Mary] as a phenomenological and theological possibility (Jean-Luc Marion). For Compaan Auke (2015), phenomenology answers questions about what is perceived as impossible, not from any pre-given dogmatic concept of God, but beginning with experience.

In this case, the impossibility to possibility of the mysteries of God is made possible through faith as this is an existential experiential through the highest reasoning – faith. For example, when the Blessed Virgin Mary answered “yes” to the message of God through the angel Gabriel, she made the impossible become possible. No society would ever accept a woman to become pregnant without a man. However, with God, Mary made the mysteries of impossibility possible through being a participant in the divine mysteries that God initiated. The phenomena are not something we can define and see in an objective way, but which still appears to us – to the person who experiences [to the believer].

The philosophical tradition has faith as a species of belief – often, as belief that is not subject to reason. For example, Mark Twain says that, “faith is believing what you know ain’t so.” The act of faith is voluntary, a matter of choice. It is a habit and commits one to a dynamic “I” or an Abrahamic call of steadfastness in God which philosophical reasoning would not be in total agreement with. Faith is not just a mere “belief.” Faith comes in and is imparted into a person who experiences or believes through God. It is from here where the impossible becomes possible through the possibility of God – as nothing is impossible with God (Matthew 19:26 NRSV). Faith is not scientific; it does not need laboratory experimentation. It is a personal existential experiential.

For Marion, the fact of Revelation exceeds the scope of all science, including, phenomenology (2002a:367). Revelation with a capital R, as a Christian dogma, belongs to theology to explore, and revelation with a lower-case r, as an ultimate, yet possible phenomenon, is the concern of phenomenology. Therefore, when Marion writes about the Revelation of Christ – the mysteries of God – Marion wants to stay within the limits of phenomenology and wants to outline it as a phenomenological possibility. In *Being Given* (2002a:234-245) and in *In Excess* (2002:123-127) Marion outlines it as the ultimate possibility, the paradox of all paradoxes, a possible saturated phenomenon. In the case of the topic under discussion, the possibility of the impossibility is grounded in the phenomenological concept of "Revelation" – the notion of possibility, which is theology. The phenomena referred to by Marion as saturated, cannot be experienced according to the logic of everyday objects, but only according to the logic of the theology, faith in God to move the impossibility to possibility.

Therefore, the article endeavoured to show a movement from the impossibility to possibility understanding of the mysteries of God such as the Incarnation, the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary possibility by believing that God does things in the unity of His being. To do so, the article tried to show that the act of faith is voluntary – an Abrahamic call of steadfastness in God imparted by God to a believer – a personal existential experiential which is not subject to laboratory experiments like science. This is because persons as creatures are analogously

related to God existentially. God transcends humanity but is also immanent making what is perceived as impossible – possible.

If humanity is to think of God, humanity must be related to God – be it in thinking, love or being. The article therefore agrees with Patrick Masterson that, the phenomenological approach to theology and philosophy or philosophy of religion is incomplete without the metaphysical. Masterson discusses two approaches to the philosophical understanding of the God of possibilities – the phenomenological, exemplified by Jean-Luc Marion, and the metaphysical, represented by Thomas Aquinas. In the end, Masterson sees value in both approaches and considers them complementary to each other to understand the God of possibilities through higher reasoning – theological faith.

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR LENT 2018

**“Because of the increase of iniquity, the love of many will grow cold”
(Mt 24:12)**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Once again, the Pasch of the Lord draws near! In our preparation for Easter, God in his providence offers us each year the season of Lent as a “sacramental sign of our conversion”. Lent summons us, and enables us, to come back to the Lord wholeheartedly and in every aspect of our life.

With this message, I would like again this year to help the entire Church experience this time of grace anew, with joy and in truth. I will take my cue from the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew: “Because of the increase of iniquity, the love of many will grow cold” (24:12).

These words appear in Christ’s preaching about the end of time. They were spoken in Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives, where the Lord’s passion would begin. In reply to a question of the disciples, Jesus foretells a great tribulation and describes a situation in which the community of believers might well find itself: amid great trials, false prophets would lead people astray and the love that is the core of the Gospel would grow cold in the hearts of many.

False prophets

Let us listen to the Gospel passage and try to understand the guise such false prophets can assume. They can appear as “snake charmers”, who manipulate human emotions in order to enslave others and lead them where they would have them go. How many of God’s children are mesmerized by momentary pleasures,

mistaking them for true happiness! How many men and women live entranced by the dream of wealth, which only makes them slaves to profit and petty interests! How many go through life believing that they are sufficient unto themselves, and end up entrapped by loneliness!

False prophets can also be “charlatans”, who offer easy and immediate solutions to suffering that soon prove utterly useless. How many young people are taken in by the panacea of drugs, of disposable relationships, of easy but dishonest gains! How many more are ensnared in a thoroughly “virtual” existence, in which relationships appear quick and straightforward, only to prove meaningless! These swindlers, in peddling things that have no real value, rob people of all that is most precious: dignity, freedom and the ability to love. They appeal to our vanity, our trust in appearances, but in the end they only make fools of us. Nor should we be surprised. In order to confound the human heart, the devil, who is “a liar and the father of lies” (Jn 8:44), has always presented evil as good, falsehood as truth. That is why each of us is called to peer into our heart to see if we are falling prey to the lies of these false prophets. We must learn to look closely, beneath the surface, and to recognize what leaves a good and lasting mark on our hearts, because it comes from God and is truly for our benefit.

A cold heart

In his description of hell, Dante Alighieri pictures the devil seated on a throne of ice, in frozen and loveless isolation. We might well ask ourselves how it happens that charity can turn cold within us. What are the signs that indicate that our love is beginning to cool?

More than anything else, what destroys charity is greed for money, “the root of all evil” (1 Tim 6:10). The rejection of God and his peace soon follows; we prefer our own desolation rather than the comfort found in his word and the sacraments. All this leads to violence against anyone we think is a threat to our own “certainties”: the unborn child, the elderly and infirm, the migrant, the alien among us, or our neighbour who does not live up to our expectations.

Creation itself becomes a silent witness to this cooling of charity. The earth is poisoned by refuse, discarded out of carelessness or for self-interest. The seas, themselves polluted, engulf the remains of countless shipwrecked victims of forced migration. The heavens, which in God’s plan, were created to sing his praises, are rent by engines raining down implements of death.

Love can also grow cold in our own communities. In the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, I sought to describe the most evident signs of this lack of love: selfishness and spiritual sloth, sterile pessimism, the temptation to self-absorption, constant warring among ourselves, and the worldly mentality that

makes us concerned only for appearances, and thus lessens our missionary zeal.[4]

What are we to do?

Perhaps we see, deep within ourselves and all about us, the signs I have just described. But the Church, our Mother and Teacher, along with the often bitter medicine of the truth, offers us in the Lenten season the soothing remedy of prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

By devoting more time to prayer, we enable our hearts to root out our secret lies and forms of self-deception, and then to find the consolation God offers. He is our Father and he wants us to live life well.

Almsgiving sets us free from greed and helps us to regard our neighbour as a brother or sister. What I possess is never mine alone. How I would like almsgiving to become a genuine style of life for each of us! How I would like us, as Christians, to follow the example of the Apostles and see in the sharing of our possessions a tangible witness of the communion that is ours in the Church! For this reason, I echo Saint Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians to take up a collection for the community of Jerusalem as something from which they themselves would benefit (cf. 2 Cor 8:10). This is all the more fitting during the Lenten season, when many groups take up collections to assist Churches and peoples in need. Yet I would also hope that, even in our daily encounters with those who beg for our assistance, we would see such requests as coming from God himself. When we give alms, we share in God's providential care for each of his children. If through me God helps someone today, will he not tomorrow provide for my own needs? For no one is more generous than God.

Fasting weakens our tendency to violence; it disarms us and becomes an important opportunity for growth. On the one hand, it allows us to experience what the destitute and the starving have to endure. On the other hand, it expresses our own spiritual hunger and thirst for life in God. Fasting wakes us up. It makes us more attentive to God and our neighbour. It revives our desire to obey God, who alone is capable of satisfying our hunger.

I would also like my invitation to extend beyond the bounds of the Catholic Church, and to reach all of you, men and women of good will, who are open to hearing God's voice. Perhaps, like ourselves, you are disturbed by the spread of iniquity in the world, you are concerned about the chill that paralyzes hearts and actions, and you see a weakening in our sense of being members of the one human family. Join us, then, in raising our plea to God, in fasting, and in offering whatever you can to our brothers and sisters in need!

The fire of Eaester

Above all, I urge the members of the Church to take up the Lenten journey with enthusiasm, sustained by almsgiving, fasting and prayer. If, at times, the

flame of charity seems to die in our own hearts, know that this is never the case in the heart of God! He constantly gives us a chance to begin loving anew.

One such moment of grace will be, again this year, the “24 Hours for the Lord” initiative, which invites the entire Church community to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation in the context of Eucharistic adoration. In 2018, inspired by the words of Psalm 130:4, “With you is forgiveness”, this will take place from Friday, 9 March to Saturday, 10 March. In each diocese, at least one church will remain open for twenty-four consecutive hours, offering an opportunity for both Eucharistic adoration and sacramental confession.

During the Easter Vigil, we will celebrate once more the moving rite of the lighting of the Easter candle. Drawn from the “new fire”, this light will slowly overcome the darkness and illuminate the liturgical assembly. “May the light of Christ rising in glory dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds”, and enable all of us to relive the experience of the disciples on the way to Emmaus. By listening to God’s word and drawing nourishment from the table of the Eucharist, may our hearts be ever more ardent in faith, hope and love.

With affection and the promise of my prayers for all of you, I send you my blessing. Please do not forget to pray for me.

From the Vatican, 1 November 2017

Solemnity of All Saints

Pope Francis

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