

OVER, UNDER, AROUND, AND THROUGH: ETHICS, SOLIDARITY, AND THE SAINTS

INTRODUCTION

In a classic 1971 Sesame Street sketch, Grover, the good-natured blue monster, sings a song intended to teach and illustrate some basic terms of relationship: over, under, around, and through, near and far. To get across the meaning of these ubiquitous relationships of everyday life, Grover energetically sings and acts out each term. Faced with his audience's puzzlement, he ends up repeating his song and actions to the point of exhaustion, giving his all to help his young pupils understand.¹

In 2011, the CTSA gathered in California, a state replete with reminders of the saints, to consider ethics in light of its convention theme, "All the Saints." Like Grover, the Christian tradition of the *communio sanctorum* has sought to teach and to embody a set of ubiquitous, but not always visible, relationships, relationships whose reality the Christian community over the ages has consistently affirmed. However, a bit like Grover's young audience, if contemporary Christians are to awaken to these relationships, we need to be taught about them. If we are to understand their terms, potentials, and corresponding responsibilities, we need to see them enacted—repeatedly—in contexts and in ways that our twenty first-century minds, hearts, and imaginations can grasp.

Immersed as we are in what Charles Taylor calls the social imaginary of late western modernity, relationships within the communion of saints, even for believers, often go unrecognized.² Meanwhile, modern/postmodern Catholics struggle to listen and respond to the "joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties" of a world

¹See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XXKu3NE7Omkw>. All websites referred to in this essay were accessed June 25, 2011.

²One key reason for this lack of recognition, Taylor contends, is moderns' experience as "buffered" rather than "porous" selves. (See note 17, below.) Taylor refers to the modern "social imaginary" rather than social theory, because: "[1] I'm talking about the way ordinary people imagine their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms, it is carried in images, stories, legends, etc. . . . ; [2] theory is often the possession of a small minority, whereas . . . the social imaginary is shared by large groups of people, if not the whole society. . . . , [and, 3] the social imaginary is that common understanding which makes possible common practices, and a widely shared sense of legitimacy." Taylor, "Modern Social Imaginaries," *Public Culture* 14 no. 1 (2002): 91-124, at 106.

marked by the explosion of economic and related interdependencies we now call globalization. Here too we encounter a vast network of relationships—multivalent, thick, dynamic, consequential, and extremely difficult to describe and analyze, much less to shape or guide. Leaving virtually no community untouched, globalization's multiplying effects raise serious questions about justice, especially for less-advantaged persons and groups.

Like Grover's song, the tradition of the *communio sanctorum* invites those with "eyes to see" into a set of relationships that suffuse and connect us. These mysterious bonds are part of a rich and varied history of practice and interpretation, spanning diverse cultures, times, and places. And, as California's sainted city names bear witness, they are bonds laden with all the density, intensity, and ambiguity of humanity's broken and graced history.³ Critically engaging this holy communion, I propose, can strengthen Catholic ethical understandings of solidarity, and help orient, energize, and purify its practice in a world that connects us as never before, yet defines power and success in terms of the ability to control, ignore, deny, or rise above those connections.

Reflecting on solidarity and the saints can also help social ethics incorporate the persistent call in post-Vatican II Catholic teaching, sounded by Pope John XXIII prior to the Council's opening, for the Church of Christ to be the "church of the poor."⁴ For actualizing this indicative-imperative dimension of the church's

³M. Shawn Copeland, alluding to Gustavo Gutierrez, in "An Interview with M. Shawn Copeland" *Fortress Forum* (Nov. 8, 2009), available at <http://www.fortressforum.com/profiles/blogs/an-interview-with-m-shawn>

⁴In a radio address delivered one month prior to the opening of the Council, Pope John XXIII said, "Confronted with the underdeveloped countries, the Church presents itself as it is and wishes to be as the Church of all, and particularly as the Church of the poor." Cited in *History of Vatican II*, Vol. II, eds. Giuseppe Alberigo and Joseph Komonchak (Maryknoll NY: Orbis, 1997), 200. On "the church of the poor" from Vatican II forward: Ibid, 200-203; Bernhard Bleyer, "Die Armen als Sakrament Christi: Die Predigt Pauls VI. in San José de Mosquera (1968) *Stimmen der Zeit*, 11/2008: 734-746. (English version at: <http://www.conspiration.de/texte/2008/bleyer2.html>). Pope Paul VI told Colombian campesinos and day laborers Aug 23, 1968: "You are a sign, a likeness, a mystery of Christ's presence. . . . The whole tradition of the Church recognizes in the poor the sacrament of Christ. . . . Beloved sons, you are Christ for us. We . . . want to discover the risen and suffering Christ in you. We have not come to get your devoted applause . . . but to honor the Lord in your persons, in order to bow accordingly before them and to . . . show that love . . . to Him in you, in you yourselves." Paul VI, *Ad quamplurimos Columbianos agri cultores v. D. "campesinos", undique in Campo v. "S. José de Mosquera" coadunatos*, AAS 60 (1968) 619-623, at 619, quoted in Bleyer, "Die Armen," 740-41. See also, John Paul II: "Love for others, and in the first place love for the poor, in whom the Church sees Christ himself, is made concrete in the promotion of justice." Christians today must "become a church of and for the poor . . . while keeping in mind the common good." *Centesimus Annus* (1991) #58. Cf. Robert Hurteau, "What is the church of the poor? A missionary reshapes his theology." *Commonweal* March 26, 1993 (http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m1252/is_n6_v120/ai_13607584/?tag=content;col11);

identity,⁵ solidarity, oriented by a preferential option and love for poor and oppressed persons, is a linchpin virtue. But to enact this virtue amid today's complex realities, we need an accurate understanding of what solidarity is and requires, plus social imaginaries and spiritualities capable of supporting it.⁶ A critical and liberative theology of the communion of saints can help fund this social-spiritual imaginary, and the beatitudinal dispositions and practices that solidarity in a church of the poor demands.

One thing has become clear to me in doing this research: seen from the vantage point of the *communio sanctorum*, solidarity and the option for the poor are not simply invitations, or even demands, that we who are rich help the poor. Rather, solidarity and the option for the poor disclose the very identity of the church. The universal church subsists in the communion of saints *as* the church of the poor. Absent solidarity among, with, and for the poor, therefore, there is neither ecclesial being nor belonging.⁷

This has implications for Christians and Catholic theologians. If the communion of saints, Christ's body that is the church universal, *is* the solitary *ekklesia* of the blessed poor, living and dead, then we who are rich, and who "want to be in that number" must find our places among and within this mystical body.⁸

and most recently, Jon Sobrino, "The Urgent Need To Return To Being The Church of the Poor," English version, *National Catholic Reporter Online* March 24, 2010 (<http://ncronline.org/print/17561>).

⁵I have in mind the indicative-imperative (You are x; So be x!) way of speaking often noted in the letters of St. Paul. See e.g., David G. Horrell, *Solidarity and Difference: A Contemporary Reading of the Ethics of Paul* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2005) 93-94. This indicative-imperative formulation also appears in recent Catholic moral teaching, as in Pope John Paul II's exhortation in *Familiaris consortio* (1981) #17, "Family, become what you are!"

⁶Spirituality denotes "the ways in which people, beyond the ordinary practices of the faith, have sought to live their Christian lives more intensely." In the face of diverse contemporary experiments in Catholic spirituality, "we do well to pay heed to Paul's advice to the church of Thessalonica: 'Do not quench the spirit. Do not despise prophetic utterances. Test everything; retain what is good. Refrain from every kind of evil' (1 Thess. 5:19-22)." Lawrence Cunningham, "Catholic Spirituality: What Does It Mean Today?" *Commonweal*, Feb 21, 2006.

⁷Dorothy Day was keenly sensitive to the centrality of the poor to the church's mission. "When I see the church taking the side of the powerful and forgetting the weak, and when I see bishops living in luxury and the poor being ignored or thrown crumbs, I know that Jesus is being insulted, as He once was, and sent to his death, as He once was. The church doesn't only belong to officials and bureaucrats; it belongs to all its people, and especially its most humble men and women and children, the ones He would have wanted to go see and help, Jesus Christ." Robert Coles, *Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion* (New York: De Capo Press, 1987) 58-59.

⁸My argument here has affinities with Michael Iafate's rethinking of the *totus Christus* image using theologies "from below." See Michael J. Iafate, "The *Totus Christus* and the

Moreover, taking one's spiritual and moral bearings from this great, gathered communion helps locate the church's necessary institutional parts within the catholic whole they serve. And theological reflection practiced in and for the *communio sanctorum* as the universal church of the poor is more able to accurately assess and faithfully critique the current state of our scholarship, our church, and our society.

This essay makes only an initial foray into the large and fertile territory staked out by these claims. Because it is so important to resist abstraction in addressing our subject, I begin by introducing two Central American mothers, Rufina Amaya and Gabriela Saavedra. As we proceed, let us allow the stories of these two women and the concrete particularities of their situations to remind us of what really counts in any investigation of solidarity and the saints: the actual members of the church of the poor, the precious lives behind our words.

Rufina Amaya of El Salvador is one of the sole survivors of the El Mozote massacre. On December 11, 1981, over 700 villagers (including hundreds of children) were executed by the Salvadoran army. "They left nothing." "First they killed the men, then they raped and killed the women, finally they killed the children," 38-year-old Rufina, who had escaped and hid behind some trees, told a reporter. Somewhere amid the carnage were Mrs. Amaya's husband, who was blind; her 9-year-old son; and three daughters, aged five years, three years and eight months. Mrs. Amaya heard her son scream: "Mama, they're killing me. They've killed my sister. They're going to kill me." For years few believed her story; the governments of El Salvador and the United States denied that any massacre had occurred. Finally, in the 1990s, forensics teams confirmed Rufina's testimony.⁹

Gabiela Saavedra enters her crudely-built shack in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, by climbing an outside, 12-foot wooden ladder, whose top two rungs are broken—carrying her 19-month-old toddler, Ana Daniel. A year ago, Gabriela's husband Daniel was mugged and murdered on his way home from work. Gabriela, 19, works at a sweatshop making clothes for export, seven days a week, from 11 to 22 hours a day, earning 400 lempiras, or US \$26 a week. Gabriela cannot afford to lose any of the wages she earns, so she works when she is sick. She also works when Ana Daniel is sick. But Gabriela's pay is too low to enable her and Ana to eat adequately or drink clean water, much less repair their shack. And Gabriela's punishing work schedule leaves her too little time to be a

Crucified People: Re-Reading Augustine's Christology from Below with the Salvadoran Jesuits," *Journal of Postcolonial Theory and Theology* 2 no. 4 (May 2011): 1-49.

⁹Rufina Amaya information taken from National Public Radio transcript March 17, 2007, at <http://www.wbur.org/npr/8972597/rufina-amaya-survivor-of-the-el-mozote-massacre>

parent, and Ana Daniel at risk of being locked alone at home, with no one to care for her.¹⁰

For Rufina, for Gabriela, and for their privileged North American neighbors, what on earth does (or can, or must) Catholic talk of solidarity amid a church of the poor mean?

I. PARSING SOLIDARITY

Pope John Paul II framed solidarity as a *fact*—the fact of interdependence, dramatically heightened in modern times; as a *moral virtue*—a settled disposition to acknowledge and take responsibility for these interdependencies in a “firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good,” and as a *Christian virtue*—the “social face of Christian charity” embodied in the sincere gift of self to neighbor, forgiveness, and reconciliation, even toward enemies. Solidarity, John Paul proposes, is the potent antidote for pernicious “structures of sin” whose hallmarks are “the all-consuming desire for profit” and “the thirst for [dominative] power.”¹¹ Sinful social structures that entrench and compound the effects of individual sins can only be combated by conversion to a solidarity that recognizes that “we all really are responsible for all,” and acts accordingly.¹²

Villanova philosopher Sally Scholz credits recent Catholic social teaching for offering “one of the few sustained discussions of solidarity as a moral value and duty” in contemporary ethical discourse. Yet Catholic solidarity-talk is not immune to the problems of varied, wavering, inexact, and at times conflicting usage that Kurt Bayertz finds in the literature generally.¹³ To borrow James Gustafson’s more evocative image, “solidarity” tends to run through scholarly and popular moral discourse like the proverbial greased pig. Our first task, therefore, is to corral the pig.

¹⁰Gabriela Saavedra’s story is told in Jody Heymann, M.D., *Forgotten Families* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) 3-6. Cf. Jody Heymann and Magda Barrera, *Addressing Poverty in a Globalized Economy* (London: Progressive Governance, 2008) 6-8.

¹¹*Sollicitudo rei socialis* (1987) #40 Recent Catholic teaching describes solidarity as the primary weapon for confronting and dismantling sinful social structures. Solidary practices, policies and institutions do this by creating and sustaining what might be called “structures of the common good,” through which wholesome patterns of relationship work to counteract and repair harms and divisions caused by social sin. Cf. SRS #38, #40; John Paul II, *Centesimus annus* #58; Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Washington, D.C.: USCCB, 2005) #193.

¹²SRS #38, #40. Cf. Thomas McGovern, “The Christian Anthropology of John Paul II,” at <http://www.christendomawake.org/pages/mcgovern/chrisanthro.htm> First published in *Josephinum Journal of Theology* 8 no. 1 (2001): 132-47.

¹³Sally J. Scholz, *Political Solidarity* (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2008). Also, Kurt Bayertz, “Four Uses of Solidarity,” in Kurt Bayertz, ed., *Solidarity* (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Kluwer, 1999) 3-28, at 3-4.

Sifting through a welter of debates, Scholz proposes a clarifying framework. Solidarity of any stripe entails *three elements*: it is a **form of unity** that binds members together into an identifiable group, that **mediates between individual and community**,¹⁴ and entails **positive moral obligations for members of the group**.¹⁵ Scholz sees this third trait as the definitive one; whatever form a group may take, it is not a solidarity group unless it entails positive moral obligations.

On this definition, globalized markets may immerse us in various direct and indirect bonds—for instance, I may wear clothing made in Gabriela’s factory—but, absent specified, acknowledged, and operative mutual obligations, such relations fall short of authentic solidarity. Instead, they remain partial, or what Scholz calls parasitical solidarities: webs of influence and relationship that depend on and benefit from, and may resemble (or masquerade as) actual solidarities; but that lack the normative teeth that authentic solidarity demands.¹⁶

Activating the moral links among members constitutive of solidarity seems especially challenging within large modern societies, where, Bayertz observes, common interests and quid-pro-quos have replaced personal bonds as the ties that bind. The modern western political imaginary envisages society as constructed, not naturally given; in them, individuals who are “buffered selves”¹⁷ come together freely in order to increase their individual and

¹⁴For Scholz, “The solidary group is constituted by individuals, but it is a collective entity, not merely an aggregate.” Shelley Wilcox, Review, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, 2010.7.26, at <http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=20668>

¹⁵Scholz, *Political Solidarity*, 17-20.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 46-48. Parasitical solidarity denotes bonds that lack morally adequate corresponding responsibilities, in the form of obligations enacted as “concrete operative norms.” On concrete operative norms see Prentiss Pemberton and Daniel Rush Finn, *Toward a Christian Economic Ethic* (Minneapolis: Winston, 1985), ch. 1. As Scholz’s term “parasitical” also suggests, these “poser” or “pretender” solidarities often depend upon, and leech benefits from, operative moral solidarities in ways that attenuate the social and human capital that such solidarities sustain. This point is made in analyses of economic globalization by scholars such as Ulrich Beck, *What is Globalization?* Trans. Patrick Camiller (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000), or Harold Lindblom, *The Market System: What It Is, How It Works, and What To Make of It* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).

¹⁷According to Taylor, modern “buffered selves” experience a “thick emotional boundary between us and the cosmos,” and between individual and community; versus the “porous selves” that traditional social imaginaries produce and support. Whereas, for porous selves, social, natural and cosmic forces readily cross the boundaries of selves to shape lives and decisive and often uncontrollable ways, moderns “live with a much firmer sense of the boundary between self and other. . . . I can see the boundary of self as a buffer, such that the things beyond don’t need to ‘get to me,’ to use the contemporary expression. . . . This self can see itself as invulnerable, as master of the meanings of things for it.” The porous self is vulnerable to spirits, demons, cosmic

mutual security and prosperity.¹⁸ Economically, interdependence by way of the division of labor has become the characteristic form of solidarity in modern society. “More and more complex divisions of labor create cohesion by way of different, mutually dependent, specialized roles, leading to an impersonal, but real interdependence which forms the cement of modern society.” The intricate ways that politics, culture, economy, and ecology are connecting strangers in webs of interest, benefit, and harm across the globe make specifying solidarity’s requirements and possibilities at once more difficult, and more pressing.¹⁹

Another contested aspect of solidarity is its scope. Feminist philosophers and theologians have raised suspicions about abstract references to general, “human solidarity,” which, Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz observes, trip only too easily and cheaply off privileged tongues.²⁰ Such general references may evoke warm sentiments but sidestep moral accountability. More perniciously, a difference-eliding rhetoric of “we’re all in this together” wielded by the powerful can operate ideologically to conceal and leave undisturbed the fault lines that protect narrow group-egotistical solidarities among the advantaged, and exclude others. In the

forces, and the fears that accompany them. “The buffered self has been taken out of the world of this kind of fear.” Thus, “the buffered self can form the ambition of disengaging from whatever is beyond the boundary, and of giving its own autonomous order to its life.” Charles Taylor, “A Secular Age: Buffered and Porous Selves,” posted 9/8/2008 at “The Immanent Frame,” <http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/2008/09/02/buffered-and-porous-selves/>

¹⁸Bayertz, “Four Uses of Solidarity,” 11. Pope John Paul II cites distortions of this quest for security and prosperity—the overweening thirsts for power and profit at any price—as the chief sources of structural sin.” SRS, #37.

¹⁹Bayertz, “Four Uses of Solidarity,” 13. “Ironically, this impersonal connective process has also been understood as desolidarization, insofar as it has fostered the loss of locality, communal bonds, and cultural traditions and particularities.” The question for Bayertz and Scholz, as well as for Catholic ethics, is how to appropriately translate new interdependencies into efficacious forms of solidarity. Cf., *inter alia*, Beck, *op. cit.*, Paul Seabright, *The Company of Strangers: A Natural History of Economic Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004) ch. 1; Greg Ross, “Interview with Paul Seabright,” *Scientific American Online* March, 2005 <http://www.americanscientist.org/bookshelf/pub/paul-seabright>

²⁰Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, “Solidarity: Love of Neighbor in the 1980s,” in Susan B. Thistlethwaite and Mary Potter Engel, eds., *Life Every Voice: Constructing Christian Theologies from the Underside* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990) 31-40, at 32, discussed in Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Friends of God and Prophets: A Feminist Theological Reading of the Communion of Saints* (New York: Continuum, 1998) 178; also M. Shawn Copeland, “Toward a Critical Feminist Theology of Solidarity,” in Mary Ann Hinsdale & Phyllis Kaminski, eds., *Women and Theology*, Annual Publication of the College Theology Society (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Press, 1995) 3-38; Carol Gould, “Transnational Solidarities,” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 38 no. 1 (Spring 2007).

wake of the El Mozote atrocities witnessed by Rufina Amaya, official U.S. political rhetoric responding to the plight of El Salvadoran citizens most likely included examples of this kind of obfuscating speech.²¹

As Scholz notes, the idea of a comprehensive human community that morally obligates all members has a venerable philosophical and theological pedigree. But many contemporary ethicists resist defining solidarity as a “tie which binds all of us human beings to one big moral community.”²² The universal obligation to every other human being, implied in Pope John Paul II’s claim that “we all really are responsible for all,” risks a moral framing of solidarity that, Kurt Bayertz contends, “is as demanding as it is powerless.”²³

Agreeing, Richard Rorty notes that “the best and strongest reasons for acting are often particular rather than universal reasons Our sense of solidarity is strongest when those with whom solidarity is expressed are thought of as ‘one of us,’ where ‘us’ means something smaller and more local than the human race.”²⁴ Carol Gould, too, rejects “human solidarity” as a literal ethical norm: “A norm that required people to feel, express, or stand in solidarity with every other human being would be impossible to apply, if not also utterly vague. This would be especially the case if the norm were understood to include positive duties or

²¹See, e.g., “Something Horrible in El Salvador,” Joan Didion’s review of Mark Danner, *The Massacre at El Mozote* (New York: Random House, 1993), *New York Review of Books* July 14, 1994 and http://www.markdanner.com/books/show_review/17

Incomplete or parasitical solidarities are not necessarily all bad, and may be sites where genuine solidarities can be fostered. In a global economy, for instance, what do the connections referenced in the below-quoted ad copy (printed on Starbucks’ coffee cups in 2011) represent?

“Everything we do, you do. You stop by for a coffee. And just by doing that, you let Starbucks buy more coffee from farmers who are good to their workers, community and planet. Starbucks bought 65% of our coffee this way last year—228 million pounds—and we’re working with farmers to make it 100%. It’s using our size for good, and you make it all possible. Way to go, you. Starbucks Shared Planet. *You and Starbucks. It’s bigger than coffee*” (emphasis in the original).

Insofar as these bonds depend on an individual consumer’s occasional choice to spend several dollars on a non-essential good, this seems to be, at best, solidarity of a most tenuous sort; worse, the text’s congratulatory tone suggests that elite solidarity with the poor can emerge virtually costlessly, as a side-effect self-interested capitalist consumption. But insofar the impersonal bonds of huge markets can be intentionally shaped to serve the material well-being of those currently lacking it, the question of how to form political solidarities that will maximize these capabilities while protecting market vitality is a key locus for economic and ethical work.

²²Bayertz, “Four Uses of Solidarity,” 5.

²³Ibid., 9.

²⁴Ibid. Bayertz quoting Richard Rorty, *Contingency, Irony & Solidarity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 191.

responsibilities, rather than simply negative duties to refrain from interfering with people or respecting their rights.”²⁵

Sharing her colleagues’ skepticism concerning the moral efficacy of appeals to a universal human solidarity, Scholz argues that authentic solidarity is activated in one of three more specific forms: “social solidarity,” “civic solidarity,” and “political solidarity.”²⁶

Social Solidarity prioritizes group membership, and moral obligations springing from pre-existing group bonds. Social solidarity refers to the level of cohesiveness and interdependence within groups ranging from subway car passengers, to families, to classes, to racial-ethnic communities.²⁷ These interdependencies may be natural or constructed, chosen or not, diffuse or tight, temporary or permanent. Insofar as they involve a unity that mediates between individuals and the group and entails positive moral obligations of some sort (and these can range from the obligation to treat fellow subway riders with civility to the obligation to care for one’s children), they are the bonds of social solidarity.

Civic solidarity denotes bonds and duties among members of civil or political communities. Members receive certain protections from all others, often mediated by government. Civic solidarity seeks to protect those vulnerabilities that would inhibit members from participating in the civic public. Positive moral claims are based both on rights of individuals and on the good of society.²⁸

Modern Catholic social teaching, Scholz observes, focuses on civic solidarity. Appeals to solidary duties are grounded in factual interdependencies of varied sorts, and there is an emphasis on the role of governments and policies in enforcing and protecting civic rights and duties. Championing the development of all peoples, a modern papal rhetoric of civic solidarity seeks “to hold the international community and powerful nations responsible for providing for and protecting the most vulnerable populations in the world.”²⁹ And, especially for those

²⁵Gould, “Transnational Solidarities,” 155. Gould does acknowledge the usefulness of “a concept of general human solidarity as a limit notion, or . . . horizon of possibility, where it refers to a disposition that each can have to act in solidarity with some others . . . or, “a willingness to acknowledge need in everyone else and to act in general ways to support their human rights, especially by working toward the construction of institutions that can allow for their fulfillment worldwide, or by participating in social movements that take such egalitarian rights fulfillment as a goal.” Ibid.

²⁶Scholz, *Political Solidarity*, 20-46.

²⁷Ibid., 21-27, 41.

²⁸Ibid., 27-33.

²⁹Ibid., 33; cf. Pope Paul VI, *Populorum progressio* (1967) #44. “This duty concerns first and foremost the wealthier nations. Their obligations stem from the human and supernatural brotherhood of man, and present a three-fold obligation: 1) mutual solidarity—the aid that the richer nations must give to developing nations; 2) social justice—the rectification of trade relations between strong and weak nations; 3) universal charity—the effort to build a more humane

currently enjoying greater power and resources, civic solidarity demands changes that will come at a price.³⁰

Political Solidarity, finally, unifies a group “not by shared attributes, location, or even shared interests. The unity is based on shared commitment to a cause.” In contrast to civic and social solidarity, political solidarity involves “overtly political group action marked by multiple moral commitments,” aimed at combating injustice or oppression and advancing in particular ways, the communal good. Though not everyone in the group need be directly affected by the injustice being combated, “Each individual in the solidary group must value a shared interpretation of the past and present, and share a vision for the future.” Johannes Baptist Metz and Elizabeth Johnson speak of this last requirement, theologically, as the need for justice-seeking communities of memory and hope who are galvanized by the *memoria passionis*, “the remembrance of the suffering of others as a basic category of Christian discourse about God,” and energized for action by the redemptive narrative of the Gospel incarnated in the lives of God’s suffering people.³¹

world community, where all can give and receive, and where the progress of some is not bought at the expense of others.” Also reflecting this Catholic emphasis on civic solidarity, philosopher Jacques Maritain writes that, “The reason for which men will to live together is a positive, creative reason. . . . Men want to live together and form political society for a given task to be undertaken in common. . . . What task indeed? The conquest of freedom. The point/goal is to have men become aware of that task, and the fact that it is worthy of self sacrifice.” Jacques Maritain, *Man and the State* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951, 1998) 207-208.

³⁰Scholz, 32, cites John Paul II, *Centesimus annus* #58: “It is not merely a matter of ‘giving from one’s surplus’, but of helping entire peoples which are presently excluded or marginalized to enter into the sphere of economic and human development. For this to happen . . . requires above all a change of life-styles, of models of production and consumption, and of the established structures of power which today govern societies.” Forty years earlier, Maritain stressed that solidarity in an interconnected world will entail the acceptance of suffering by the well-off:

“Given the human condition, the most significant synonym of *living together* is *suffering together*. When men form a political society . . . [t]hey want to accept common suffering out of love for the common task and the common good. . . . What sufferings indeed? Sufferings due to solidarity. Suffice it to observe that the very existence of a worldwide society will inevitably imply deep changes in the social and economic structures of the national and international life of peoples, and a serious repercussion of these changes on the free business of a number of individuals, who are not the most numerous in the world, but the most attached to profit-making. The very existence of a world-wide society will also imply a certain—relative no doubt, yet quite serious and appreciable—equalization of the standards of life of all individuals.” *Ibid.*, 207.

³¹Johann Baptist Metz, *A Passion for God: The Mystical-Political Dimension of Christianity*, tr., ed. by J. Matthew Ashley (New York: Paulist Press, 1998) 5; Johnson, *Friends of God and Prophets*, esp. ch. 9.

Along with this shared vision, a hallmark of political solidarity is its “inherently oppositional nature.” Intriguingly, Scholz describes this oppositional feature as “rich with positive moral content.” Political solidarity, she emphasizes, does not begin with impartiality or neutrality. “Real people and real problems” are its moral starting point, and concrete human relations its content.³² Political solidarity takes sides, and the solidary group’s perceptions of injustice and vision for change are shaped and limited by that group’s cultural context and ideological framework.³³

Politically solidary groups vary in size and lifespan; their membership and goals may be fluid. Group bonds are centered in shared, intentional commitment to a morally-valued cause, augmented by commitments to others in the group and to society in general.³⁴ And, as stories of dangerous action undertaken for solidarity’s sake repeatedly attest, “The collective may be strengthened as a cause becomes more pressing or urgent—perhaps radically affecting the life prospects of the oppressed and/or the members of the solidary group.”³⁵

Scholz’s description raises two important questions. First, since political solidarity requires members to sign on to engage in struggle, what motivates people to take on this burden? To motivate and sustain political solidarity, most of these thinkers agree, some type of affective and personal engagement—whether an

³²Scholz, *Political Solidarity* 35, citing John Ladd, “The Idea of Community, An Ethical Exploration, Part I: The Search for an Elusive Concept,” *Journal of Value Inquiry* 32 (1998): 5-24, at 7-8.

³³Does or can political solidarity lead to social solidarity? Sometimes, but the two forms are distinct and best kept so. “Social solidarity does not always emerge from political struggles and not all political struggles give birth to lasting social communities,” writes Bayertz. However, political solidarity may tap into or reveal an already-existing social solidarity among humans. “To put it pointedly: the solidarity practiced here and now in the battle for a just cause appears as the trial sample of what human beings are capable of when social obstacles hampering the development of their moral strengths are removed.” Bayertz, “Four Uses of Solidarity,” 20; cf. Scholz, *Political Solidarity* 40. Scholz appears, ultimately, to accept Bayertz’s suggestion that political solidarity brings out “an already-existing social solidarity among humans by virtue of their shared humanity,” a social solidarity that is both archaeological (because it “uncovers dispositions toward cooperation, mutual aid, and common feeling”), and anticipative (because it “draws a picture of the future human being who will ultimately be free to develop its cooperative and common strengths unhindered . . .”) Scholz, 256, quoting Bayertz, 20.

³⁴Political solidarity entails multifaceted and overlapping commitments and relationships: among members of the solidary group; to the goals of the social movement; between individual members and the solidary group; and between the group and those outside it. These relationships carry “positive duties;” Scholz focuses on three: cooperation, social criticism, and non-violent activism. These positive obligations are distinguishable but intertwined “in such a way that to break faith within one of the relationship adversely affects the others as well. That . . . is part of the nature of an existential commitment to solidarity.” Scholz, *Political Solidarity*, 78.

³⁵Ibid., 34.

imaginative, empathic identification with the concrete sufferings of others (Gould),³⁶ or love of the cause and loyalty to the group struggling for the cause (Taylor),³⁷ or simply a shared hope that things can change for the better (Scholz)—is a needed ingredient.³⁸

Second, are political solidarity's inherently oppositional dimensions inimical to, or destructive of, solidarities with those outside the politically solidary group? These authors hold that political solidarity need not conflict with broader human solidarity, and in fact may be its condition. Yes, argue Nicholas Smith and Arto Laitinen, "solidarity generated this way must exclude. But such exclusions are the inevitable price of mobilizing power. This is not to say that others need be excluded from the consequences of solidaristic action motivated by [what Charles Taylor calls] love of the particular. On the contrary, it may well be that the interests of the universal, so to speak, are best served by actions empowered by a love of the particular."³⁹ To advert to the parlance of Catholic social teaching: "all" may be "responsible for all," but this responsibility is only activated when particular, attentive and loving, "I's" and "we's" discern and enact what is needed and possible within specific, embodied circumstances.⁴⁰

³⁶Gould, "Transnational Solidarities" 156, writes: "When people or associations stand in solidarity with others at a distance, they identify with these others in their efforts to overcome oppression or to eliminate suffering, and they take action to aid these others or stand ready to do so if called upon. . . . We are here focusing on identification with the lived situation of others and with an appreciation of the injustices to which they may be subject. The shared values that characterize these solidarity relationships consist then in a shared commitment to justice, or perhaps also, in more consequentialist terms, to the elimination of suffering." "The solidarity conceptualized here . . . centrally involves an affective element, combined with an effort to understand the specifics of others' concrete situation, and to imaginatively construct for oneself their feelings and needs. If possible, listening to people's own accounts of these is important."

³⁷See Bayer, "Four Uses of Solidarity," 14, citing Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) 166-70; also Nicholas H. Smith and Arthur Laitinen, "Taylor on Solidarity," *Thesis Eleven* 99 (Nov. 2009): 48-70. http://jyu.academia.edu/ArtoLaitinen/Papers/277024/Taylor_on_Solidarity

³⁸Scholz, *Political Solidarity*, 79-84.

³⁹Smith and Laitinen, "Taylor on Solidarity," 56, citing Charles Taylor, *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995) 198.

⁴⁰The stories of the four U.S. churchwomen (Sisters Ita Ford, Maura Clarke, Dorothy Kazel, and lay missionary Jean Donovan) brutally murdered in 1980 by El Salvadoran militia for their work with the poor in that war-torn country illustrate dramatically the power of solidarity grounded in a committed "love of the particular," and its potential cost. Two weeks before her death, Jean Donovan wrote to a friend, "Several times I have decided to leave—I almost could except for the children, the poor bruised victims of adult lunacy. Who would care for them? Whose heart would be so staunch as to favor the reasonable thing in a sea of their tears and loneliness? Not mine, dear friend, not mine." Marvin L. Krier Mich, *The Challenge and Spirituality of Catholic Teaching*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll,

Feminist philosopher Carol Gould adds one further, crucial dimension to this understanding of political solidarity: it must realistically and responsibly address differences in culture, social standpoint, and power. To this end, everyone in the solidary group, especially those with more social power, must cultivate the practice of respectful listening and humility that Gould calls “deference.”⁴¹

Scholz’s analysis illumines modern Catholic teaching as strong on social and civic solidarity, but chary of political solidarity, even in the interest of what John Paul II calls the “preferential, but neither exclusive nor excluding” option for the poor.⁴² On this count, Bryan Massingale is correct: official Catholic social teaching privileges a discourse of solidarity without struggle.⁴³ Given church leaders’ keen awareness of the suffering and injustice that afflict the majority of the world’s inhabitants, why is oppositional, political solidarity so timidly treated? Can Catholics and Catholic institutions eschew political solidarity, and still credibly aspire to be a church of and for the poor? Perhaps the communion of saints can shed some light on this.

NY: Orbis, 2011) 122-123; cf. Joyce Hollyday, “Four U.S. Martyrs,” in Jim Wallis & Joyce Hollyday, *Cloud of Witnesses*, new rev. ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991, 2005) 285-292; Elizabeth O’Donnell Gandolfo, “Women and Martyrdom: Feminist Liberation Theology in Dialogue with a Latin American Paradigm,” *Horizons* 34 no. 1 (Spring 2007): 26-53.

⁴¹“Solidarity in this reading centrally makes reference to the social standpoint and social context of the others, all of which may in fact not be similar to one’s own. . . . And crucial here is a requirement to allow the others to determine the forms of aid or support most beneficial to them. This requirement, which I have called deference, is thus a way to avoid the imposition on the others of the customary expectations and practices of those offering aid. It recognizes that it is the people in the oppressive or needy situation who are usually best able to say what support they wish and expect to benefit from.” Gould, “Transnational Solidarities,” 156-157.

⁴²See Gerald S. Twomey’s thorough study, “Pope John Paul II and the ‘Preferential Option for the Poor’” *Journal of Catholic Legal Studies* 45 (2006): 321-367, at 355.

⁴³Bryan N. Massingale, “Vox Victimarum Vox Dei: Malcolm X as Neglected ‘Classic’ for Catholic Theological Reflection,” *Proceedings of The Catholic Theological Society of America* 65 (2010): 63-88, at 81-82. Noting that the “African American ethical tradition” is critical of this approach, Massingale cites Frederick Douglass: “‘If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, yet deprecate agitation, are [people] who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its mighty waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but there must be struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will.’” *Ibid.*, 82.

II. WHAT IS THE *COMMUNIO SANCTORUM*?

From the early centuries of the Christian story, the tradition of the *communio sanctorum* has referred to two mysterious relationships.⁴⁴ As proclaimed before the communion rite in Eastern churches, *communio sanctorum* refers to the sharing of holy things among holy people (the saints), quintessentially, the sharing of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharistic Liturgy.⁴⁵ In its second meaning the communion of saints refers to the vital spiritual bonds of charity/love, influence, and assistance among all the faithful, living and dead, in the Body of Christ, the church.

Catholic teaching affirms the damaging impact of individual sins on the whole community, an impact that ripples across generations. Yet, by God's grace, in the *communio sanctorum*, the ripples of love and help prove stronger.⁴⁶ Here, "a perennial link of charity exists between the faithful who have already reached their heavenly home, those who are expiating their sins in purgatory and those who are still pilgrims on earth. Between them there is . . . an abundant exchange of all good things." "In this wonderful exchange, the holiness of one profits others, well beyond the harm that the sin of one could cause others."⁴⁷

⁴⁴See *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed. (New York: Random House, 2003) Part I, Chapter 3, #946-962. Richly informative treatments of this twofold relationship are Berard Marthaler, *Creed: The Apostolic Faith in Contemporary Theology*, rev. ed. (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1993, 2007) ch. 22; and Johnson, *Friends of God and Prophets*, esp. ch. 5.

⁴⁵In the Melkite rite, e.g., "When the Sacred Host is first raised on high, the priest cries aloud, 'Ta Ayia tis Ayies,' that is, 'Holy things for holy people' - to which the people . . . respond, 'One Holy, one Lord, Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father.' According to the Syriac Liturgy of St. James . . . the priest exclaims, 'Holy things are given for holy persons in perfection, purity, and holiness;' to which the people respond, 'One Holy Father, one Holy Son, one Holy Ghost; blessed be the name of the Lord, for he is one in Heaven and on earth; glory be to him for evermore.'" "Consecration in the Eastern Church," excerpted from Rev. Anthony Aneed, *Syrian Christians* (Milwaukee, 1919) <http://www.melkite.org/Consecration.html>

⁴⁶Analogously, in the face of structural sin, when people take "due account of the need to serve the whole community, and each individual member of it . . . a positive effect gradually improves the material, psychological and moral conditions of their lives. This is really the 'obverse' of the 'structures of sin.' One might call them the 'structures of the common good.'" Pontifical Council for Human and Christian Development, "World Hunger, A Challenge for All: Development in Solidarity, (Vatican City: 4 October 1996) #25. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/corunum/documents/rc_pc_corunum_doc_04101996_world-hunger_en.html

⁴⁷Paul VI invokes Ephesians 4:16: "'For all who are in Christ, having his spirit, form one Church and cleave together in him.' Therefore, the union of the wayfarers in this life, and their brothers and sisters who have gone to sleep in the peace of Christ is not in the least weakened or interrupted, but . . . according to the perpetual faith of the church, is strengthened by a communication of spiritual goods . . ." The blessed dead are not idle, but rather,

This communion of saints—a communion born of and sustained by creative and redemptive love of the Divine—qualifies as a form of “solidarity” in Scholz’s terms. Its strangeness to modern secular sensibilities notwithstanding,⁴⁸ this peculiar solidarity, traversing boundaries of time, space, culture, and even death, has been confidently invoked by Christians from the days of the first Christian martyrs up until the present. It is confirmed daily in the Eucharistic prayers of every single Mass celebrated throughout the world, and the even more ubiquitously, at every moment, in a vast whispered and spoken chorus across the earth of prayers offered on others’ behalf.

III. WHAT DOES THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS OFFER AN ETHICS OF SOLIDARITY?

What might this ancient doctrine have to offer contemporary Christians seeking to understand and enact the virtue of solidarity within a preferential love for the poor and vulnerable? Aware that I can only scratch the surface of an adequate response here, I propose, in brief compass, the following.

First, the communion of saints frames human and Christian solidarity within an enriched, relational picture of the human person. By positing efficacious spiritual relationships among the living, among the dead, and between the living and the dead, this ancient article of faith invites late- and post-modern selves to rediscover and embrace a radical porousness to God, to neighbor, and nature, in fresh 21st century forms. This is a central contribution of the communion of saints to Catholic social ethics and practice: it opens up the social-anthropological landscape within which solidarity is understood and enacted. Instead of hyper-buffered, separated selves, it reveals positively porous selves connected to God, to ancestors, and to neighbors across the world.⁴⁹ A community alive to the

“through him and with him and in him they do not cease to intervene with the Father for us. Thus by their brotherly interest our weakness is greatly strengthened.” Pope Paul VI, “On Indulgences” (1967) #5. Cf. *Catechism* #956-58.

⁴⁸Arguably, though, the sensibility that enabled our forebears to imagine this supralocal and intergenerational web of sustaining connections is not wholly foreign to modern/postmoderns; rather, it is being reformulated in terms of contemporary media and experiences. See, e.g., Jim Gilliam’s moving talk, “The Internet is My Religion,” 2011 Personal Democracy Forum, June 7, 2011, at http://www.livestream.com/pdf2011/video?clipId=pla_8a026681-a944-4459-a735-6ff526f72b5a and Justin Horner’s January 2011 Reddit blog entry and extensive reader follow-up (later published in the *New York Times Magazine* under the title “The Tire Iron and the Tamale”) at http://www.reddit.com/t/AskReddit/comments/elal2/have_you_ever_picked_up_a_hitchhiker/c18z0z2

⁴⁹However, the porousness that enables interpersonal connections and spiritual solidarity within the communion of saints neither obviates freedom, nor forces intimacy, nor dissolves personal identity. God is in this regard (to borrow Julian of Norwich’s phrase),

communio sanctorum inhabits a capacious (and countercultural) spiritual-social imaginary wherein relationships with their gifts and responsibilities are expanded, and the horizon of hopes reconfigured.⁵⁰

Second, the mystery of the *communio sanctorum* unveils the full membership of the *ekklesia* as the host of “friends of God and prophets” who comprise the bruised, broken, healed and healing body of Christ,⁵¹ in the time between the resurrection and “Victory Day.”⁵² This communion, this mystical body, comprises a wild spectrum, a crazy quilt of characters, people of innumerable gifts, talents, foibles and finitudes, stories of sin and ways of holiness. The saints include a few names still remembered and many more names forgotten, some who have lived long and prosperous lives, and many whose lives on earth ended tragically, brutally, or too soon. Stretching from the past into the future and across all natural and humanly-made boundaries, one finds room “in that number” for the breathtaking virtuosos, and for throngs of the “not very good and not very bad,” the loved sinners and the sinful lovers—in short, every person whose story has been caught up into the beatitude- and cross-shaped story of God in Jesus Christ.

How do we recognize the members of this communion? While this question gets answered variously by ecclesiologists, canon lawyers, and bishops, we have good scriptural grounds for supposing that the Beatitudes of Matthew and Luke offer a reliable guide for identifying God’s friends. By this measure, the communion of saints comprises all souls who have loved and suffered in poverty of body and spirit, in hunger, in thirst for justice, in meekness and mercy, and all who have been abused and persecuted for loving what and whom God loves.

“wondrously courteous.” However porous, each self has real physical, psychic and emotional boundaries, and the right to safety and comfort within one’s own skin. Honoring this truth and its moral salience is especially important in the face of persons or communities who have been victimized by abuse, torture, rape or other grievous boundary violations. An insightful, interdisciplinary treatment of these issues is Michele Saracino, *Being About Borders: A Christian Anthropology of Difference* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011).

⁵⁰So, for instance, solidarity understood in light of the communion of saints simultaneously ennobles and relativizes political action by connecting to, yet distinguishing it from, God’s reign. “Liberations that talk only about political change, about who is in the government, are only bits and pieces of the great liberation, the one that paid for the root of all our ills, of all our injustices.” And if the earth’s liberations don’t mesh with this great liberation of Christ, the grand Liberator, “then they are mutilated, not genuine liberations, only parts of liberation.” (Nov. 25, 1979) Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love*, compiled & trans. James Brockman, S.J. (Farmington, PA: Plough Publishing, 2007) 190.

⁵¹Johnson, *Friends of God and Prophets*, 3, citing Wisdom 7:27.

⁵²Joseph Ratzinger, *Eschatology: Death and Eternal Life*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1988) 60-61.

Classic European depictions like Fra' Angelico's 15th century "Christ Glorified in the Court of Heaven," notwithstanding, *this* uncountable, holy communion is indisputably dominated by the faces and bodies, the lives and stories, the memories and hopes of historical "nobodies," the poor, the oppressed, and the forgotten majorities throughout history and in the present day. This is why Shawn Copeland challenges Catholic theologians to re-center the subject of theology on poor, oppressed women of color.⁵³ Gabriela and Rufina and their children, along with the predominantly black, brown, yellow and red faces of poor women, men and children, *are* the faces of the communion of saints, the main demographic among card-carrying members of the church universal, the church of the poor.

We need only to do the math: on the roster of the communion of saints, just as on the wall in El Salvador that commemorates the 75,000 civilians lost in that terrible civil war, only a few of all those names are publicly known; only a few are from among the upper classes or the "first world;" only a very few are white.

As recent work by Michael E. Lee and Michael Iafate shows, this line of reflection jibes with the identification of Christ's body, the church, with the "crucified peoples" of history by El Salvadoran Jesuits Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino.⁵⁴ Sobrino, as Iafate shows, contends that this church of the poor, of the crucified peoples, makes Christ's salvific activity available both to its members and to the world in several important ways.

First, the poor bring "light" to the world, showing the non-poor the truth about themselves and about society. "[T]he Third World offers light to enable the First World to see itself as it truly is, which is an important element of salvation." Second, out of their own suffering and struggle emerges a profound hope for a new world, inspiring solidarity among the human family. Finally, "[t]he poor mark out the direction and the basic contents of our practice" that orient our work toward a new society, including both prophetic condemnation of the dehumanizing "civilization of wealth" "as well as the creation of new "economic, political and cultural models to overcome it."⁵⁵

⁵³See the extensive work of M. Shawn Copeland, most recently, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race and Being* (New York: Fortress Press, 2010).

⁵⁴Ellacuría describes the crucified people as "that collective body, which as the majority of humankind owes its situation of crucifixion to the way society is organized and maintained by a minority that exercises its dominion through a series of factors, which taken together and given their concrete impact within history, must be regarded as sin." Iafate, *Totus Christus and the Crucified People*, 30, citing Ignacio Ellacuría, "The Crucified People," in *Mysterium Liberationis: Fundamental Concepts of Liberation Theology*, ed. Ignacio Ellacuría and Jon Sobrino (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1993) 590. See also, Michael E. Lee, *Bearing the Weight of Salvation: The Soteriology of Ignacio Ellacuría* (New York: Herder & Herder, Crossroad, 2009).

⁵⁵Iafate, "Totus Christus and the Crucified People" 35, citing Jon Sobrino, *No Salvation Outside the Poor: Prophetic-Utopian Essays* (Maryknoll, NY: 2008) 60-61, 5, 5-6, 61,

Third, considering solidarity in light of the mystery of the communion of saints more deeply connects social ethics to liturgy (especially the Eucharist), as well as to popular prayer and piety. As ethics in the Orthodox Church exemplifies, connecting ethical reflection to liturgy situates solidarity within Christians' journey of conversion, aided and challenged and by the *communio sanctorum* of the sacraments and of the blessed community, living and dead.⁵⁶

Catholic theologian James Alison speaks poignantly of the Eucharist as nurturing this journey, observing that, "to be able to be a penitent persecutor, or a penitent traitor—to be able to be Paul or Peter—is not something that comes at once." The patient work of God's forgiving love that enables us, little by little . . . to be

63-64, 62-63. On Ellacuría's treatment of the "civilization of wealth" and "civilization of work/poverty," see Lee, *Bearing the Weight of Salvation*, 101-102. As Iafraate recounts, Sobrino proposes "going beyond Latin American liberation theology's emphasis on the 'option for the poor' by insisting rather on the 'option to let salvation come from the poor.' . . . If we 'take hold of reality,' as Ellacuría often insisted is the vocation of Christians, we see a reality of intense dehumanization brought on through a civilization of wealth that creates victims (the crucified people). Salvation, then, historically understood, must include a movement toward a 'more human humanity.' Salvation in history which includes authentic humanization is not found among the 'societies of abundance' or in the contemporary narratives of globalization and democracy, but is found 'where we least expect it' in the world of the poor. . . ." Iafraate, "*Totus Christus*" 34, citing Sobrino, *No Salvation Outside the Poor*, 50-52.

⁵⁶Liturgy as wellspring of ethics is an integral theme in the writings of Orthodox scholars such as Stanley Harakas and Vigen Guroian. In "Communion of Saints and Sinners," a sermon delivered 13 May 1973 (at http://www.metropolit-anthony.orc.ru/eng/eng_275.htm), Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh underscores the liturgy as prime site for growing more deeply aware of the solidarity of spiritual communion in finitude, sin and grace shared among the all the saints:

"Every prayer which you hear at Liturgy was wrought out of a human soul at moments of ecstasy, of distress, at moments of deep repentance, of immense gratitude. . . . In its liturgy, . . . the Church has gathered . . . prayers that correspond to the experience, to the life, to the death, to the joy, to the suffering, to the anguish and the gratitude of the saints throughout history. [We are invited to] realize that we, small as we are, in the making as we are, groping as we are for a plenitude which is not yet ours, and which they possess to a greater degree than we, that we stand in a vast crowd of men and women at prayer, and that we overhear the great saints of God praying their prayers. . . . [T]heir prayers are in our midst, their experience being shared, in every word of prayer, in every melody of liturgical singing, they are in our midst, not only invisibly praying for us, but making us partakers of their deep, tragic, glorious experience; of God and of the world, of men as much as of God. . . . And then we could turn and see our neighbor also a part of this very mysterious communion of saints and sinners. . . . And the communion of saints will become reality and the communion of sinners will become something meaningful to us, a real brotherhood of people who are, who recognize themselves as sinners and yet feel that God has come to them also, that they have elder brothers and sisters who are concerned with them, at one with them, sharing with them the most precious gifts of their lives."

able to stand free and see the other, the community, the group, not in defensive terms, not as a ‘they,’ but as a ‘We,’ and a we in which I may [also] be a stumbling block rather than a building block—that is part of the healing mystery of the Mass.” This conversion, Alison emphasizes, “involves the recasting of our solidarity [into] a new form of solidarity, a new way of belonging that does not depend on exclusion . . . where we learn to create the unity that does not depend on casting out. At any given celebration of the Eucharist, that is . . . the conversion that is going on . . . [through the] presence of the risen Lord who is working this change in his people.”⁵⁷

Beyond official liturgy, the piety and prayer of everyday people, especially poor and oppressed peoples, embody a panorama of culturally-rich, sacramentally-dense, testimonies and pedagogies of solidarity whereby peoples’ lived religiosity participates in the wonderful exchange of love and benefits among the saints, within the beautifully-diverse body of Christ.

Fourth, the “all saints” tradition locates solidarity’s ethical demands within a fruitful tension between what John Thiel calls Pauline and Matthean styles of eschatology.⁵⁸

Pauline eschatology simultaneously reveals our hopeless entanglement in the communion of sin and evil, and delivers the good news that we sinners are, by grace, redeemed by Christ’s forgiving solidarity with us.⁵⁹ This Pauline trope is illustrated in the story of Ruby Turpin, the self-satisfied, judgmental, other-categorizing, “respectable Christian woman” in Flannery O’Connor’s “Revelation.”⁶⁰ Mrs. Turpin is knocked off her spiritual high horse one day in her small town’s doctor’s waiting room, when a disturbed, unattractive young woman

⁵⁷James Alison, *Knowing Jesus* (Springfield, IL: Templegate, 1993) 95.

⁵⁸See John E. Thiel, “Time, Judgment, and Competitive Spirituality: A Reading of the Development of the Doctrine of Purgatory,” *Theological Studies* 69 (2008): 741-785, and “For What May We Hope? Thoughts on the Eschatological Imagination,” *Theological Studies* 67 (2006): 517-541, essays replete with analysis and insights germane to the subjects of this essay.

⁵⁹See Thiel, “Competitive Spirituality,” 748-50. Thiel’s tracing of the rise of purgatory as one way of leveling the playing field for the majority, “non heroes” among the communion of sinners and saints, complements Elizabeth Johnson’s focus on the non-hierarchical and noncompetitive strands of the communion of saints tradition in *Friends of God and Prophets*. As writers like Alison (op. cit.) and William Cavanaugh [e.g., *Being Consumed: Economics and Christian Desire*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2008) 70-85] do with the Eucharist, Thiel mines specific ways that Christian eschatology might work to undercut the competitive, separative and judgmental ways in which believers imagine and enact their relationships to God and neighbors.

⁶⁰Originally published in Flannery O’Connor, *Everything That Rises Must Converge* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), the text of “Revelation” (completed by O’Connor shortly before her death in 1964 from lupus at age 39), is available at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/30444531/Revelation-by-Flannery->

suddenly attacks Ruby, and hissing, calls her an “old warthog from hell.” Shaken, Ruby later asks God in consternation, “How can I be a hog and me both?” Christianity in the Pauline style pivots off this perplexing fact: each and every one of us is “a hog and me both.”⁶¹ Accepting this bedrock reality, and God’s love in response to it, is the price of admission into the communion of saints, and the beginning place for humble, compassionate solidarity with our fellow loved sinners.

As Ruby’s eschatological vision at the story’s end graphically teaches, entry into the solidarity of the saints requires the burning away, above all, of dispositions to judge, separate, and marginalize according to the otherizing calculus that Jesus’ parables and life so thoroughly rejected, and on the basis of which “crucified peoples” continue to be nailed to their crosses.⁶² Ruby, superficially well-meaning, dominating, oblivious, a large person with small eyes, is an archetype of the unconverted, non-poor Christian; a symbol of the cruel complacency of first-world elites.⁶³

⁶¹Acknowledging this truth is also crucial for the institutional church, as Dorothy Day suggests to Robert Coles: “I am embarrassed—I am *sickened*—when I see Catholics using their religion as a social ornament. Peter [Maurin] used to tell me that a good Catholic should pray for the church as if it is a terrible sinner, in bad need of lots of prayers. I remember being surprised for a second to hear him say that; he was such a *devout* Catholic. But then I realized that it was precisely *because* he was so devout that he said what he said. . . . I think the life of the Lord is constantly being lived out—we are betraying him as well as honoring Him, those inside the church as well as those outside it.” Coles, *Dorothy Day*, 58-59.

⁶²“A visionary light settled in her eyes. She saw . . . a vast swinging bridge extending upward from the earth through a field of living fire. Upon it a vast horde of souls were rumbling toward heaven [led by poor colored folks, white trash and] battalions of freaks and lunatics shouting and clapping [for joy] and leaping like frogs. . . . [At the very rear of the procession,] she recognized at once [. . .] those who, like herself and Claud, had always had a little of everything and the God-given wits to use it right. . . . [This last group was composed, orderly, and singing in tune.] Yet she could see by their shocked and altered faces that even their virtues were being burned away.” O’Connor, “Revelation,” 97.

The competitively sorting, grading, separating and otherizing vision that so constricts Ruby Turpin is also at the heart of the dynamic of racism, famously defined by Albert Memmi as “the generalized and final assigning of values to real or imaginary differences, to the accuser’s benefit and at his victim’s expense, in order to justify the former’s own privilege or aggression.” *Racism* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000) 169.

⁶³Allan Figueroa Deck points out one contemporary example of “Rubyism,” or the otherizing sin against the *communio sanctorum* that afflicts the Roman Catholic ecclesial imaginary: “There is deep mistrust in the West about the improbability of a new resurgent Christian frontier outside of the West The feeling is that the post-Western world cannot be trusted with the immense liberal gains wrested from Christianity, and so the

As it enfolds Christians in a Pauline communion of saved sinners, solidarity in the communion of saints and sinners *also* calls disciples to accountability in Thiel's Matthean sense, encouraging gratuitous actions of love for God in attentive love of neighbor that will, in the end, separate the sheep from the goats.⁶⁴ Thiel even considers ways by which the blessed dead may continue Christ's redemptive activities limned in the gospel resurrection narratives⁶⁵—"the way that Jesus keeps his promises, bears the pain of his life without reproach, reconciles failure, and shows himself to be who he is."⁶⁶ Thiel's work thus proposes "the communion of the saints as an activity in which the blessed dead [and living] participate in Christ's work" of undoing the effects of sin, not least their own sins.⁶⁷

Besides challenging a picture of the blessed dead as "at rest," Thiel's treatment troubles boundaries between the traditional categories of "church militant" on earth, "church expectant" or "suffering," and "church triumphant" in heaven. Among other effects, blurring these borders (or underscoring their porousness) de-absolutizes the triumph of the pre-eschaton "church triumphant." This move makes sense in light of what the *communio sanctorum* affirms. Don't the intimate bonds

prospect of Christianity surging without enlightenment constraints provokes deep antagonism in the West, suggesting a gathering culture clash . . . The incredulity is unshakable." "A Response to M.T. Davila," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 63 (2008): 54, citing Lamén Sanneh, "Why is Christianity, the Religion of the Colonizer, Growing So Fast in Africa?" *The Santa Clara Lectures*, Santa Clara Univ., May 11, 2005. 14-15.

⁶⁴Thiel, "Competitive Spirituality," 749-750. Cf. Romero, *Violence of Love*, 179: "I think the saints have been the most ambitious people, those who have wanted to be truly great, and they are the only truly great persons. Earthly heroisms cannot attain the heights of a saint. That is my ambition for you and for me: to be great, ambitiously great, because we are God's images and we cannot be content with mediocre greatness." (Sept. 23, 1979)

⁶⁵Of the early Christian communities, Thiel writes, "The resurrected Jesus was a paradigm for their religious imaginings, and we would do well to follow their time-honored example by making the resurrected Jesus a paradigm for imagining the life of the blessed dead" (and, I would add, the life of the whole communion of saints). Thiel, "For What May We Hope?" 529.

⁶⁶So, for example, "One way of considering the realm of human sinfulness is as a tragic collection of broken promises." "For all but the extraordinary saints, death marks the loss of worldly opportunity to keep unkept promises or to mend relationships severed by sinful betrayal. . . . If we imagine the task of discipleship extending into the afterlife, then perhaps we can think of the blessed dead as engaged in the moral task of promise-keeping. . . . Promise-keeping becomes transformative imitation of Jesus when the promises broken in the course of earthly life are renewed and faithfully kept eschatologically. To imagine the blessed dead as active in this way is to imagine them engaged in overcoming sin, particularly sin of their own making . . ." or to "imagine them at work in securing ties of moral relationship." Thiel, "For What May We Hope?" 537, 538.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 538.

of communion in Christ's body assure that no one member can enjoy complete beatitude until the beatitude of all members has been attained? Doesn't Christ's body continue to suffer until the resurrection of the *Totus Christus* is complete?

Fifth, figuring solidarity within the communion of saints connects the blessed living to the dangerous memories of all the exploited, abused, defeated, blessed dead. Embracing their lives within the loving bonds of Christ's suffering and redeeming body generates hope that can spur and enable us, the living, to bear faithfully "the sufferings due to solidarity." Vatican II describes the saints as reflecting God's face in the world.⁶⁸ In a world riven by sin, the face of God that the saints most often reflect is Jesus' suffering face, the image of *el Divino Rostro*. Today, bearing solidarity's weight for love of God in neighbor demands saintly practice in new forms: a *mysticism of open eyes* that faces and feels reality, and does not shrink from proclaiming truth to power; an *asceticism* that freely undertakes discomfort and suffering for solidarity's sake; and the courage to face persecution and *martyrdom* when solidarity draws scorn, hatred and violence from those in thrall to idolatrous powers-that-be.⁶⁹

Traditionally a martyr is "a witness to Christ who, in the face of danger, suffering and difficulty, remains faithful to the end, specifically, one who sheds their blood in a death motivated out of hatred of the faith, *odium fidei*." Today popular and official understandings of martyrdom are expanding. In the 1980s, El Salvadorans were abused and killed by fellow Christians out of *odium caritas* or *odium veritatis*. The mass "disappearings" of Cambodian or Argentinean civilians

⁶⁸*Lumen Gentium* #50: "God shows to men, in a vivid way, His presence and His face in the lives of those companions of ours in the human condition who are more perfectly transformed into the image of Christ." Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (2000) #7: In the "great host of saints and martyrs," known and unknown, "Holiness, a message that convinces without the need for words, is the living reflection of the face of Christ."

⁶⁹On "mysticism of open eyes" see Metz, *Passion for God*, 14, 69, 163; cf. Ellacuria's emphasis on "taking hold of reality" and attunement to *la Realidad*. My reading here of structural sin as spiritual as well as a moral and material, and of solidarity as a mystical, ascetic, and martyrological practice that entails costly struggle against the forces of structural sin and faithfulness "to the end," is consonant with John Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, #37: "[H]idden behind certain decisions, apparently inspired only by economics or politics, are real forms of idolatry: of money, ideology, class, technology I have wished to introduce this type of analysis above all in order to point out the true nature of the evil which faces us with respect to the development of peoples: it is a question of a moral evil, the fruit of many sins which lead to 'structures of sin.' To diagnose the evil in this way is to identify precisely, on the level of human conduct, the path to be followed in order to overcome it." #38: "This path is long and complex, and what is more it is constantly threatened because of the intrinsic frailty of human resolutions and achievements, and because of the mutability of very unpredictable and external circumstances. Nevertheless, one must have the courage to set out on this path, and, where some steps have been taken or a part of the journey made, the courage to go on to the end."

and allies like Sister Alice Domon, tortured, raped and murdered by state forces (drugged and dumped into the ocean from an airplane) in 1977 for her work with the Mothers of the Disappeared of the *Plaza de Mayo*, bespeak a profound *odium humanum dignitatum*.⁷⁰

María Pilar Aquino underlines another motive for the persecution and murder of those who are, or pursue solidarity with, God's poor: fear. The presence and service to their Algerian Muslim neighbors that cost the Trappists of Tibhirine their heads in 1996, or the three decades of ministry and advocacy for the land rights of Brazilian rainforest peasants that got 73-year-old Sister Dorothy Stang shot dead by landowners' henchmen in 2005, bespeak the violence that *timor fidei* can also unleash.⁷¹

But in the communion of saints, those so cruelly slaughtered do not disappear; they continue to lend their energies actively to struggles against sin and evil.

⁷⁰On *odium caritate* as motive for martyrdom, see Lawrence Cunningham, *A Brief History of Saints* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005) 142-143; cf. Gandolfo, "Women and Martyrdom," 31: "The *odium fidei* that led to the death of [the El Salvadoran] martyrs was a hatred of truth, justice, love, charity, and peace; ultimately, it was a hatred of the poor and thus, hatred of humanity." On Sister Alice Domon, see Bruno Chenu, Claude Prud'homme, France Quere, & Jean-Claude Thomas, *The Book of Christian Martyrs*, tr. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1990) 195-201.

⁷¹María Pilar Aquino, "The People of God in the Struggle for Justice," in K. F. Burke, R. Lassaller-Klein, eds. *Love That Produces Hope: The Thought of Ignacio Ellacuría* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2006) 205-222, at 205. On the Tibhirine monks: John W. Kiser, *The Monks of Tibhirine: Faith, Love, and Terror in Algeria* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002). On Dorothy Stang: "Sister Dorothy, a nun with the Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur order in Ohio, was a naturalized Brazilian. She had made powerful enemies in the Amazon Basin working on behalf of the poor. David Stang, her brother, said she was not by any means a sweetly pious nun who had retreated to a life of prayer and contemplation. She was tough, smart and intensely political, and it was precisely her fervent earthly work on behalf of the poor that got her killed, he said. 'None of this ooey-gooney little nun bit,' Mr. Stang said. 'She was like a Mack truck.'" "Sister Dorothy Stang," *New York Times* (May 3, 2010) at [tp://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/s/sister_dorothy_stang/index.html](http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/people/s/sister_dorothy_stang/index.html) Also, Andrew Bundcombe, "The Life and Brutal Death of Sister Dorothy Stang, Rainforest Martyr," (Tues Feb 15, 2005) *The Independent/UK* at <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines05/0215-03.html> As these stories attest, "A martyr's death cannot be the result of an accident, or misfortune . . . Rather it is an expression of the character of someone who has consciously chosen a particular way of life, aware of its possible costly consequences, and who has intentionally accepted the kind of destiny that is given to the disciples of Christ." It is also acknowledged and honored by a community of living faith as an instance of a recognizable practice, an embodiment of an ancient and ongoing narrative." Neville Richardson, "Heroes of the Struggle or Martyrs for the Faith: How Do We Recognize Martyrs Today?" *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 131 (July 2008): 40-46, at 46. Cf. R. L. Moss, "The Companionship Model of the Communion of Saints: Recovery from the Early Church," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 135 (November 2009): 56-74.

So, Romero: “Let us not think that our dead have gone away from us. Their heaven, their eternal reward, makes them perfect in love; they keep on loving the same causes for which they died. Thus, in El Salvador the force of liberation involves not only those who remain alive, but also all those whom others have tried to kill and who are more present than before in the people’s movement.”⁷²

Sixth, the communion of saints confirms historical conflict and struggle as aspects of Christian solidarity with the poor and oppressed. Recent Catholic social teaching emphasizes human, social, and civic solidarity, but hesitates to endorse political solidarity as a requirement of Gospel living.⁷³ Yet if, in Ellacuría’s words, “you can’t be for the reign of God unless you are also publicly, actively against the anti-reign,”⁷⁴ how can solidary struggle against social evils be legitimately sidestepped?

To press this question creatively, social ethics might revisit the venerable trope of the church militant, the ranks of the blessed living, encouraged and assisted by the blessed dead, who, united in God’s love do patient, wily, protracted battle against sin and evil. In every generation and on multiple fronts, this motley band engages in combat against sin’s destructive personal and social effects, especially on the poor—within the hearts of its members, within the church, and the social orders. Those presently on the front lines of this solidary struggle cannot succeed without reinforcements from the whole company, including those whose “strife is o’er,” but who, with Jesus, retain their battle scars, and their combat experience.

⁷²Romero, *The Violence of Love*, 212 (March 2, 1980).

⁷³The saints who see reality with open and critical eyes cannot hesitate to name these things as incarnating the forces of the kingdom of evil. Romero stated this boldly: “It falls to me to go about retrieving the abused and corpses. I will not tire of denouncing the outrage of random kidnappings, of disappearances, of torture. The organized sector of our people is still being massacred simply for going to the street in an organized manner to ask for justice and liberty. Violence, assassination, and torture, with so many killed, butchered with machetes and thrown in the sea, people discarded: *all this is the reign of hell.*” Romero quoted in Aquino, “The People of God in the Struggle for Justice,” 214.

⁷⁴To this end, “Ellacuria and the Jesuit martyrs were not afraid to speak publicly and became fierce communicators. The right wing accused of them being political, but they understood their public stand for justice and peace as a requirement of the Gospel. They expected every Christian to speak out. They would not tolerate our silence, our fear, our apathy, or our false humility (which lets us off the hook).” (John Dear, S.J., “Remembering the Jesuit Martyrs of El Salvador,” *National Catholic Reporter* Nov. 10 2009.) Similarly, Dorothy Day writes that “I felt that the Church was the Church of the poor . . . but at the same time, I felt that it did not set its face against a social order which made so much charity in the present sense of the word necessary. . . . And it was not just human pride but a strong sense of man’s dignity and worth, and what was due to him in justice, that made me resent, rather than feel proud of so mighty a sum total of Catholic institutions.” Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness*, intro. Robert Coles (New York: HarperCollins, [1952] 1997) 150. <http://ncronline.org/blogs/road-peace/remembering-jesuit-martyrs>

How might we conceive of the church militant in an era that calls for non-violent resistance to, and complex reconstruction of social and economic patterns that oppress, exclude, and impoverish? From 1890 till the 1960s, following each low Mass celebrated daily around the world, every day, congregations recited Pope Leo XIII's prayer to St. Michael the Archangel.⁷⁵ In a new century that continues to attest to humanity's stunning capacity for violence, both blatant and banal, the vocabulary of loving, disciplined struggle and opposition to evil remains germane. When her murderers asked her if she had a weapon, Sr. Dorothy Stang pulled out her Bible and read aloud passages from the Beatitudes. Bruno Chenu writes that the saints, trusting in God's power, "engage in combat against the forces of evil and despair and, by God's grace, endure."⁷⁶ Entangled in consumer culture, trained to cling fearfully to our comforts and our comfort zones, surely we elites need, more than ever, to call on the hope-inspiring energies of our blessed living and blessed dead, indeed, "all the angels and saints."

In the militia of the church of the poor, it is the sufferings and courage of the Rufinas, the Gabrielas, so many children, and their allies—the whole cloud of witnesses—that set the standard of heroism and faithfulness "to the end." Speaking of martyrs who endure torture—but how can this *not* also include Rufina, and all victims of mass, state-sponsored violence; and how can this not include poor mothers like Gabriela, and the millions of parents who suffer the torture of knowing that they cannot adequately protect or care for their loved ones, nor effectively better their children's lot?—France Quere writes: "This is what the ancients called combat: not dying, but suffering, without groveling in the abject misery to which their executioners have reduced them. They remain human beings. And God does not cease to be born in the amazing manger of their bodies."⁷⁷

The question, however, remains: Is engaging explicitly political, or conflictual solidarity a moral requirement for all disciples? Certainly, all disciples are called to live as members of the church of and for the poor. Archbishop Romero clarifies: "When we say 'for the poor,' we do not take sides with one social class, please note. What we do . . . is invite all social classes, rich and poor without distinction," to "take seriously the cause of the poor as though it were our

⁷⁵The English version of Leo XIII's prayer: "Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the malice and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan and all evil spirits who wander through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen."

⁷⁶Chenu et al, *The Book of Christian Martyrs*, 28-29.

⁷⁷Lest Quere's words minimize the soul-rending trauma endured by victims of torture, cf. Rose Marie Berger and Julie Porter, "Sister Dianna Ortiz: Death's Dance Broken," in Wallis & Hollyday, eds., *Cloud of Witnesses*, 37-42, and, esp., Sr. Dianna Ortiz, OSU, "I Was Tortured," (2005) at <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article8807.html>

own—indeed, as what it really is, the cause of Jesus Christ.”⁷⁸ To do this, one must follow Jesus by following the poor and oppressed. For, “the poor have shown the church the true way to go. A church that does not join the poor in order to speak out from the side of the poor against the injustices committed against them, is not the true church of Jesus Christ.”⁷⁹

All in the church of the poor are obliged to practice solidarity, then, in some form, through their particular callings. Not all saints join explicitly political movements or groups. People have different gifts and roles to play, and as Romero notes, “you won’t get everyone to join an organization.”⁸⁰ However, as Jesus’ life and the lives of contemporary saints attest, authentic solidarity of any kind—human, social or civic—is liable to be perceived as dangerous political solidarity by guardians and beneficiaries of an unjust status quo. On the night before she died, Jean Donovan asked her U.S. ambassador Robert White, “What do you do when even to help the poor, to take care of the orphans, is considered an act of subversion by the government?”⁸¹ Beatitudinally-motivated solidarity is the mark of the communion of saints. Enacting it in any form will cost you, can get you hurt, and can even get you killed.

Seventh, and finally, if solidarity is the key virtue for combating structural sin in an interdependent but fractured world, the witness of the saints helps us see concretely how other virtues, and the beatitudes, ground, and support flow from it. St. Vincent De Paul, a champion of “following Christ by following the poor” in his own day, writes:

⁷⁸Romero, *Violence of Love*, 177 (September 9, 1979). Pope Benedict XVI’s *Caritas in veritate* (2009) frames social justice in terms of charitable, non-conflictive human solidarity, anchored by truth and leavened by the logic of love and gift. But in a world marred by the history of sin, pursuing social justice will require struggle at the sides of the dispossessed. The official church’s hesitance to endorse political solidarity (especially its conflictual and oppositional aspects) may help explain the slow pace at which the causes for canonization of Oscar Romero, and other murdered Latin American Catholics widely recognized among their people as martyrs, have proceeded. See Martin Maier, SJ, “Selig sein und seligsprechen,” *Stimmen der Zeit* (3/2010): 145-46. English trans. (“Blessed rather than Beatified”) at: <http://www.con-spiration.de/texte/english/2010/maier-martin-e>.

⁷⁹Romero, *Violence of Love*, 202 (February 17, 1980).

⁸⁰“Among vocations, charisms, and ways of being, what huge differences there are! . . . The point is to be able to bring them [all] to bear on the community’s welfare. If God gives you a vocation to political activism, and you organize the people for their common good, then use that gift of God. It too is a vocation. Political action is a vocation and not all have it; you can’t get everyone into an organization. . . . All have to find their own vocation. Let’s respect what God says to each man or woman, but let us also, all of us, contribute to the lovely and varied unity of God’s kingdom and of the church.” Romero, *Violence of Love*, 182-183 (September 30, 1979).

⁸¹Hollyday, “Four U.S. Martyrs,” 291-92.

“Humility and charity are the two master-chords: one, the lowest; the other, the highest; all the others are dependent on them. Therefore it is necessary, above all, to maintain ourselves in these two virtues; for . . . the preservation of the whole edifice depends on the foundation and the roof.” Pope Benedict, in *Caritas in veritate*, sounds a similar, foundational theme: love, grounded in truth, really does make the world go round, including the institutional world; and suggests a corresponding spirituality of solidarity: an attentive, receptive, openness to life, an “unclenched” posture by which one continually listens for the truth, and willingly accepts both the gifts and the sacrifices solidarity entails.

Taking cues from Vincent and Benedict, we might conjure a simple, Grover-like way to imagine solidarity’s place within the church of the poor today:

Over us, must be **charity**—our source and fulfillment in love freely given by God, and returned in love of God in self, neighbor, and God’s creation, in communion with all the saints. Under us, must be humility—a meekness and poverty of spirit, a continually cultivated grounding in *la Realidad*, in its weight, and its demands.⁸² Around and Through us: active, solidary relationships, dispositions and practices marked by a *mysticism* of open eyes that sees reality in its interdependence, suffering, brokenness and beauty; an *asceticism* that cultivates, in our opulence, capacities for courageous, decentered living with and for the poor and oppressed majorities who comprise this holy communion; and a *martyr’s posture* of faithful, vulnerable witness – an unclenched life-orientation ready to bear the “weight of reality” and the “sufferings due to solidarity,” discerningly entering into at-times risky struggles to incarnate an inclusive common good that is, ultimately, as big as God.⁸³

CONCLUSION

Dean Brackley, SJ, contends:

As the powerful globalize markets, finance and communications, we need to globalize the practice of love and turn this violent new century into the Century of Solidarity More than anything else, this will require “new human beings,” including a critical mass of people in Europe and North America, with hearts capable of identifying with the poor majority of the planet Where will these new human beings come from? The Church must form these new human beings with hearts of flesh. Its schools should give a privileged place to the intellectual and moral creation the world calls for.⁸⁴

⁸²Cf. Ellacuria’s and Sobrino’s contributions here, as interpreted by Lee, Aquino, Iafraite and others. See esp. Lee, *Bearing the Weight of Salvation*, 5, and chs. 2-4.

⁸³See, e.g., Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* III, 17.

⁸⁴Dean Brackley, S.J., “Crosses and Resurrections: Good News From Central America” (2009 Romero Lecture) 14. <http://www.romerotrue.org.uk/documents/romero%20lectures/crossres.pdf>

As our bruised, blessed cloud of witnesses attests, taking up Brackley's call to an educated and yes, political, Catholic solidarity will mean facing many dangers, toils, and snares. But attuning our hearts and imaginations to our true identities as poor, loved-sinners, in humble and grateful communion with the blessed living and dead, can buoy us up to embrace this arduous work. Finding our homes within the solidary bonds of the church of the poor, embraced within the mysteriously porous and gracefully leaky boundaries of Christ's suffering and redeeming body, we each are charged and empowered to play our particular, indispensable parts in that "wonderful exchange," that throbbing network of suffering, struggle and love that is the communion of saints.

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