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Reconciling Evangelization and Dialogue through Love of Neighbor
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INTRODUCTION

Pope Benedict and Interreligious Dialogue

A year and a half into his papacy, Benedict XVI faced his first major international crisis. On September 12, 2006 he delivered an academic lecture in Germany at the University of Regensburg on the theme of faith and reason in Western culture.¹ In the context of a discussion on compulsion in religion, Benedict referred to a fourteenth century dialogue in which the Byzantine Emperor addressed an Islamic scholar: “Show me just what Mohammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman such as the command to spread by the sword the faith he preached.”²

Two days later the Organization of the Islamic Conference, representing fifty-seven Islamic states, issued a press statement expressing “regret” for the “derogatory fallacies defaming Islam,” and for the “smear campaign” which indulged in “character assassination of the prophet Mohammed.”³ In the days that followed, protests, some violent, occurred in Jakarta, Delhi, London, and other cities. Seven Christian churches in the West Bank and Gaza were attacked. On September 17, 2006 an Italian missionary nun and her bodyguard were shot and killed as they left a children’s hospital in Mogadishu, Somalia.⁴

A flurry of questions accompanied the intense reactions to the pope’s quotation of the medieval text. Did Benedict intend to mark a deliberate shift in Vatican policy regarding interreligious dialogue, and Islam in particular?⁵ One Catholic News Service reporter attributed the crisis to the pope’s “long-standing penchant for speaking bluntly and provocatively on interreligious issues.”⁶ For example, in 2000, introducing to the press *Dominus Iesus*, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith’s declaration “On the Unicity and Salvific Universality of Jesus Christ and the Church,” then-Cardinal Ratzinger noted that while good things can exist in other religions, “one cannot close one’s eyes to the errors and illusions that are also present” in those religions.⁷

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¹ Benedict XVI, *The Regensburg Academic Lecture*, 36 ORIGINS 248 (September 28, 2006).

² Id. at 249.

³ *Islamic Reaction to the Pope’s Quotation*, 36 ORIGINS 252, 253-54 (September 28, 2006).

⁴ Sidebar, 36 ORIGINS at 248. See also Ian Fisher, *Pope Apologizes for Uproar Over His Remarks*, NEW YORK TIMES (September 17, 2006).

⁵ See Organization of the Islamic Conference Statement, *supra* note 3 at 254.

⁶ John Thavis, *Tough Talk—Benedict’s bluntness strains existing interfaith bridges*, CATHOLIC NEWS SERVICE (September 22, 2006).

⁷ Id.

Under the direction of Cardinal Ratzinger, *Dominus Iesus* had staked out a strong claim. Discussing the relationship of the Church and other religions to salvation, “it must be firmly believed that ‘the Church, a pilgrim now on earth, is necessary for salvation: the one Christ is the mediator and the way of salvation; to his present to us in his body which is the Church.’”⁸ While the truth that God has willed that the Church founded by him be the instrument for the salvation of *all* humanity “does not lessen the sincere respect which the Church has for the religions of the world,”⁹ it does rule out, “in a radical way, that mentality of indifferentism ‘characterized by a religious relativism which leads to the belief that ‘one religion is as good as another.’”¹⁰ Thus, while followers of other religions can receive divine grace, “it is also certain that *objectively speaking* they are in a gravely deficient situation in comparison with those who, in the Church, have the fullness of the means of salvation.”¹¹

As a consequence of her belief in God’s universal plan of salvation, *Dominus Iesus* concluded, “the Church must be missionary,”¹² and therefore “primarily committed to proclaiming to all people the truth definitively revealed by the Lord, and to announcing the necessity of conversion to Jesus Christ and of adherence to the Church through Baptism and the other sacraments, in order to participate fully in communion with God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”¹³

The 2000 *Dominus Iesus* backdrop may have heightened the readiness to interpret the quote in the 2006 Regensburg address as a sign that Benedict planned to steer away from Pope John Paul’s emphasis on inter-religious dialogue¹⁴ toward a clearer proclamation of Christian identity and evangelization.¹⁵

Subsequent Vatican statements, however, seem to indicate that Benedict’s use of the quote was not intentionally provocative. In the September 17, 2006 Angelus greeting, Benedict stated that the quotation did not “in any way express my personal thought.”¹⁶ A simultaneous statement by the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, highlighted the church’s

⁸ CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, *DOMINUS IESUS: ON THE UNICITY AND SALVIFIC UNIVERSALITY OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE CHURCH* (2000) 20.

⁹ *Id.* at 22. See also *id.* at 2 (quoting Second Vatican Council, *NOSTRA AETATE* at 2) (“The Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She has a high regard for the manner of life and conduct, the precepts and teachings, which, although differing in many ways from her own teaching, nonetheless often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men.”)

¹⁰ *DOMINUS*, *supra* note 8 at 22.

¹¹ *Id.* 22.

¹² *Id.* 22.

¹³ *Id.* 22.

¹⁴ See, e.g., John Paul II, *Address at the Conclusion of the World Day of Prayer for Peace*, 5 (October 27, 1986) (“We hope that this pilgrimage to Assisi has taught us anew to be aware of the common origin and common destiny of humanity. Let us see in it an anticipation of what God would like the developing history of humanity to be: a fraternal journey in which we accompany one another toward the transcendent goal which he sets for us”) [REDACTED] **ORIGINS** __ (DATE); JOHN PAUL II, *NOVO MILLENNIO INUENTE* 55 (2001) (“In the climate of increased cultural and religious pluralism which is expected to mark the society of the new millennium, it is obvious that [interreligious] dialogue will be especially important in establishing a sure basis for peace and warding off the dread spectre of those wars of religion which have so often bloodied human history. The name of the one God must become increasingly what it is: *a name of peace and a summons to peace.*”); JOHN PAUL II, *CROSSING THE THRESHOLD OF HOPE* 99 (1994) (discussing his April 1986 visit to the Synagogue of Rome during which he spoke of the Jews as “our elder brothers in the faith”).

¹⁵ See John T. Pawlikowski, *Is Dominus Iesus a Shadow Over the New Papacy?* Beliefnet.com http://www.beliefnet.com/story/165/story_16560_2.html (April 25, 2005).

¹⁶ *Quotation in Papal Speech Stirs Muslim Reaction*, 36 *ORIGINS* 245, 246 (September 28, 2006).

esteem for Muslims and Benedict's "unequivocal" "option in favor of interreligious and intercultural dialogue" from the start of his papacy.¹⁷ For example, it reaffirmed Benedict's August 2005 message to Muslim representatives in Cologne, Germany: "The lessons of the past must help us to avoid repeating the same mistakes. We must seek paths of reconciliation and learn to live with respect for each other's identity."¹⁸

In a September 25, 2006 address to Muslim leaders at Castel Gandolfo and broadcast live on the Arab television network, Al-Jazeera,¹⁹ Benedict clearly defined interreligious dialogue as a "necessity" and stated his intention to continue the work of John Paul II, with a prayer that the relations of trust will not only continue, "but will develop further in a spirit of sincere and respectful dialogue, based on ever more authentic reciprocal knowledge that with joy recognizes the religious values that we have in common and with loyalty respects the differences."²⁰

At this early stage, what conclusions might be drawn from the crisis? On one level it may be interpreted as in essence a communication gap. As Vatican reporter John Allen colorfully put it, it was a case of "'German professor meets sound-bite culture,' with a phrase from a tightly wrapped academic argument shot into global circulation, provoking an unintended firestorm."²¹ In light of the positive outcome of the Castel Gandolfo meeting, the crisis might mark a significant effort to bridge the gap, perhaps resulting in an ultimately positive step ahead in the work to foster interreligious dialogue. As the director of the Vatican press office, Fr. Federico Lombardi, dared to hope, the end result might be a broader appreciation of "the urgency of a renewed dialogue that is positive, trustworthy, capable of looking at problems in depth and ready for 'self-criticism.'"²² But the undercurrents which sparked such intense reactions may not be easily resolved.

Evangelization and Dialogue in Tension: The Hard Questions

Dialogue "capable of looking at problems in depth," requires sincere acknowledgement of the deep tensions between and within traditions, and the hard questions that these generate. After and in light of the Regensburg crisis, it is clear that interreligious dialogue is here to stay. But as *Dominus Iesus* and the Regensburg illustrates, evangelization and efforts to strengthen Christian identity are also here to stay, and will continue to be a focal point of intense reflection. Can the Church's clear mission to proclaim that Jesus is Lord, not only of the Church, but of all humanity and for all time, be reconciled with sincere dialogue with people of other religious traditions and respect for their identity? Can this tension be reconciled not only in theory, but also in practice, in the context of a pluralistic society?

To sharpen the question, I will give a brief sketch of how I have experienced the tension within the dynamics of my own life and work. On one hand, the Church's mission to evangelize as set out in *Dominus Iesus* makes a lot of sense to me. Perhaps one reason for this is that for the past thirty years I have been closely involved with one of the relatively new ecclesial movements in the Catholic Church, the Focolare. I have absorbed a spirituality which is focused largely on living out evangelical love in the ordinary situations of everyday life, and on communicating this

¹⁷ Id. at 246.

¹⁸ Id.

¹⁹ Sidebar, 36 ORIGINS 263 (October 5, 2006).

²⁰ Benedict XVI, *The Castel Gandolfo Meeting of the Pope and Muslim Leaders*, 36 ORIGINS 261, 262 (October 5, 2006).

²¹ John L. Allen, Jr., *A Challenge, Not a Crusade*, NEW YORK TIMES (September 19, 2006).

²² Sidebar, 36 ORIGINS 263.

message to others. Involvement with the movement has given me a solid formation in the Catholic faith. I firmly believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died and rose not just for Christians but for all of humanity. Yes, Jesus is the center of my life, but he is also the center of the universe. His life, death and resurrection have objective meaning and value for all of human history, not just for those who subjectively believe this because it is how we were raised.

On another level, when I think what it might mean to “proclaim” this message to the culture around me—in the academic environment where I now work, in the law firm where I used to work, in our current political climate—I find myself faced with a set of difficult questions. At the most basic level, many of the statements in *Dominus Iesus* are simply non-starters for conversation in these environments. Wouldn’t it be the height of arrogance on my part even to think—let alone to assert—the ways in which my religion and my Church are superior?²³ Practically I cannot imagine myself finding, as *Dominus Iesus* urges, the words “to announce the necessity of conversion to Jesus Christ and of adherence to the Church through Baptism.”²⁴ When I think about the complexity of these environments, even something about the word “evangelization” makes me nervous or at least ambivalent.²⁵

About the time that my family met the Focolare, the movement was beginning its engagement with inter-religious dialogue.²⁶ These gatherings and contacts have been a source of deep personal enrichment, nourishing and strengthening my own faith. How can I possibly deny how much I have learned through conversations and friendships with people who are supposedly in an (objectively speaking) “gravely deficient situation”?²⁷

When I consider the reconciliation of evangelization and dialogue in my own life, I wonder, in the words of Paul Knitter, if there might be “a deep tension, if not contradiction, between the call that Catholics feel . . . to enter into authentic dialogue with other believers and *Dominus Iesus*’ insistence that the Catholic Church, because it possesses the full and final saving Truth, must actively seek the conversion of all people.”²⁸

It seems that if I want to respond to the call to evangelize, I might have two options. One is to launch myself—against my cultural and academic instincts—into a search for all the ways and openings to proclaim the message of the saving power of Jesus, and to interpret the lumps that will undoubtedly arrive as a consequence of being a faithful follower of Christ. Another is to engage in a kind of double-speak. In my “Catholic” life, with Catholic friends, I can work to

²³ See DOMINUS, *supra* note 8 at 22.

²⁴ Id. 22.

²⁵ See Avery Dulles, S.J., *John Paul II and the New Evangelization—What Does it Mean?* in RALPH MARTIN & PETER WILLIAMSON, EDs, POPE JOHN PAUL II AND THE NEW EVANGELIZATION (1995) 25, 33 (evangelization appears to be “the chosen trademarks of revivalist and fundamentalist sects, some of which are virulently anti-Catholic. Catholics distrust the Biblicism, the individualism, the emotionalism, and the aggressive proselyzation of certain Protestant evangelistic preachers . . . Influenced by the American tradition that religion is a purely private matter, they hesitate to bring pressure on anyone to undergo a deep conversion of mind and heart. Individuals, they assume, should make up their own minds in perfect freedom.”)

²⁶ See generally Focolare International Website, *Dialogue Among Religions for Fraternity Among Peoples*, <http://www.focolare.org/page.php?codcat1=298&lingua=EN&titolo=ways%20to%20dialogue&tipo=among%20religions> (tracing the Focolare Movement’s work in interreligious dialogue from the awarding of the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion to Focolare founder Chiara Lubich in 1977 through current developments). In one of his last letters to Lubich, John Paul coined his own description of Focolare people as “apostles of dialogue.” John Paul II, *Message to Ms. Chiara Lubich on the Occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Birth of the “Work of Mary” (Focolare Movement)* (December 5, 2003).

²⁷ See DOMINUS, *supra* note 8 at 22.

²⁸ See Paul F. Knitter, *Book Review*, SIC ET NON: ENCOUNTERING *DOMINUS IESUS*, 30 HORIZONS 157, 158 (2003).

strengthen my conviction about the unicity and salvific universality of Jesus Christ and the Church as well as pray for and support those who have the vocation to be actual missionaries. But in religiously pluralistic environments, for example, with my colleagues at work, I'll keep these convictions a secret—because I know they will not fly—and simply hope and pray that as a result of somewhat generic gestures of kindness and love they will somehow someday have the good fortune to be freely drawn into the One True Church.

My hope is that I have another option. Something in me yearns for a deeper synthesis of Church teaching and a more genuine expression of the way I live my faith. What approach might insure that my conviction in the unicity and salvific universality of Jesus Christ and the Church does not become arrogant triumphalism or devolve into disrespectful proselytism? Simultaneously, what might help me to avoid a cowardly retreat from the missionary task of authentically sharing with others the greatest treasure I have, my faith?

Of course this essay will not be able to provide complete answers to these complex questions. But I would like to trace what I see as glimpses of a response to these questions in some of the documents and speeches of John Paul II and Benedict XVI, and in the life of the Church today. The essay begins by locating the novelty of the “new evangelization” in a “missionary spirituality” which draws a fundamental connection between evangelization and love of neighbor. It then discusses a series of examples in culture, politics and law which illustrate how a missionary spirituality in action brings evangelization into harmony with respectful interreligious dialogue.

Both Paul VI and John Paul II observed: “[p]eople today put more trust in witnesses than in teachers, in experience than in teaching, and in life and action than in theories.”²⁹ For this reason, woven throughout this analysis are stories of people who have been working to bring together the elements of evangelization and dialogue in their own lives and in their own work. Concrete examples focus on the work of the Focolare Movement not because it is the only community engaged with these themes, but because it is the one which has most informed my own thinking and approach to both evangelization and dialogue.

I. THE NOVELTY OF THE “NEW EVANGELIZATION”

A. *Evangelize the Evangelizers*

Both Paul VI and John Paul II were clear that the novelty of the new evangelization is not the content—the message is the same as always, Jesus Christ. What should be new, John Paul urged, is “its ardor, its methods, and its expression.”³⁰ I believe the new evangelization is at its core an invitation to delve deeply into the question of *how* the evangelical message is lived out and delivered.³¹

In a 1995 essay, then-Father Avery Dulles described one of the obstacles to the new evangelization like this: “Caught up in a merely sociological or traditional type of Catholicism,

²⁹ JOHN PAUL II, REDEMPTORIS MISSIO at 42 (1990) (Quoting Paul VI).

³⁰ John Paul II, *The Task of Latin America's Bishops, Address of Pope John Paul II to the Latin American Bishops' Council*, 12 ORIGINS PAGE (March 24, 1983). See also Edward Clark, *What is New About the New Evangelization* 36 ORIGINS 1 (May 18, 2006) (describing the characteristics of the new evangelization).

³¹ This is in slight contrast with analyses that see the new evangelization's novelty in its broader audience. Compare Leonard Sullivan, *Catholic Street Evangelism in Practice Today*, in MARTIN, *supra* note 25 at 149, 150 (emphasis on finding new ways to reach out to non-Catholics).

too many Catholics of our day seem never to have met the Lord. They know a certain amount about him from the teaching of the Church, but they lack direct, personal familiarity.”³²

What happens when the idea of evangelization is passed through the filter of a “merely sociological or traditional type of Catholicism”? It tends to emphasize communication of *doctrine*, what one knows *about* Jesus, rather than one’s own personal familiarity *with* Jesus.³³ I think some of the controversy surrounding *Dominus Iesus* is a good example of this dynamic. The document set out to “reiterate certain truths that are part of the Church’s faith”³⁴ as a guide for Bishops and theologians.³⁵ It did not intend to discuss *how* to communicate these truths to non-Catholics and non-Christians. *Dominus Iesus* helped to clarify the parameters of Catholic identity, a necessary ground for any dialogue. But I do not believe that Pope Benedict would suggest *Dominus Iesus* as the best place to start for reflection on the *methods* for evangelization.

Where might be the best place to start? For Dulles, it is living contact with the person of Christ. “Drawing near to us in so many ways, Jesus seeks to enter into the sanctuary of every Christian heart. If we grant him that entrance, he will be a living, energetic reality that will take over the direction of our lives.”³⁶

John Paul put it beautifully in his discourse to a group of Polish pilgrims in 1998. “One cannot evangelize if one is not personally the object of evangelization. . . . only a person who has been renewed” by the “law of love of Christ and the light of the Holy Spirit can bring about a true metánoia in the minds and hearts of other people, in the fabric of a society, in a nation or in the world.”³⁷

The first step in the new evangelization is an encounter with the Person of Christ.³⁸ The first resource, then, is a spirituality to evangelize the evangelizers. As Paul VI wrote: “The Church is an evangelizer, but she begins by being evangelized herself. [The Church] needs to listen unceasingly to what she must believe, to her reasons for hoping, to the new commandment of love.”³⁹

B. A Missionary Spirituality: Love as the Heart of Proclamation

In *Redemptoris missio*, John Paul II describes love as the heart of mission, and the motivating force behind all efforts to evangelize.⁴⁰ As Benedict explained in his 2006 World

³² Dulles, *supra* note 25 at 37.

³³ See Dulles, *supra* note 25 at 37.

³⁴ DOMINUS, *supra* note 8 at 4.

³⁵ See e.g., Robert Imbelli, *The Reaffirmation of the Christic Center* in SIC ET NON: ENCOUNTERING DOMINUS IESUS (Stephen J. Pope & Charles Hefling, eds. 2002) 96, 97 (“The declaration is directed, in the first instance, not to ecumenical dialogue partners of the Catholic Church, nor to all people of good will, but to the bishops of the Catholic Church, to be communicated in particular to theological faculties and missionary congregations.”).

³⁶ Dulles, *supra* note 25 at 37.

³⁷ John Paul II, *Discourse to the Pilgrims of the Diocese of Torun, Poland* (February 19, 1998) (translation from Italian).

³⁸ See text *supra* at note 36. See also NOVO MILLENNIO, *supra* note 14 at 29 (“we shall not be saved by a formula but by a Person, and the assurance which he gives us: *I am with you!*”).

³⁹ Dulles, *supra* note 25 at 30-31 (quoting EVANGELIUM NUNTIANDI 15).

⁴⁰ REDEMPTORIS, *supra* note 29 at 60 (1990) (describing love as “the soul of all missionary activity,” love “has been and remains the driving force of mission.”). See also John Paul II, *Discourse to the Participants in the Symposium on the Tenth Anniversary of Redemptoris Missio* (January 20, 2001) (“The Church, rooted in Trinitarian love, is missionary by nature, but it needs to become so in all of its activities. This will happen if it will live fully the charity that the Spirit puts in the hearts of the faithful . . .”) (translation from Italian).

Mission Day Message, “the love that God has for each person constitutes, in fact, the heart of the experience and the proclamation of the Gospel.”⁴¹

But what does this mean concretely? Some of the scholarship reveals that it is often understood in this sense: the greatest possible love that I can have for my neighbor is to share the greatest treasure I possess, the gift of faith. As Fr. Tom Forrest put it, “evangelization is the only adequate and convincing proof of their Christ-like love for both God and neighbor. . . . How can I claim to have found the pearl of great price yet share it with no one?”⁴² Over the centuries, this love has motivated thousands of people to dedicate their lives, even to the ultimate sacrifice of martyrdom, in order to bring the faith *ad gentes*. And to these the whole Church holds, and will continue to hold, an enormous debt of gratitude.

Nonetheless, I believe that the new evangelization invites us to a fundamental shift in how we draw the connection between love and evangelization: to explore not just the fact of sharing the gift of faith, but to delve deeply into *how* the gift is shared. This is, I believe, the masterpiece of the “missionary spirituality” as described in *Redemptoris missio*.

According to this framework, love is not only the initial motivation, but as John Paul explained, it is also “the sole criterion for judging what is to be done or not done, changed or not changed. It is the principle which must direct every action, and the end to which that action must be directed.”⁴³

The missionary spirituality is intensely Christocentric. John Paul explains: “An essential characteristic of missionary spirituality is intimate communion with Christ. We cannot understand or carry out the mission unless we refer it to Christ as the one who was sent to evangelize.”⁴⁴ He then describes a spirituality that “commits us to being molded from within by the Spirit, so that we may become ever more like Christ.”⁴⁵ What essential characteristics does he highlight? I will focus on four: Christ’s love is 1) self-emptying, 2) universal, 3) concrete, and finally, 4) it generates relationships of mutual love. I will also note how Benedict tracks several of the same themes in his 2006 encyclical *Deus caritas est* and other documents.

1. “He Emptied Himself”

To articulate the heart of the missionary spirituality John Paul quotes St. Paul’s description of what it means to have Christ’s own attitude: “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. (Phil 2:5-8).”⁴⁶

The Incarnation and the Pascal Mystery are at the heart of mission. John Paul explains: “The mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption is thus described as a total self-emptying which

⁴¹ Benedict XVI, *Charity, Soul of the Mission* (Message for the 80th World Mission Sunday, June 2, 2006) http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/messages/missions/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20060429_world-mission-day-2006_en.html at 1 (“Unless mission is animated by charity, that is, unless it flows from a profound act of divine love, it risks being reduced to a mere philanthropic and social action. The love which God has for each single person constitutes, in fact, the very core of living and preaching the Gospel, and all who hear it in turn, become witnesses.”).

⁴² Fr. Tom Forrest, C.Ss.R., *Why Should Catholics Evangelize*, 51, 55-56, in MARTIN, *supra* note 25.

⁴³ REDEMPTORIS, *supra* note 29 at 60.

⁴⁴ *Id.* at 88.

⁴⁵ *Id.* at 87.

⁴⁶ *Id.* at 88.

leads Christ to experience fully the human condition and to accept totally the Father's plan. This is an emptying of self which is permeated by love and expresses love. The mission follows this same path and leads to the foot of the cross."⁴⁷

What might this mean for anyone who hopes to live a missionary spirituality? According to John Paul, "The missionary is required to 'renounce himself and everything that up to this point he considered as his own, and to make himself everything to everyone.' This he does by a poverty which sets him free for the Gospel, overcoming attachment to the people and things about him, so that he may become a brother to those to whom he is sent and thus bring them Christ the Savior."⁴⁸ The "goal" of missionary spirituality is best captured in the words of St. Paul: "To the weak I became weak . . . I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the Gospel . . . (1 Cor 9:22-23)."⁴⁹ The starting point, the method, and even the goal of a missionary spirituality is conformity to Christ precisely in Christ's capacity to empty himself out of love, and as an expression of love.

Benedict's description of love as "ecstasy" in *Deus caritas* highlights similar elements. Love is "a journey, an ongoing exodus out of the closed inward-looking self towards its liberation through self-giving, and thus towards authentic self-discovery and indeed the discovery of God."⁵⁰ He continues with a description of Jesus' life of self-giving: "Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it' . . . In these words, Jesus portrays his own path, which leads through the Cross to the Resurrection: the path of the grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies, and in this way bears much fruit. Starting from the depths of his own sacrifice and of the love that reaches fulfillment therein, he also portrays in these words the essence of love and indeed of human life itself."⁵¹

2. Love is Universal

Second, a missionary spirituality is universal in scope, it means loving everyone. As John Paul describes:

In order to proclaim to all his brothers and sisters that they are loved by God and are capable of loving, he must show love toward all, giving his life for his neighbor. The missionary is the "universal brother," bearing in himself the Church's spirit, her openness to and interest in all peoples and individuals, especially the least and poorest of his brethren. As such, he overcomes barriers and divisions of race, cast or ideology. He is a sign of God's love in the world—a love without exclusion or partiality.⁵²

⁴⁷ Id.

⁴⁸ Id. (citing Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, AD GENTES Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church, 24).

⁴⁹ Id.

⁵⁰ POPE BENEDICT XVI, *DEUS CARITAS EST* at 6 (2006). See also *NOVO MILLENNIO*, *supra* note 14 at 43 ("A spirituality of communion means . . . knowing how to 'make room' for our brothers and sisters, bearing 'each other's burdens.'") (quoting *Galatians* 6:2).

⁵¹ *DEUS CARITAS* *supra* note 50 at 6.

⁵² *REDEMPTORIS*, *supra* note 29 at 89. See also *NOVO MILLENNIO*, *supra* note 14 at 49 ("Beginning with intra-ecclesial communion, charity of its nature opens out into a service that is universal; it inspires in us *a commitment to practical and concrete love for every human being* . . . Certainly we need to remember that no one can be excluded

Similarly, Benedict summarized in *Deus caritas*, “In God and with God, I love even the person whom I do not like or even know.”⁵³ Here the point here is not to identify “targets” of evangelization, but to image the universality of God’s own love for humanity. This kind of love in and of itself communicates an important evangelical message.

3. Love is Concrete

Third, in the missionary spirituality loving as Jesus loved “takes the form of concern, tenderness, compassion, openness, availability and interest in people’s problems.”⁵⁴ As Benedict summarized in *Deus Caritas*, despite its extension to all of humanity, love “is not reduced to a generic, abstract, and undemanding expression . . . but calls for my own practical commitment here and now.”⁵⁵

Benedict’s 2006 World Mission Day message echoes similar themes: “To be missionaries is to bow, like the Good Samaritan, before the needs of everyone, especially the poorest and most needy, because the one who loves with the heart of Christ doesn’t seek his or her own interest, but only the glory of the Father and the good of one’s neighbor.”⁵⁶ And here too, this quality of love communicates a message. As Benedict put it: “God’s presence is felt at the very time when the only thing we do is to love.”⁵⁷

4. The Witness of Mutual Love

Finally, Jesus himself described the powerful witness not only of love of neighbor, but more specifically of mutual love, the love that Christians have for each other. “By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35). This is an idea which is not as discussed as one might imagine.

As John Paul explained in *Redemptoris missio*, “The kingdom aims at transforming human relationships; it grows gradually as people slowly learn to love, forgive and serve one another. Jesus sums up the whole Law, focusing it on the commandment of love.”⁵⁸ The very nature of the “kingdom” is that of “communion among all human beings.”⁵⁹ Thus, John Paul continues, “the ultimate purpose of mission is to enable people to share in the communion which exists between the Father and the Son. The disciples are to live in unity with one another, remaining in the Father and the Son, so that the world may know and believe (cf. Jn 17:21-23). This missionary text makes us understand that we are missionaries above all because of *what we are* as a Church whose innermost life is unity in love, even before we become missionaries *in word or deed*.”⁶⁰

from our love... there is a special presence of Christ in the poor, and this requires the Church to make a preferential option for them. This option is a testimony to the nature of God’s love.”).

⁵³ DEUS CARITAS *supra* note 50 at 15, 18

⁵⁴ REDEMPTORIS, *supra* note 29 at 89. *See also* Address at Torun, *supra* note 37 (one’s transformation into a “new man” in Christ expresses itself first of all in works of mercy, authentic solidarity with one’s neighbor, especially the most needy.”)

⁵⁵ DEUS CARITAS *supra* note 50 at 15.

⁵⁶ *Soul of the Mission*, *supra* note 41.

⁵⁷ DEUS CARITAS *supra* note 50 at 31c.

⁵⁸ REDEMPTORIS, *supra* note 29 at 15.

⁵⁹ *Id.* at 15.

⁶⁰ *Id.* at 23 (check, or 26?). *See also* NOVO MILLENNIO, *supra* note 14 at 42 (describing “the domain of communion (*koinonia*), which embodies and reveals the very essence of the mystery of the Church.”).

It is precisely in building this “communion of love,” John Paul explained, “that the Church appears as ‘sacrament’, as the ‘sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of the human race.’”⁶¹ The witness of mutual love, therefore, communicates an evangelical message about the life of God at the heart of the Trinity, and therefore about the Church in its deepest essence.

II. RECONCILING EVANGELIZATION AND DIALOGUE: EXAMPLES

One of the genuine novelties of the new evangelization is the emphasis on the extent to which evangelical love is a witness that in and of itself communicates a powerful message. Universal love is in and of itself “a sign of God’s love in the world—a love without exclusion or partiality.”⁶² Concrete love is in and of itself a witness: “God’s presence is felt at the very time when the only thing we do is to love.”⁶³ Mutual love and unity among Christians which generates a “communion of love,” in and of itself communicates an evangelical message, and witnesses to the reality of the Church as the “‘sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of the human race.’”⁶⁴

As Benedict put it in *Deus caritas*: “Those who practice charity in the Church’s name will never seek to impose the Church’s faith upon others. They realize that a pure and generous love is the best witness to the God in whom we believe and by whom we are driven to love. A Christian knows when it is time to speak of God and when it is better to say nothing and to let love alone speak.”⁶⁵ Love itself “speaks,” love, in and of itself, *is* witness.

What difference might this make in the effort to reconcile evangelization and dialogue? In the sections that follow I hope to draw out two intertwined ways in which the missionary spirituality might reconcile evangelization and dialogue. The first part discusses a way of being, in imitation of Christ who “emptied himself” out of love, as a fruitful ground for inter-religious dialogue. The second part provides examples of “proclamation” that are grounded in a personal experience of Christ’s own love, and how this approach helps to generate relationships in which the evangelical message is much more likely to be received as a gift rather than as an unwelcome threat to another’s identity.

A. *A Way of Being Which Communicates Christ’s Self-Emptying Love*

It is fascinating to note that when he was asked to articulate a spirituality not of mission, but of dialogue, John Paul placed at the core of his analysis the same description of Christ’s self-emptying love. In a 2001 address to the plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, he indicated that the life of communion at the heart of the Trinity as the “perfect and eminent model of dialogue among human beings.” “Consequently, in inter-religious dialogue we must take to heart the exhortation of Saint Paul: ‘In your minds you must be the same as Jesus Christ’ (*Phil 2:5*). The Apostle then goes on to underline the humility of Jesus, his *kenosis*. It is in the measure that, like Christ, we empty ourselves that we shall truly be able to open our hearts to others and walk with them as fellow pilgrims towards the destiny that God has prepared for us.”⁶⁶

⁶¹ NOVO MILLENNIO, *supra* note 14 at 42.

⁶² REDEMPTORIS, *supra* note 29 at 89.

⁶³ DEUS CARITAS *supra* note 50 at 31c.

⁶⁴ NOVO MILLENNIO, *supra* note 14 at 42.

⁶⁵ DEUS CARITAS *supra* note 50 at 31c.

⁶⁶ John Paul II, *The Spirituality of Interreligious Dialogue*, 31 ORIGINS 404 (November 22, 2001).

What might it mean to live this concretely in the course of everyday relationships and conversations with others? Here I will draw on the foundations for the Focolare's work in inter-religious dialogue. Focolare founder Chiara Lubich describes what she terms "making ourselves one," modeling ourselves on Jesus, particularly at the point in his passion when he lets go of everything, even to the point of crying out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt. 27:46, Mk, 15:34).

We cannot enter the heart of another person to comprehend them, to understand them, to share their suffering, if our spirit is rich with a worry, a judgment, a thought . . . with anything at all. "Making ourselves one" demands spirits that are poor . . . And who, then, do we look to in order to learn this great art of being poor in spirit, this art which, as the Gospel says, brings with it the Reign of God, the kingdom of love, love in the soul? We look to Jesus Forsaken. No one is poorer than he.⁶⁷

Does the "everything" to be put aside mean even God? Yes, in a sense.

[W]hen love for other people asks it . . . we must be ready even to leave God for God . . . for example, in prayer, to "make ourselves one" with someone in need; giving up God in that which seems to be our inspiration in order to be completely empty to receive into ourselves another's suffering.⁶⁸

But what happens as a result? Emptiness and renunciation are not the final word, because the experience is modeled on the Pascal mystery:

To those who "make themselves one" perfectly, Jesus gives to their speaking an extraordinary authenticity, a capacity to be essential, without anything superfluous or unnecessary. Their words enter into the heart of their neighbors like a sword that burns everything which must fall and leaves standing only the truth. In this way, that neighbor can grow in the truth, which is synonymous to growing in Jesus.⁶⁹

In the context of inter-religious dialogue Lubich frames the exchange like this: love leads to a complete emptying of oneself in order to "become one" with others, to deeply understand the meaning they give to their religious experience. "When we make ourselves one with the others, they can open up, reveal themselves to us, express and explain themselves, and share something of their being Jewish or Muslim or Buddhist or Christian. Some of their immense, even unexpected richness will shine in us too."⁷⁰

⁶⁷ CHIARA LUBICH, UNITY AND JESUS FORSAKEN 90 (1985).

⁶⁸ Id. at 91.

⁶⁹ MICHEL VANDELEENE, IO, IL FRATELLO, DIO NEL PENSIERO DI CHIARA LUBICH 195 (1999) (translation from Italian).

⁷⁰ Chiara Lubich, *Engaging in Fruitful Dialogue*, 35 LIVING CITY 10-11 (October 1996) (Living City is the monthly North American version of the Focolare Movement's magazine, www.livingcitymagazine.com). See generally Amelia J. Uelmen, *Chiara Lubich: A Life for Unity*, 8 LOGOS 52, 57-59 (2005) (outlining Lubich's approach to interreligious dialogue).

Dialogue in this spirit moves far beyond helping people to become kind, tolerant, and appreciative of religious difference. It results in a genuine reciprocal exchange and growth. At a November 2000 gathering of 5,000 Christians and mostly African-American Muslims in Washington D.C., as she highlighted the parallel teachings on love in the Qur'an and the Gospels, Lubich encouraged the participants, "we can already appreciate that what is taking place among us . . . is not a mere dialogue of words: what we are experiencing is communion in God."⁷¹

In an atmosphere of mutual trust, what John Paul termed a "respectful proclamation" of the truths of the Christian faith are welcomed as a gift.⁷² For example, at the Washington gathering, in order to respond to Lubich's address, Imam Warith Dean Mohammed, the leader of many of the Muslims present, reached for an image from the Gospel to express the depths of his own experience of the communion experienced: "I read in the Bible when Jesus Christ, peace be upon him, invited his followers to wash each other's feet, and I think that's just what we are doing. We are washing each other's feet."⁷³

How can I be sure that my conviction in the unicity and salvific universality of Jesus Christ and the Church does not become arrogance or devolve into disrespectful proselytism? The imitation of Christ who showed the depth of his love for each person by emptying himself leaves no room for arrogance or coercion. At the same time, the emptiness of love is not a relativistic void but rather a space for the Holy Spirit, the real protagonist of evangelization, to act and speak, suggesting in each circumstance what actions or words might help the person in front of me to grow in truth and love.

B. *A Way of Speaking Grounded in a Personal Experience of Christ's Own Love*

And when love suggests that it is the moment to speak a more explicitly about Christ? The new evangelization, John Paul urged, requires a "clear and emphatic proclamation of the gospel, which is directed to every person."⁷⁴ But what is the content of the proclamation? Lubich suggests that it suggests that we should begin "not so much with catechizing our neighbors, but with our own experience with Jesus."⁷⁵

Some of the most powerful examples of this kind of "proclamation" I know of are based on the experiences of elementary school children. For the Focolare children from four to eight years old, several of the elements of the spirituality of unity⁷⁶ have been distilled into six points

⁷¹ Chiara Lubich, *A Spirituality of Unity for the Harmonious Living of the Human Family*, http://www2.focolare.org/en/sif/2000/20001114e_c.html (last visited 16 October 2006). See also Chiara Lubich, *A Spirituality of Unity for the Harmonious Living of the Human Family*, 40 LIVING CITY 22-24 (January 2001).

⁷² NOVO MILLENNIO, *supra* note 14 at 56 (proclamation is "to be offered to all with the greatest respect for the freedom of each one: the gift of the revelation of the God who is Love.") See also Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Travelers, *Instruction 'Erga Migrantes Carita Christi' on the Pastoral Care of Migrants*, 31 ORIGINS PAGE (August 12, 2004) (discussing paths to "open a way towards sharing with people of different origins and cultures, also in view of a 'respectful proclamation' of their own faith.").

⁷³ Imam Mohammed, *Response to Lubich*, 40 LIVING CITY 24 (January 2001).

⁷⁴ Dulles, *supra* note 25 at 36 (quoting John Paul II, *Ad Limina visit of Bishops of Southern Germany* (December 4, 1992)).

⁷⁵ CHIARA LUBICH, IN UNITÀ VERSO IL PADRE 32 (2004) (entry for August 24, 2000). See also Dulles, *supra* note 25 at 36 (quoting John Paul II, "Only from a personal relationship with Jesus can an effective evangelization develop.")

⁷⁶ Many aspects of the Focolare spirituality of unity run parallel to John Paul's description of a missionary spirituality described above, as well as his outline of the spirituality of communion as set forth in NOVO MILLENNIO. See, e.g., John Paul II, *Address to a Group of Bishops, Friends of the Focolare Movement* at 2 (February 13, 2003) http://benedettoxvi.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2003/february/documents/hf_jp-

that cover the sides of a cube.⁷⁷ Each morning the children roll the cube, and then try to live according to what comes out on top, and then they share their “experiences” of living universal love (I love everyone; I love my enemy; I love Jesus in the other), concrete love (I’m the first to love; I share the other’s joy or hurt); and mutual love (“we love one another”).⁷⁸

If we could listen in on their meetings or the evening meal, we might hear something like this: “There’s a girl in my class that no one likes to play with, then I remembered when I rolled the cube it said to love Jesus in the other, so we spent recess together and had a great time.”⁷⁹ What is striking is how easily and naturally they move to a “proclamation” of the Gospel message, often to friends their same age. For example, two small children were walking by an African street vendor, and as they passed one said to him, “You are not supposed to be here because you are black and we are white.” As they continued walking, the other responded: “You can’t talk like that! Don’t you know that Jesus said we are all brothers and sisters?” His friend went back to apologize, and from that day on they always greeted each other on the street.⁸⁰ Another little girl was telling her grandmother that a boy at school had pushed her. “Did you push him back?” the grandmother inquired. “No grandma . . . I want to act like Jesus!”⁸¹

I realize that under some definitions this next example may technically fall into the category of the “old” evangelization, because it took place in Nagasaki, Japan at a school where the large majority of students were not Christian, and the teacher was of no particular religious tradition. But I think it also captures the essence of a way of speaking which is grounded in a personal experience of Christ’s own love.

Kanna just completed kindergarten. At the end of the year as the teacher was greeting each of the children, she said to Kanna: “Thank you for telling us about Jesus. When you talked about him we could feel that he was close to you. You taught us the prayers that you learned at home and they are beautiful. This morning I saw you give the prize you won to one of your classmates, and I was moved. I am about to get married, but first I want to get baptized and I am already preparing for it. I want to believe in Jesus the way you do.”⁸²

“Humanity today would rather hear witnesses than teachers,” noted Paul VI, “and if teachers are heard, it is because they themselves are the example of what they teach”⁸³ And this might be what Pope Benedict had in mind when expressed to the Focolare children his wish that they “grow in [their] friendship with Jesus so as to become joyful witnesses of the Gospel and bring to everyone the gift of real happiness.”⁸⁴

To paraphrase the Gospel of Matthew, unless we change and become like little children we may never understand how to *speak* about the Kingdom.⁸⁵

[ii_spe_20030213_bishops-focolari_en.html](#) (noting how the Focolare spirituality of unity has contributed to the Gospel-based spirituality of communion).

⁷⁷ See generally GERTA VANDERBROEK & MAURO CAMOZZI, EDs., *THE CUBE OF LOVE: DISCOVERING LIFE WITH GOD THROUGH CHILDREN* (2000), 6-7.

⁷⁸ *Id.* at 50.

⁷⁹ See *id.* at 8.

⁸⁰ *Id.* at 29.

⁸¹ *Id.* at 35.

⁸² *Id.* at 33.

⁸³ Paul VI, General Audience, October 2, 1974.

⁸⁴ *Messaggio del Papa alle gen 4*, 50 CITTÀ NUOVA 47 (July 25, 2006) (Città Nuova is the bi-weekly Italian version of the Focolare magazine).

⁸⁵ Cf. MATTHEW 18:3.

III. POLITICS: THE WITNESS OF EVANGELICAL LOVE THROUGH DIALOGUE

Can the elements of a missionary spirituality described above permeate and transform politics and political life? In 1946, a member of the Italian parliament Iginò Giordano made this notation in his diary: “Can a politician be a saint? Can a saint be a politician? Test the answer to this question on yourself, now that you are becoming a politician.”⁸⁶ On June 6, 2004 the Diocese of Frascati, Italy opened the process of beatification for this writer, journalist, politician, ecumenist, patrologist, married man, and as *Fides* described, “one of the most representative figures of the twentieth century who left a deep mark and opened prophetic perspective at the cultural, political, ecclesial and social level.”⁸⁷ Giordani’s figure is far too rich and too complex to do even minimal justice in a few paragraphs. Here I will limit the discussion to how he lived the universality of evangelical love.

Giordani entered politics in the 1920s, as head of the press office of the newly created Popular Party. During the tumultuous period of Fascism, he remained ensconced in the Vatican Library, and pursued an illustrious writing career. Through the 1930s he served as the director of *Fides*, the magazine of the pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith, and other important journals, and became known for his decisive and polemical style. Following the war, on June 2, 1946, he was elected to the parliament and became one of the “Constitutional Fathers” who laid the foundations of the Italian republic.

When he was already well known as a journalist, author, and political player in the reconstruction of Italy, 1948 marked an important turning point for Giordani. He described his encounter with the then twenty-eight year old founder of the Focolare Movement, Chiara Lubich and the spirituality of unity as “the voice that, without realizing it, I had been waiting for.”⁸⁸

I think it would be fair to say, to paraphrase Cardinal Dulles, that for Giordani this moment marked a strong encounter with the Person of Jesus as “a living, energetic reality” that took over the direction of his life.⁸⁹ He paints a powerful image of this moment:

Something happened to me. Those pieces of culture which had been lined up, began to move and animate themselves, coming together to form a living body through which ran a generous blood: the blood for which Saint Catherine was so ardent? Love had penetrated and entered into all of the ideas, bringing them into an orbit of joy. What happened was that the idea of God ceded its place to the love of God, the ideal image to the living God . . . Having found Love, I found myself all of a sudden in the circuit of the Trinity. All of the dogmas and ideas emerged from the shelves of my memory to become living material, blood of my blood. I was moving from a library filled with books toward the Church, inhabited by Christians.⁹⁰

What happened with this “move” from the library to the Church? Many were struck by the transformation in Giordani’s writing style: once nicknamed the *martello* (hammer) of the

⁸⁶ IGINO GIORDANI, DIARY OF FIRE 25 (1981) (entry for April 5, 1946).

⁸⁷ *Holiness Should Not Be the Privilege of a Few but Rather a Mass Phenomenon Involving All Christians*, AGENZIA FIDES, at www.fides.org/eng/news/2004/0406/04_2534.html (Apr. 6, 2004).

⁸⁸ IGINO GIORDANI, MEMORIE DI UN CRISTIANO INGENUO 149 (1994).

⁸⁹ See Dulles, *supra* note 25 at 37.

⁹⁰ MEMORIE, *supra* note 88, 150-151.

heretics, he had become their *mantello* (mantle); the polemical defender of the faith had become a meek prophet of love.⁹¹ The pages of the newspaper, *La Via*, which Giordani edited during his time his Parliament, are filled with his reflections following this experience.⁹² Here I will note just one example. On July 1, 1949 the Holy Office issued a decree declaring the excommunication of Marxists. In an article dated June 30, 1949, in an article entitled *Communists and Catholics*, Giordani advocated that the solution was not “slam[] the door in the face of our brothers because they are communists,” but rather a commitment on the part of the Christian Democrats to build a more equal society, so that the communists might see how “true justice is fulfilled through the eternal revolution of the Gospel.”⁹³ “Communion will resolve communism,” he concluded, “and will bring back the communists.”⁹⁴

Needless to say, his position was not acclaimed amidst growing cold-war tensions. These arguments, together with his proposals of pacifism, earned him descriptions as ingenuous, ambiguous and anachronistic.⁹⁵ And he stuck to this position despite the political consequences. In a 1951 he wrote a powerful response to those who attacked his position.

The Bolsheviks should be seen, no less than pagans and publicans, as vile people who are unworthy of our treatment: they are the persecutors of the Church. Their system includes concentration camps and secret police. Very well: but it's exactly because they are so fallen that we should see how they need to be redeemed: and they will be redeemed first of all with charity. This is the reason to offer a common meeting ground on which we can work together: conservatives and democrats, communists and anti-communists ... and this is the Christian democracy that works peace. It is clear: we will be a springtime of Christianity when many Pharisees tear garments because Christians refuse to hate publicans and pagans!⁹⁶

I realize that this example is not unproblematic. For starters, it was not a recipe for longevity as an elected official. Giordani was voted out of office by 1953.⁹⁷ On the finer points, the last few decades of Biblical scholarship and Jewish-Christian dialogue have fostered a deeper understanding of the Pharisees as reformers with whom Jesus must have had deep intellectual sympathy.⁹⁸ If Giordani had benefited from this research I would venture to guess that he might

⁹¹ Adriana Maria Avellaneda Torres, *Il giornalismo di Iginio Giordani* 112 (2000) (unpublished thesis available online at http://www.flars.net/iginogiordani/tesi_di_laurea/tesiAdriana.rtf).

⁹² See generally IGINO GIORDANI, *DARE UN'ANIMA ALLA DEMOCRAZIA* (2003) (selection of articles *La Via* 1949-1943, edited by Francesco D'Alessandro).

⁹³ Id. at 156-157.

⁹⁴ Id. at 157.

⁹⁵ Torres, *supra* note 91 at 100. The Church at the time was also deeply skeptical and concerned about Giordani's position. His approach was ultimately vindicated in the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. See GAUDIUM ET SPES 21 (1965) (“While rejecting atheism, root and branch, the Church sincerely professes that all men, believers and unbelievers alike, ought to work for the rightful betterment of this world in which all alike live; such an ideal cannot be realized, however, apart from sincere and prudent dialogue.”).

⁹⁶ Iginio Giordani, *Riarmo o reazione*, LA VIA (February 10, 1951), quoted in Torres, *supra* note 91 (LOOKING FOR ORIGINAL).

⁹⁷ TOMMASO SORGI, UN'ANIMA DI FUOCO: PROFILO DI IGINO GIORDANI 92 (2003).

⁹⁸ See e.g., Robert A. Wild, S.J., *The Encounter Between Pharisaic and Christian Judaism: Some Early Gospel Evidence*, 27 NOVUM TESTAMENTUM 105, 124 (1985) (“we cannot dismiss the possibility that Jesus himself was

have tweaked the concluding image. But most to the point, in light of our current global crises, Giordani's positions does not address our toughest questions: what exactly does it mean to love a terrorist, and how would evangelical love respond to terrorist threats?

That said, I do believe that Giordani's example is a rich mine of material for reflection on the new evangelization of politics. What would it mean for politics if we were to take seriously the evangelical message that God's love embraces every single person on the planet, and every single person in political life, including adversaries—to quote Benedict, “even the person whom I do not like or even know”?⁹⁹ What would it mean to place at the foundation of all relationships in politics Giordani's conviction that those who fall short—even very short—of Gospel values will be “redeemed first of all with charity”? Benedict's reflections in *Deus Caritas* seem to suggest a similar radicality in the measure of love: “The one who serves does not consider himself superior to the one served, however miserable his situation at the moment may be. Christ took the lowest place in the world—the Cross—and by this radical humility he redeemed us and constantly comes to our aid.”¹⁰⁰

In light of Giordani's challenge to the Christian Democrats to build a more equal society, so that the communists might see how “true justice is fulfilled through the eternal revolution of the Gospel,” might the heart of the “witness” of evangelical love in politics be Christian commitments to work *together* to build and sustain more just social structures?¹⁰¹

There would be much, much more to say about Giordani's life and his prophetic message for our own times and our own political culture. But Giordani is not the only politician who has found in the Focolare's spirituality of unity a vision for living evangelical love in political life.

Closer to our own times, Josef Lux, like Giordani, stepped up to the plate during a tumultuous time for his country, serving as the vice-prime minister of the Czech Republic from 1992-1998. Concrete love and service were running themes of his political career. He wrote: “For a Christian one cannot serve God without serving man, and service to man is at the same time service to God.”¹⁰² For Lux the effort to love concretely meant stopping often on the street to help someone in need, even in the midst of a busy schedule. It meant being attentive enough to see when a sleepy colleague needed a cup of coffee. Even journalists were touched by his capacity to bring people together: “He tried to make relationships more humane, even amidst ideological controversy . . . He worked so that they could understand each other, and even love each other.”¹⁰³

In 1998 resigned from his post due to his battle with leukemia. The illness itself was a possibility for “proclamation,” to share with a broad public the gift of faith. In a public interview he confided: “I am convinced that God is a Father, and this conversation with him makes me

raised in the Pharisaic tradition and so was a natural object of concern for his fellow sectarians.”); id. at 113 (“why would Christians worry over legal niceties observed by a particular Jewish sect unless there was some common cause between the two groups.”)

⁹⁹ *DEUS CARITAS supra* note 50 at 15, 18

¹⁰⁰ Id. 35.

¹⁰¹ On this point the Second Vatican Council's reflection on the “remedy” for atheism is especially instructive. See *GAUDIUM supra* note 95 at 21 (“faith needs to prove its fruitfulness by penetrating the believer's entire life, including its worldly dimensions, and by activating him toward justice and love, especially regarding the needy. What does the most reveal God's presence, however, is the brotherly charity of the faithful who are united in spirit as they work together for the faith of the Gospel and who prove themselves a sign of unity.”)

¹⁰² Movement for Unity in Politics (MPPU) Newsletter n.2 at 7 (April 2006)

http://www.mppu.org/uploads/Newsletter/newsletter_02.06.pdf

¹⁰³ MPPU Webpage, Students' E-mail news from the Czech Republic, Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Social Sciences, Carolina n. 353, November 26, 1999 <http://carolina.cuni.cz/archive-en/Carolina-E-No-353.txt>

free, because I can share with him my concerns and be sure that he will give me the necessary strength.”¹⁰⁴ After Lux’s death in 1999, then-President of the Czech Republic Vaclav Havel reflected: “Josef Lux held within himself something transcendent... He was able to rise above partisan interests in order to put them in harmony with those of everyone. We will try to accept his death as a challenge in order to foster the most beautiful values that he embodied.”¹⁰⁵ The head of the opposition, then-prime minister Milos Zeman confirmed: “It is said in politics that one does not have friends, especially among one’s political adversaries. I would like to express my great esteem for Josef Lux, even though he was the president of another party, my adversary, whom I considered a friend.”¹⁰⁶

Might these examples be limited to a few rare personalities, extraordinary leaders who grace a country’s political scene every few decades? Might we dare to imagine how the witness of mutual love might penetrate even the political realm? Since 1996, the Focolare’s Movement for Unity in Politics has been working to distill the principles of evangelical love into a digestible and practical formula to be lived in the everyday trenches of ordinary political life.¹⁰⁷ In several countries, politicians and public officials often from different and even opposing parties gather to encourage one another in their journey along this path. A description from Brazil is indicative:

Since the founding of the Movement for Unity in Brazil in 2001, we have held in the federal parliament periodic meetings among politicians from different parties and of different religions and convictions. Our objective has been to contribute to building peace within national politics, and fostering dialogue through the exchange of experiences of living in our daily lives brotherhood among other representatives. We try to highlight the value of other’s ideas, to love both friends from our own party as well as adversaries. We work to take seriously the suggestions of others, and even when we may disagree with the opinions expressed, we try to understand how everyone has an important contribution to give in the search for the common good.¹⁰⁸

At the Parliament in Seoul, Korea, eight representatives meet regularly to pursue similar goals. Representative Kim Nak-Sung reports that he keeps next to his telephone a series of the points of “the art of loving in politics” which the Movement for Unity encourages politicians to live.¹⁰⁹ “This way I remember to put them into practice in the course of my day-to-day work.”¹¹⁰ A Buddhist representative, Kim Sung-Gon, had intended to drop into the meeting for brief time due to campaign commitments, but he ended up staying the whole time. “What stayed with me is the idea of seeing Jesus in my brothers.” Translating the principle into his understanding, “I would say to see Buddha in my brothers,” he later reports success in going

¹⁰⁴ MPPU Webpage at 6 <http://www.mppu.org/uploads/Documenti/Domenico,%20Josef%20e%20Memmo.pdf>

¹⁰⁵ Id.

¹⁰⁶ See *supra* note 103.

¹⁰⁷ See generally ANTONIO MARIA BAGGIO, ED., *MEDIATAZIONI PER LA VITA PUBBLICA: IL CARISMA DELL’UNITÀ E LA POLITICA* (2005) (collecting reflections offered by the Movement for Unity in Politics during a series of gatherings at the Italian Parliament from 2001-2003).

¹⁰⁸ MPPU Newsletter *supra* note 102 at 11.

¹⁰⁹ See MPPU Webpage, *Un’amore politico*, <http://www.mppu.org/uploads/Documenti/arte%20di%20amare.pdf>

¹¹⁰ MPPU Newsletter 8 (Nov. 2005). http://www.mppu.org/uploads/Newsletter/newsletter_01.06.pdf

beyond what had previously divided him from certain colleagues in the past. He played a key role in preparing the next meeting together with Won Hee-Ryong, a member of an adverse party.¹¹¹

Participants in the Movement for Unity in Politics meet in eighteen different places—in Rome and in five other European countries, in the Argentinean parliament, in Brasilia and in Montevideo in Uruguay, involving in total about three thousand, among which about 200 elected officials, and others who work in various government capacities. It is still a small seed, but this approach may be a helpful model for the task that Benedict described in *Deus Caritas*:

[I]t is not the Church's responsibility to make [its social] teaching prevail in political life. Rather, the Church wishes to help form consciences in political life and to stimulate greater insight into the authentic requirements of justice as well as greater readiness to act accordingly, even when this might involve conflict with situations of personal interest.¹¹²

IV. EVANGELICAL LOVE IN LAW PRACTICE: BEYOND “ROLE MORALITY”

Projects similar to the Movement for Unity in Politics are also afoot for lawyers, judges, and those working various legal systems around the globe.¹¹³ But to describe how lawyers might live evangelical love I would like to focus on the nitty-gritty of everyday life in law practice. I will give a few examples from my time as an associate in the litigation department of a large law firm—not because these stories are extraordinary, but precisely because they are so mundane, taking place for the most part in the course of run-of-the-mill legal work.

Any kind of transformation in law practice faces several hurdles. As legal ethics scholar Deborah Rhode described, many lawyers believe that “the most effective way to discover the truth and to preserve rights is through an adversarial process in which lawyers have ‘undivided fidelity to each client’s interests as the client perceives them.’”¹¹⁴ Working within this paradigm, Rhode warns, “lawyers’ sensitivity can atrophy or narrow to fit the constructed universe dictated by role. The agnosticism that advocacy purportedly entails can readily become a defining feature of one’s total personality.”¹¹⁵ Especially for younger lawyers working in large organizations, the problem is further compounded by their sense that rigid hierarchies allow little room for their own moral voice or judgment.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Id.

¹¹² DEUS CARITAS *supra* note 50 at 28b

¹¹³ See Russell Pearce & Amelia J. Uelmen, *Religious Lawyering’s Second Wave* 22 J. L. & Religion __ (2006); Amy Uelmen, *Relationships in Law*, Living City 14-17 (March 2006) (describing the first international “Communion and Law” conference which gathered 700 lawyers and judges from 35 countries).

¹¹⁴ Deborah L. Rhode, *The Professionalism Problem*, 39 WM. & MARY L. REV. 283, 312 (1998) (quoting American Lawyer’s Code of Conduct).

¹¹⁵ Deborah L. Rhode, *Ethical Perspectives on Legal Practice* (Symposium of the Corporate Law Firm), 37 STAN. L. REV. 589, 626 (1985).

¹¹⁶ I have been chipping away at this particular problem in a series of essays. See, e.g., Amelia J. Uelmen, *The Evils of ‘Elasticity’: Reflections on the Rhetoric of Professionalism and the Part-Time Paradox in Large Firm Practice*, 33 FORDHAM URB. L.J. 81 (2005); Amelia J. Uelmen, *An Explicit Connection Between Faith and Justice in Catholic Legal Education: Why Rock the Boat?*, 81 UNIV. DETROIT-MARCY L. REV. 921 (2004); Amy Uelmen, *Me, My Career and the Future of Our World*, 45 LIVING CITY 14-15 (October 2006).

Where to start? A good place to begin might be in an effort to let the words of scripture permeate an approach to our ordinary work.¹¹⁷ I will never forget the day during my first year as an associate when I realized how living the phrase “Perfect love casts out fear” (1 Jn. 4:18) transformed the relationship with the partner supervising my work. Especially in the context of research for appellate briefs, I saw that “perfect love” meant not only thoroughness and creativity, but also being straightforward in presenting the results of my analysis, even if it contradicted the answer a supervisor was hoping for. For me this phrase of the Gospel opened the door to learning how to be a fully responsible attorney.

As I made the effort to put the words of scripture into practice on a daily basis, one effect was that it helped me to maintain a solid anchor to a values system which challenged aspects of the firm culture. In a competitive environment, temptations to climb the ladder at the expense of others ceded to “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Lev. 19:18, Mt. 22:39). “Blessed are the merciful, for mercy shall be theirs” (Mt. 5:7) became a lens through which to navigate office politics and tensions. When irritability or stress—my own or others’—strained working relationships, “Leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother” (Mt. 5:24) was the push to apologize before the day’s end and work toward healing.¹¹⁸

This alternative anchor also helped me to maintain a clearer vision of the broader social context of my work as a lawyer. “Whatever you do to the least, you do it to me” (Mt. 25:40) was a constant and powerful reminder of the presence of Christ in each person—including each person affected by how large corporations do business. With respect for the presence of Christ in each person as my principal compass, how could I not move beyond the “role morality” of unquestioning fidelity to “the client’s interests as the client perceives them”?¹¹⁹

The issues are obviously complex. Respect for the presence of Christ in clients also includes respect for their autonomy; respect for the presence of Christ in the community also includes the dimension of the structures of the rule of law.¹²⁰ But these principals are not the only considerations. Breaking beyond the rigid bounds of “role morality” opens the door to taking moral responsibility for our work,¹²¹ to exploring an approach to legal practice which leaves much room for a series of probing questions about the extent to which our legal system fosters structures of social injustice, and the possibilities for constructive change. Evangelical love itself may be a helpful guide for how to navigate the tensions. As Benedict put it in *Deus caritas*, “Love is the light . . . that can always illuminate a world grown dim and give us the courage needed to keep living and working.”¹²²

How much room is there for “proclamation” of Gospel values in a large law firm? At the firm where I worked, one of the clients was an abortion rights activist group, and at a certain point, there was some work on the Stenberg “partial birth abortion” case. I remember when the case came down from the United States Supreme Court an email was sent to “all attorneys”

¹¹⁷ The Focolare publishes the “Word of Life,” a phrase of scripture chosen monthly from one of the liturgical readings with a commentary with practical suggestions for living evangelical love in the ordinary encounters of daily life. See, e.g., *Word of Life*, <http://www.focolare.org/articolopdv.php?codart=3955&pdv=2>

¹¹⁸ See generally Amelia J. Uelmen, *One Case at a Time: On Being a Catholic Lawyer*, 55 in JAMES MARTIN, S.J. & JEREMY LANGFORD (EDS.), *PROFESSIONS OF FAITH: LIVING AND WORKING AS A CATHOLIC* (2002).

¹¹⁹ See generally Amelia J. Uelmen, *Can a Religious Person Be a Big Firm Litigator*, 26 FORDHAM URB. L.J. 1069, 1199-1102 (1999).

¹²⁰ See Russell G. Pearce & Amelia J. Uelmen, *Religious Lawyering in a Liberal Democracy: A Challenge and an Invitation*, 55 CASE WESTERN RESERVE L. REV. 127, 153-159 (2004).

¹²¹ See Russell G. Pearce, *Model Rule 1.0: Lawyers are Morally Accountable*, 70 FORDHAM L. REV. 1805 (2002).

¹²² DEUS CARITAS *supra* note 50 at 39.

announcing that some aspects of the outcome could be considered a “victory” for the firm, and it attached an analysis that derided the aspects of the opinions that could be considered pro-life. The tone of the email, like the tone of some of the conversations in the firm, was, “if you work for this firm then you must be on the only ‘rational’ side of the abortion issue.”

After talking with my friends and sleeping on it, the next day I responded with a one line reply to “all attorneys.” It said: “On such a sensitive topic, I think it might be important to acknowledge that some of us at this firm read this not with a sense of ‘victory,’ but of profound and terrible sadness.”¹²³ Send.

This provoked a three-inch stack of firm-wide email exchange, an apology from the partner who initially sent the email, a policy committee resolution for how to handle these issues with awareness of diverse opinions in the firm, and a long discussion about what kinds of work on the “pro-life” side of the issue would not constitute a direct conflict for the firm. One by one, about twenty attorneys—partners and associates, many but not all Catholic, many but not all “pro-life”—called or emailed to discuss how we could help the firm begin to open up to different perspectives on this issue.¹²⁴

For me this marked a moment when I realized just how much room there is—even in large firm practice—for “proclamation” of a perspective based on Gospel values, and that it might even be received not as an obstacle, but as a service to the larger conversation within the firm.

CONCLUSION

In *Deus caritas*, Benedict states with confidence: “Love is possible, and we are able to practice it because we are created in the image of God.”¹²⁵ His concluding invitation is an excellent one-line description of a new evangelization which may be fully reconciled with respectful, sincere and open interreligious dialogue: “To experience love and in this way to cause the light of God to enter into the world—this is the invitation I would like to extend.”¹²⁶ This approach is, I believe, our best and deepest for continuing the new evangelization of law, politics and culture in the years to come.

¹²³ Email from Amelia Uelmen dated June 29, 2000 (on file with the author).

¹²⁴ This story is also recounted in an article featuring the “religious lawyering” work at Fordham Law School’s Institute on Religion, Law & Lawyer’s Work. See Patricia Lefevre, *Lawyers Find Spirituality for the Long Haul*, NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER 4a (Colleges & Universities Special Section, October 28, 2005).

¹²⁵ DEUS CARITAS *supra* note 50 at 39.

¹²⁶ *Id.*