Ex Latere Christi
EX LATERE CHRISTI

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It is with great pleasure, as the Academic Dean of the Pontifical North American College, that I present to you the third issue of *Ex Latere Christi*. We are pleased to present a number of writings on a wide variety of topics written by faculty, seminarians, alumni, and friends of the College. This is but a small glimpse into the academic life of this community, but one that we hope will prove to be enlightening to those who read it.

I recently rediscovered a beautiful letter written in 2010 by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI to the seminarians of the world. Allow me to quote the Holy Father Emeritus:

>I can only plead with you: Be committed to your studies! Take advantage of your years of study! You will not regret it. Certainly, the subjects which you are studying can often seem far removed from the practice of the Christian life and the pastoral ministry. Yet it is completely mistaken to start questioning their practical value by asking: Will this be helpful to me in the future? Will it be practically or pastorally useful? The point is not simply to learn evidently useful things, but to understand and appreciate the internal structure of the faith as a whole, so that it can become a response to people’s questions, which on the surface change from one generation to another yet ultimately remain the same. For this reason, it is important to move beyond the changing questions of the moment in order to grasp the real questions, and so to understand how the answers are real answers.¹

The purpose of our study of the ecclesiastical disciplines of philosophy,

¹ Benedict XVI, “Letter to Seminarians” (18 October 2010).
theology, and canon law is eminently useful and practical because it aims at answering life’s deepest questions. Our study ought to lead us into an ever-deeper encounter with Jesus Christ, who is “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (Jn 14:6). After coming into contact with the Truth and entering into relationship with the Truth, our task is to assist others in coming to that same encounter. The Truth we have encountered becomes a lantern that lightens the path we walk with those whom we have the privilege to accompany. In short, study should never be a self-serving activity, one that only benefits myself; rather, study must be at the service of the other. It is our hope that in these ensuing pages, the fruits of our study will offer something for your thought and reflection and will lead you to a greater encounter with the Truth.

I am grateful to the student volunteers and faculty staff of our journal who have worked diligently to put together another outstanding issue. In a particular way I would like to thank Fr. Randall Soto (Diocese of San José), our Editor-in-Chief; and our Managing Editor and Student Editor, Mr. Alexander J. Wyvill, Ph.L. ’22 (Archdiocese of Washington) and Mr. Thomas O’Donnell ’23 (Archdiocese of Baltimore). In addition, we are indebted to a number of seminarians who aided in the editing of individual articles: Rev. Mr. Madison Hayes ’21 (Archdiocese of Anchorage-Juneau); Rev. Mr. Christopher Trummer ’21 (Diocese of Springfield in Illinois); Mr. John Bilenki ’22 (Archdiocese of Baltimore); Mr. Aaron Kelly ’22 (Diocese of Rochester); Mr. Matthew Ludwig ’24 (Archdiocese of Washington); and Mr. Andrew Westerman ’24 (Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter).

Sr. Mary Christa Nutt, R.S.M. presents a fascinating article entitled “The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church: A Metaphysical Perspective.” Through the lens of fides et ratio, Sr. Mary Christa examines questions of the relationship between men and women, the particular vocation of woman according to nature, and how this relates to the role and vocation of women in the Church.

Sr. Mary Angelica Neenan, O.P., in an article entitled “Et Tu, Virtus?,” shares with us the challenges and the lessons she has learned from
teaching virtue theory to young adults for over a decade, emphasizing for us the continuing need for the renewal of moral theology in the practice of daily life as inspired by Fr. Servais Pinckaers, O.P.

Rev. Damien Ference, Ph.L. a priest of the Diocese of Cleveland, presents an article entitled “On the Possibility of Friendship with Artificial Intelligence.” Grounded in the thought of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* and *De Anima*, Fr. Ference examines the questions about the nature of friendship and whether friendship with artificial intelligence is possible.

Rev. Mr. Lucas LaRoche ’21 (Worcester) offers a paper which started as an STB thesis at the Pontifical Gregorian University. It is entitled: “Inculturation and the Roman Rite: A Critical Review of the Use of Zaire.”

We are also pleased to present our first book review. Mr. Aaron Kelly, Ph.L. ’22 (Diocese of Rochester) comments on Marcus Mescher’s book, *The Ethics of Encounter: Christian Neighbor Love as a Practice of Solidarity*.

We conclude our issue with a homily given on the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe in the Immaculate Conception Chapel at the Pontifical North American College by Rev. Vincent Ferrer Bagan, O.P., Director of Liturgical Music.

I would like to renew my gratitude to His Excellency, the Most Reverend Robert Deeley, JCD, ’73, C’86, the chair of the Board of Governors of the College, and all the Bishops who serve in this role. A special thank you to the Very Reverend Peter C. Harman, STD, ’99, the Rector the College for his continued support of *Ex Latere Christi*.

Again, our hope is that the articles in this issue stimulate a growing desire to search for the “real answers” to the “real questions” that are asked by one who has encountered the Truth. Please know of my prayers for you and, in your kindness, please pray for me and all at the College.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*Academic Dean*
*Executive Editor, Ex Latere Christi*
INTRODUCTION

The title of this paper indicates that it will be about the participation of women in the Catholic Church. In today’s milieu, implicitly this title is posing a question: do women participate fully in the Catholic Church? To answer the question of whether or not women participate fully in the Church actually requires an evaluation of women’s roles in the Church relative to men’s roles. The Catholic Church is one of the few institutions in the western world that continues to differentiate some of the ministries that are open to men and women and to promote certain vocations based on sex. So the real question at hand is: how does the Church view men and women relative to each other? This implies a second set of questions: is this view archaic, unmodern, wrong, stifling to women, or is a binary classification of sex even possible anymore? These then are the two questions I intend to answer to follow: 1) How does the Church view man and woman? And, 2) Is the Church wrong? Given the complicated nature of these questions, I do not pretend to do more here than suggest where further development would be helpful.

I approach these questions from a perspective in keeping with the theme of this lecture series, that is, from the perspective of faith and reason. To this end, I will briefly reflect on reason and then faith and reason.

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1 Based on a talk given on November 14, 2019 at the “Faith and Reason Lecture,” University of Toronto, Canada.
PHILOSOPHICAL REASONING

Today it cannot be assumed that it is obvious what it means to address a question using faith and reason. In fact, the opposite can nearly be taken for granted. Both Pope St. John Paul II\(^2\) and Pope Benedict XVI\(^3\) saw the tension in the relationship between faith and reason as one of the most fundamental that the Church faces in her mission of new evangelization. I think that the Church’s tradition of faith and reason is also one of the most precious and needed gifts that the Church can give to the cultures she graces with her presence.

First, let me address what I mean by reason. How the Church views men and women is a question that ultimately asks what a human person is, and how the soul and body of a person relate. This is a philosophical question.

We address questions about the person from the perspective of philosophical reason less than we might imagine today. As Sr. Mary Prudence Allen began her trilogy, *The Concept of Woman*: “All too frequently those answering [the question of woman and man] have given superficial and polemical analyses which seek to persuade more by emotion than by the slow and painful search for truth.”\(^4\) I would like to follow the course of philosophical and theological reason, which is the slow, painful, dispassionate (in the best sense of the word) search for truth. Typically, we

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\(^2\) His encyclical *Fides et Ratio* testifies to this.

\(^3\) Aside from the famous so-called, “Regensburg Lecture,” see: “Revelation is the breaking in of the living, true God into our world: it liberates us from the jails of our theories, the bars of which try to protect us against the irruption of God into our life.... The poverty of philosophy, that is, the poverty into which positivist reason has thrown itself, has become the poverty of our faith. The latter cannot be liberated unless reason becomes open to what is new. If the door of metaphysical knowledge remains shut, if the boundaries of human knowledge as they were set by Kant cannot be crossed, then the faith can only waste away: it is short of breath.” Joseph Ratzinger, “La Theologie un etat de lieux,” *Communio* (French ed.), vol. 22, no. 1 (February 1997), quoted in Robert Sarah, *The Day is Now Far Spent* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2019), 33.

do not put a lot of confidence in our ability to arrive at reliable truths that we can share through the process of discursive reasoning.

We tend to trust as factual only what we can know through scientific experimentation, which is a certain application of human reason to form methods that measure and quantify the material world around us. If something can be proved through physical tests, it is to be trusted. It is serious information. We tend to mistrust truths arrived at by human reason exercised outside the scope scientific experimentation or empirical evidence. Our culture rarely stops to expose its prejudices and presuppositions about the use of reason, but they are omnipresent in what we could call the cultural imagination. Our mistrust of the use of reason outside the scope of what today we call science has led us to relativism regarding the most important aspects of human existence, leaving us to rely on as credible only what can be measured. This reduces what we consider to be universally true to include only the material, quantifiable aspects of reality. The immaterial aspects of reality tend to be relegated to the realm of the individual’s choice and experience, including the human soul, the existence of God, personhood, human freedom, grace, virtue, faith, hope and love, and what ultimately differentiates what it is to be a man or a woman.

To engage with what I am about to say, I presuppose a certain confidence in the ability of human reason to attain to and communicate truths beyond what is strictly material, to reason about human existence and to know some things through reason about God. I employ philosophical and theological thought to prove certain things to be true or false.

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5 This is a description of what has been called positivism or empiricism or scientism. My claim is ultimately consonant with the claim that the abandonment of classical metaphysics has led to reductive but prevailing worldview(s) or narratives. Pope Benedict XVI’s “Regensburg Lecture” gives a masterful example of the threat to reason that positivism, empiricism or materialism pose to human rationality. See: Benedict XVI, “Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections,” delivered at the Aula Magna of the University of Regensburg on Tuesday, 12 September 2006.
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH AND REASON

Next, I am assuming a certain relationship between faith and reason. There are various relationships we can envision between truths that can be reached through human reason and truths that are revealed by Jesus Christ.6

First, we could imagine that revealed truths are unrelated to reason or unreasonable. There is a whole impression of how God is and how man is behind this kind of assertion. It means that revelation could be irrational but is considered true because God says so and thus that man need not and perhaps even should not think about revealed truths. This perspective leads to a voluntaristic notion of God, that is, a God whose laws are not based on His inner coherence or essence or truth, but solely on His power. This leads also to fideism, or an irrational and unthinking exercise of faith.7

Second, we could imagine that we do not need revelation to know what Jesus revealed. The content of revelation can be comprehended by men. I mean comprehended in the sense of encompassed completely by the human mind. This presupposes either that what Jesus revealed is basically human wisdom or that God’s inner life is accessible to human reason. This ultimately proposes a God who is not transcendent or truly, metaphysically other than His creatures—His existence is perhaps just infinitely larger than ours, but we can basically grasp it. This perspective tends toward rationalism and ultimately anthropomorphizes God.

Finally, we can take the position of most of the Fathers of the Church and certain theologians like St. Thomas Aquinas and Pope St. John Paul II that revealed truths about God are above reason. They are known

6 To say that these relationships have been heavily debated over the centuries is an understatement. One such well known debate in the twentieth century was between Karl Barth and Erich Przywara. Ultimately, one of Martin Luther’s deepest motives of division from the Catholic tradition was the place and role of philosophy in theological understanding.

7 This is the primary point made in the “Regensburg Lecture.”
only because Jesus Christ revealed them, but they are not unreasonable. They are simply higher than what reason could attain to. Behind this approach to faith and reason is a worldview, an understanding of God and man. It presupposes that the same God who created ex nihilo, the author of all being and truth, whose intelligible imprint we can read in some way in all creation, is the God of revealed truth, who in and through Christ shares His inner life, which super-exceeds or transcends human comprehension, but does not contradict it. It assumes that God does not exist as contradiction within Himself comprehended in His unity or His triunity, and that the world He made is likewise harmonious and intelligibly ordered, an order apprehended to a certain extent by rational creatures. If God is truly transcendent, He can also be immanent to our human lives without usurping our own realm of causality. Thus, this worldview also presupposes that there is a distinction between human nature and the grace bestowed on men through Christ. This perspective sees philosophy as the handmaid to theology, respecting God’s incomprehensible otherness, but also respecting and encouraging the use of reason to understand what the Church teaches as revealed. This is the perspective out of which I am presenting the participation of women in the Church to you now.

To be clear, the Church does not endorse one philosophical position to the exclusion of all others, but she does say what philosophical positions are incompatible with what we know to be true about God according to what His Son has revealed and sound reason.

So why does the Church differentiate some ways of participation according to sex? Why are some men admitted to the priesthood while all women are not, for example? And what is the way that the Church calls women to participate in her life and holiness?

**Different Possibilities of Understanding the Relationship Between Men and Women**

I will begin with a model following the research of Sr. Mary Prudence Allen, R.S.M.. For those who do not know, she is the author of a
three-volume work, *The Concept of Woman*, which essentially offers the only narrative about the history of integral sex complementarity. I will explain what I mean by that term shortly. Sr. Mary Prudence’s model is useful for identifying and philosophically evaluating the general positions that could be taken regarding the relationship between men and women. There are five possibilities:

1. Sex unity: Men and women are equal and not significantly different.
2. Sex neutrality: This position goes beyond the idea of sex unity that differences are not significant, to claim there are no differences at all.
3. Sex polarity: Men and women are significantly different, and men are superior to women.
4. Reverse sex polarity: Men and women are significantly different, and women are superior to men.
5. Integral sex complementarity: Men and women are significantly different but share equal dignity—the latter is the position of the Catholic Church according to the recent magisterium of St. John Paul II, but Sr. Prudence shows that sex complementarity began to emerge in the Church’s intellectual tradition as early as St. Augustine in the end of the 4th / start of the 5th century. Actually, one may cogently argue that this perspective was inaugurated with the Incarnation of Christ, and perhaps existed even in seed-form within Israel.

The five possible visions of relationship between the sexes ultimately rest on certain metaphysical, epistemological, natural philosophical, and moral positions. To examine each philosophical position presupposed by the five possible visions of the rapport between the sexes, Sr. Prudence proposed four questions:

1. At the metaphysical level: In what way are men and women opposite (or I would say differentiated)?
2. At the level of natural philosophy: How are the respective functions

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8 See Allen, *Concept of Woman*, vol. I, 3.
of mothering and fathering in generation understood?
3. At the level of epistemology: Do women and men relate to wisdom in the same or different ways?
4. At the level of morality: Do women and men have the same or different primary virtues?10

I am going to attempt to answer these questions to help bring light to the position of the Church on men and women, beginning with the primary philosophical factor that affects how one understands the relationship between men and women, which is how one understands the relationship between the human body and soul.

**PHILOSOPHICAL POSITIONS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BODY AND SOUL**

What is most obviously different about men and women are their bodies. No matter what understanding you have of sex and gender, one cannot deny that we are born physically determined to be male or female in all or almost all cases.11

To illustrate the point, if someone wants to transition from one gender to another, he or she must undergo a number of surgical and chemical procedures to try to alter the physical body. This presupposes two things. First, that one can distinguish the physical presentation of sex from the person’s inner experience of gender, which indicates something about the transcendence of the soul. Someone who calls himself or herself transgender attempts to match his biological body, what belongs to the material realm of reality, to an inner experience or his or her assessment

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11  In the very rare cases of hermaphrodites, one sex always predominates, and, even more significantly, the person thus affected usually experiences this as a great trial and suffering. Regardless, every human body is determined by certain physical chromosomes that assign a sex to the person. This belongs to the realm of hard, scientific evidence.
of an inner experience regarding gender; there is a presupposed distinction between the body and the soul, and gender is related to some aspect of being human that can apparently transcend the physical and material body. Second, the surgical and chemical steps taken to change someone's sex can only alter or suppress the physical appearance or manifestations of sex; the chromosomes, in the end, cannot be altered. Every new cell produced by a human body is stamped with the genetic code and sex the person was born with. It is the subsequent production of hormones, etc. that medical science aims to change. Nature, if we want to call it such, determines sex, and all that follows in altering gender is an attempt to change nature.

The question we want to address then is not what chromosomes we have, which is scientifically provable, but how we relate to our chromosomal condition and what having certain chromosomes tells us about who we are. Can the soul of a person be at odds with his or her physical body? How one answers this question depends on whether he or she is a materialist, a dualist or what I will call a hylemorphic realist. In other words, the concept of femininity and masculinity belongs in part to the realm of the philosophical and metaphysical, not only to psychological or physical factors. The reality of what it is to be a man, or a woman depends on what level of the person one is questioning. One could ask if the body could be at odds with the soul at the ontological level and arrive at a different answer asking the same question at the psychological level. There are ultimately two distinct questions being asked. Whether or not the soul could be metaphysically or ontologically at odds with the body is one question. If the person could psychologically experience himself at odds with his body is another question.

Since we are aiming at the deepest truths of the person, I will address the three main metaphysical-anthropological positions that can be taken regarding the body-soul relationship.

First, there is dualism. Dualism is the belief that the body and soul exist in a separated relationship where the body and soul are considered essentially independent from each other and potentially at ontological
odds with each other. Plato was the most famous dualist in history, but since him, many dualists have emerged, including St. Augustine when he was a Manichean, and perhaps most influentially to our present culture, Descartes, as well as postmodernists, including some postmodern feminists. They tend to see the soul, belonging to the immaterial realm of reality, as the true person and the material realm of the body as alien and alienating to the true person. The classical image is that of the body as a prison for the soul. Reincarnation exhibits this kind of thought inasmuch as a soul could be re-instantiated in just about any physical body. This position lends itself easily to the possibility of a psychological or spiritual state where body and soul are at odds, but this opposition would be somehow also ontologically natural to the person. There would be a strong argument, then, for overall psychic serenity and indifference in the face of gender dysphoria.

For the materialist, there is no immaterial soul. The person is only a conglomerate of electrical, material, and chemical impulses; a bundle of nerves, bones, synapses, and hormones that compose a body and a brain stamped by a given genetic code and gender. What could be considered the soul is nothing more than a state of consciousness somehow generated by these physical factors. Thus, there is no immaterial soul to either unite with or even to oppose to the body. If materialists were consistent, they would never propose a distinction between sex and gender identity since there is no transcendent principle of the person to question the body’s physical presentation, impulses, thoughts, and experiences; the physical realm would exhaust and absorb what it is to be a person. If a natural disjunction between brain and body could occur, there would still be no psychic discomfort. One presentation of sex and gender would be experienced as the same as any other. But of course, with unexamined presuppositions, persons often hold incoherent ideas. Today, plenty of materialists accept transgenderism, for example.

I am going to make a case for a third position, that of hylemorphic realism—where the human person is both his body and his soul such that the body relates intimately and organically to the soul and vice versa,
while the soul is immaterial and transcends the body in a certain way. This anthropology rests on metaphysical principles that I will elucidate now:

First, hylemorphism presupposes that human persons have immaterial souls that give being to (are the formal principle of) and are metaphysically united to, but that subsist beyond and transcend, the body. I do not mean that the immaterial soul exists prior to the body, but that once a human person is conceived, and God gives the incorruptible soul such that the person exists as body and soul, the expiration of the body in death does not mean the ending of the soul.

That the rational soul subsists or is a subsistent reality, we can know by reason, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, in any number of ways. One rational argument he gives is that the functions we can observe as particularly human—to reason and to will—exceed the potential of any purely matter-bound power of soul. For example, the mind has no threshold for information above or below which it is damaged as say, an eardrum or an eye is when encountering too great a sound or light. The soul can in a sense become all things by knowing all things without being damaged. This is not the case for any power of soul proportionate to sense apprehension or inclination. The intellect shows none of the limitations in operation that any power tied strictly to an organ does. Animals, by contrast, have sensitive souls, but show no truly transcendent operation. Their souls are entirely commensurate with their material bodies, and so their souls expire with the failure of the organism. They also show no capacity for transcendent self-reflection. Animals never attempt to change their sex. They do not conceptualize what it is to relate spiritually and psychologically to their sex-determined body, which is gender. Aquinas also pointed out that if the human soul—and all living things, for that matter—did not have an immaterial principle of life, we could not differentiate animate from inanimate objects.

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13 *ST* I, q. 75, a. 1, corpus.
I use the word realistic or realist to modify *hylemorphic* because our everyday experience confirms the unity of body and soul quite often. Take for example, the terrible feeling about ourselves we undergo if we are told that we are ugly, especially by someone we love. Even gender dysphoria bespeaks a natural yearning for unity between body and soul, even if those who seek to transition would deny a stable human nature. In fact, only a natural inclination to achieve unity between interiority and physical exteriority can explain the often painful and uncomfortable measures that persons will go through to attain a unity between the gender with which they identify interiorly and their physical appearance. These examples could be multiplied, as could counterexamples, but I will not address those now.

Second, *hylemorphism* presupposes that the organic substances we see in the universe that are enlivened or informed by immaterial principles or forms—or souls if you will—exhibit a dynamism or end toward which they act. Formal immaterial causes or principles of life that enliven matter imply final causes. We experience this and take it for granted every day. The world of living things follows a certain order. Life does not unfold in a random way. Children are born and grow and mature physically always in the same manner. If this were not so, doctors could not identify when a child’s growth patterns are abnormal, for example. This order can be rationally perceived—and sometimes even measured scientifically. This order is manifested in the physical aspects of organisms but must be driven so to speak by the immaterial aspects of reality, since we know intelligibility to come from immaterial principles. How do we know this? One way we know this is because our minds are the intellectual principles that so often establish order or orchestrate how processes and events will unfold. If the universe is full of organic things with immaterial principles of life ordered by finalities, the universe is not random. This is obvious or at least reasonable to a rational soul. The universe presents us with natures, that is, with formal and final principles inherent to natural and organic substances at every level of existence. A straightforward rational assessment of our experience of existence can recognize that neither an immanent cause nor men’s minds can account
fully for formal and final causality in the universe, and in some ways not even material or efficient causality can be accounted for. It is rational then to believe that God exists.14

Thus, I presuppose that the world is full of creatures imbued with certain natures that have a dynamism inherent in their way of being and these manifest an order sustained and given by who Christians know to be the Word of God. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John 1:1–5).

It follows that men and women identify our physical bodies deeply with who we are, while the soul transcends the physical body in some ways. Each of the three philosophical positions that I mentioned yields one of the five possible visions of the relationship between men and women.

Very generally speaking, dualism undergirds sex unity or sex neutrality. Both understandings of sex polarity could be linked to materialism. The vision of sex complementarity alone follows from hylemorphism. Basically, to arrive at complementarity, which is differentiation and equality, there must be a principle of differentiation and a principle of sameness, where what differentiates does not imply a greater than and a less than and what gives equality imparts the primary existence and dignity. This is hylemorphism, and I believe that it is the philosophical position most compatible with faith and reason—and that also best coincides with the Church’s understanding of the person and the relationship between men and women.

14 In fact, atheism and nihilism contradict our ordinary experiences. However common, atheism is a kind of capricious, decadent, and indulgent philosophical position. To close one’s eyes to the natural, metaphysical order and dynamism in the universe, first exhibited in the human person, which cannot be explained sufficiently by merely material and efficient causes and forces is not a product of honest human experience and thought.
Integral Sex Complementarity implies and is based upon the following metaphysical commitments (reinforced, enriched, and further illuminated by revelation):

1. That men and women alike possess immaterial, intelligent souls capable of knowledge and love (Aristotle arguably arrived here), and they are both in the image of God (Augustine arrived here). Thus, they both have an equal dignity, and they are integral in themselves, that is, wanted for their own sake by God.

2. That in the essence of the souls of men and women, both are capable of receiving the grace of God and both receive the theological virtues to intellect and will—they can both achieve union with God.

3. That, since the body is intimately related to the soul, men’s and women’s rational souls relate to the outside world by way of their bodies and their bodies are differentiated. This is obvious. Men and women produce hormones differently, they have different sexual organs, they have different muscle mass, ways of carrying weight, etc. If we are consistent in applying the unity of body and soul, these physical characteristics of sex difference are not sealed off from the psychic and spiritual level of man. Thus, even with the same powers of soul, men and women also have differentiated emotional and psychological propensities. All these aspects of the lower soul, tied directly to the body, form how a man and a woman perceive reality and act on reality. Thus, men and women relate to reality in a differentiated way, each with a unique gift, so to speak.

I do not want us to gloss over the dignity and uniqueness of each human soul too quickly before looking at how the body differentiates men and women and helps us to understand what is properly feminine and masculine. Deeper than the level of sex differentiation there is the complex and unrepeatable beauty of each human soul, whether that of a man or a woman. If the souls of human beings transcend the body and are capable of intellectual knowing that can even participate in the life of God,

15 See various arguments in Allen, Concept of Woman, vol. I.
then jumping too quickly to the distinctions between men and women or exaggerating the importance of sex differentiation can leave the primacy of the uniqueness of each human being overshadowed, bringing about a forced or overly constraining image of what it is to be a woman and what is proper to woman as such. Human persons are not entirely determined by necessary, biological, and organic functions in the same way that animals are. Our rationality makes us capable of free choice and moral action, actions that use but transcend the body. This is especially evident in each person’s unique capacity to cooperate with divine grace. The reality of sex differences should not ‘peg’ men and women too tightly nor lead to an overly simplistic view of the human individual person who, however, always exists as either a man or woman. This is not dualism, as I will explain shortly, but I think our language about the ‘femininity’ or ‘masculinity’ of the soul must be carefully nuanced and qualified.

THE VOCATION OF WOMAN ACCORDING TO NATURE

Now, I turn to the specific vocation of woman, starting with an analogy from nature to shed light on what differentiates men’s and women’s vocations in the Church. As Pope St. John Paul II put it: “It is a question of understanding the reason for and the consequences of the Creator’s decision that the human being should always and only exist as a woman or a man.” 16

The differentiation between men and women is most obvious in the natural realm and it is also rather obviously connected to reproduction. The most dramatic differences in the bodies of men and woman are sexual organs. It is specifically in giving and nurturing new life that men and women have unique capacities that are relative to each other. The child is conceived naturally through a sperm and an ovum. Sex-differentiation is ordered to the transmission of life.

A woman has a physical capacity particular to her to bring forth and nurture new life. She does this not only because she wants to, but because she is uniquely physically capacitated to by being a woman. She can receive life in her womb and provide tissue, blood, warmth, nutrition and give birth in a way a man cannot. She can likewise nurse the child and in this way form a unique bond with the child. Her body’s biological differentiation from man’s lends itself to motherhood. A man has another part to play in the transmitting of life, very important but different in specificity in the transmission of life. This is physical complementary. Neither the man or the woman can do what the other can biologically, nor can they achieve new life alone.

Plainly then, whatever else the body may communicate, it indicates that the differentiation between men and women is intimately connected to the transmission of new life and rooted especially in in a physical differentiation. We can say with Pope St. John Paul II that woman in differentiation from man has a special grace or capacity for physical motherhood while men in differentiation from women have a special capacity for physical fatherhood.

Yet the soul, the seat of the person, cannot be alienated from the body if we want to avoid dualism. The body is integral to what it is to be a person and it manifests something about our innate inclinations, specific gifts, and capacities. Thus, we can see that maternity is stamped into what it is to be a woman.

Looking at the body from the hylemorphic perspective, given the transcendence of the human soul, this capacity for maternity cannot be exhausted by physical maternity, both because to be a mother to a human child requires a capacity to nurture life in a manner proportionate to a rational offspring, and because for the mother herself to act humanly in motherhood she must act rationally. The mother must be able to provide for the child at every level of his existence, that is psychologically and spiritually as well as physically. Because to act as a truly rational creature, a mother must also employ all her soul, from its lowest to its highest powers, motherhood, rearing human beings, must be physical
and spiritual. 

Motherhood and fatherhood, we can conclude, go beyond physical conception and birth. Each parent uniquely contributes to the growth of the child’s physical, spiritual, emotional, and psychological life in a way that is differentiated and analogous to the physical specificity of being a man or woman. 

Thus, in some way, however difficult to articulate, even at the spiritual level men and women are differentiated in the bringing about of life. 

As St. Augustine said, the Blessed Mother is not the pre-eminent member of the Church because of her physical maternity, but above all because she conceived Christ first in her heart by faith. Likewise, religious women who renounce marriage nonetheless possess a spiritual maternity. Every physical mother’s deepest and most important role is in her spiritual maternity, by which she contributes uniquely to the life of her children. 

Starting with biological motherhood as a way to understand what differentiates men and women and thus to understand the nature of being a woman cannot be confused with associating women with motherhood in the derogatory light of utilitarianism, which paints motherhood as useful inasmuch as she bears children for a particular temporal gain, such as the benefit of the state or a political ideology (as it was by the communists or other totalitarian regimes). The biological differences of men and women provide a window to understand what makes a human being a woman and not a man at the level of the sensitive and rational powers too. 

WHAT DIFFERENTIATES THE SOUL OF A WOMAN FROM A MAN?

If what it is to be female cannot belong only to the body, ‘where’ in

17 Augustine, Sermon 72, A, 7. 
the soul, to put it crudely, or *how deeply* in the soul does sex differentiate? This is a widely debated question. I would like to propose only the sketch of a possible answer. St. Thomas Aquinas explains that the intellect and will of man are subsistent and rational precisely on account of their immateriality.\(^{19}\) Immaterial substances do not have sex or gender in themselves. Purely immaterial beings do not procreate. It is in the intellect and will knowing and loving God that men and women alike image God and derive their equal dignity. The human soul, however, is one, and has vegetative and the sensitive powers, which we share with animals. These operations of the lower soul are entirely co-extensive with or absorbed by the body’s functions. For Aquinas, they include the imagination, the cogitative sense, the common sense, the memory in a certain way, the passions, and the emotions, in short, the whole richness of the psychological life. These lower powers of soul are suited to inform and put into act a female body and a female psyche. In a *hylemorphic* model based on realist metaphysics, the lower powers of the soul are also intricately, inextricably, and intimately involved in our human, rational knowing and loving.

We also know that procreation and the rearing of children is tied to the present temporal, bodily way of human existence. The Lord taught the Sadducees that:

> The children of this age marry and remarry; but those who are deemed worthy to attain to the coming age and to the resurrection of the dead neither marry nor are given in marriage. They can no longer die, for they are like angels;

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\(^{19}\) “But we must observe that the nobler a form is, the more it rises above corporeal matter, the less it is merged in matter, and the more it excels matter by its power and its operation; hence we find that the form of a mixed body has another operation not caused by its elemental qualities. And the higher we advance in the nobility of forms, the more we find that the power of the form excels the elementary matter; as the vegetative soul excels the form of the metal, and the sensitive soul excels the vegetative soul. Now the human soul is the highest and noblest of forms. Wherefore it excels corporeal matter in its power by the fact that it has an operation and a power in which corporeal matter has no share whatever. This power is called the intellect.”

*ST I, q. 79, a. 1.*
and thy are the children of God because they are the ones who will rise. (Lk 20:30–38)

The need for bodily sex differentiation will come to an end in Heaven, then, when the human intellect gazes upon God and finds in Him the fulfillment of all desires. The soul reunited with the resurrected body will not be ordered to entering into sexual union or child rearing but toward union with God, who is not male or female. Yet neither is God not male or female. Rather, He is beyond sex, as the source and fullness of all unity and differentiation. The human intellect and will, by which union with God is achieved by grace, are not sex differentiated by the very fact of their immateriality, an immateriality which makes them capax Dei, capable of being able to unite by grace with God who is immaterial and beyond gender. Sex differentiation is also surely a manifestation of the beauty and manifold perfections of God, and so femaleness and male-ness may, as St. Augustine thought, remain in Heaven.20 God loves all things he has created, especially man and woman. Nevertheless, since the soul is most deeply made spousal to God,21 it is ultimately not male or female in itself. One may conclude that the soul of a woman is sex differentiated inasmuch as the lower powers of soul are suitable to a female body, which given the highly developed doctrine of hylemorphism in Aquinas, deeply affects her spiritual way of knowing and loving. A woman knows and loves as a woman. St. Thomas uses a distinction in moral agency that can be helpful here. He distinguishes the act of a human from a human act. A truly human action is a voluntary and moral action because it is accomplished through the powers that specify what is to be human. Acts that a man accomplishes involuntarily are still human in that a human does them, but they are not voluntary, such

20 Augustine, City of God, (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1958), Book XXII, Ch. 17.

as sleeping.22 Similarly, a woman possesses the soul of a woman, but her soul and most especially her intellect is not female *per se* by virtue of being immaterial. A woman’s soul has neither male nor female ‘parts.’ The human soul is essentially and according to its highest powers ordered to the transcendent God. But in considering this or that human soul as possessing lower powers that actuate this or that body, the soul is the act of a man or a woman and cannot be otherwise. In other words, souls cannot be indiscriminately incarnated in any human body, but this individual soul animates that male or that female person. Thus, in a way similar to the categorization of a human act versus the act of a human, one could say that the soul is not male or female according to what is essential to sex but is the unique soul of a female or of a male.

**Grace and Its Effects**

Now is the appropriate moment to address grace and its effects very succinctly. Grace does not ruin or violate nature, but neither is it entirely encompassed or defined by nature. The same God of the natural forms of the universe is the Author of grace and salvation. According to the famous formula of Aquinas, grace heals, elevates, and perfects nature, allowing a man or woman to participate in the inner Trinitarian life. Both men and women are heirs to the Kingdom and are born into the Trinitarian life by grace through baptism into Christ. Both men and women receive the infused virtues of faith, hope, and charity to their intellect and will. Both are given the guidance of the Beatitudes and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to attain to happiness with God. Men and women all have the same end. Participation in the Trinitarian life by grace is the fundamental participation of all the baptized in the Church. In this fullest sense of participation, there is no differentiation between man and woman. As St. Paul wrote: “So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither

22 See *ST* I-II, q. 1, a. 1.
slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal 3:26–28). In Christianity, the reception of supernatural grace is the fundamental equalizer of men and women, which does not fail to respect sex differentiation, since nature is entirely respected even if uplifted by grace. According to Sr. Mary Prudence Allen, it was precisely the doctrine of grace and the rich example of female and male saints alike along the history of the Church that allowed the development of the concept of integral sex complementarity, which theory exists in a fully articulated form only within the Catholic Church.23

**Grace and Ecclesiology**

Grace must be spoken about in the context of the Church, since it is entrusted by Christ to His Body the Church who is Mother and Bride, and is transmitted especially in the Sacraments, which prolong the grace of his salvific passion, death, and resurrection in time. The grace of God by its essence incorporates men and women into the mystical body of Christ. Grace endows with healing and gifts to the soul so that we may be united to God and to each other into an organic body, that of Christ. By grace, men and women are invited into participation in the Trinitarian life. As the Father sends the Son and the Holy Spirit in mission, so by grace all men and women are incorporated into the Trinitarian missions, each taking a part in the living mission of the whole like the parts of a body, as says St. Paul.

**Vocation in General**

I am going to switch my language now from the roles and participation of women in the Church to that of vocation, which is where sex differentiation plays out in the life of the Church. It is only considering grace and the Church that can one speak of vocation, according to St. Edith Stein. Vocation is a call, or a mission given by God to an individual. It

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implies a relationship both initiated and fulfilled by participation in the life of God in His Church.

The mission of every Christian is founded first on the creaturely life given by God, then upon the spiritual life of the soul.

It is opportune here to correct a typical but false thought about the Church’s very nature sometimes construed from her moral teachings. Negative commands or judgments (‘thou shalt nots’) are not the essence of the Church’s mission, but rather they provide the threshold below which is the loss of the life of grace and ultimately self-destruction. The Church only commands men and woman negatively to refrain from what is sinful because it is harmful. She delineates the minimum or baseline in the moral life to foster the optimization of divine life in the soul. The Church understands men in their deepest needs and so the nature of her guidance aims not only to prevent immorality but primarily to convert men, turn them, from an unfulfilling interior path toward personal and communal fulfillment in the Trinitarian life. To give a simple example, the commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill’ provides the minimum moral standard to allow for the life of grace in oneself and others. The Church does not so much seek to restrain us from murder (though she does want to do that) as she wants to turn us from a trajectory toward death to a dynamism that leads to unending life, the life of grace through and in Christ, for ourselves, and others (in this case the life spared of murder). The essence of the Church’s mission is to facilitate the fulfillment of the natural desire for transcendence in man and the supernatural impetus of grace until the consummation of the soul and all souls is achieved with God in Heaven. She does this through her sacraments and through instruction. The Church herself is a mother.

To apply this logic of the Church’s moral prohibitions to the participation of women in the Church:

The Church does not so much forbid women to be priests as much as she calls each woman to fulfill her natural inclinations and gifts in participation as a woman with His Trinitarian grace. As St. Edith Stein puts
it, vocation is a call for not a restriction from.¹ The differentiation of vocations in the Church is not based only on the physical body, then, nor on a lack, but on God-given natural and supernatural qualities and capacities, bestowed by God as a unique participation in the mission of Christ, to contribute to the panoply of interrelated manifestations of grace, in a way that never alienates nature, but builds on and develops nature.

Rather than bar the way to the priesthood, the Church invites woman to different forms of participation that she is uniquely equipped to carry out for the good of the whole and for the fulfillment of her own desires and graces. If woman were not differentiated from man, and if her way of differentiation did not correspond to the deeper inclinations of her soul, this would be constraining. For the dualist or the materialist, vocation would rob woman of freedom and opportunity, but from a metaphysical perspective of hylemorphic realism, one can see that it is fitting and empowering that the Church invites participation in the Trinitriaian life according to each person’s unique existence: body and soul.

The Church nurturing the life of each man and woman by calling each person to the use of his or her unique capacities given by God for the sake of all. This is a vocation. God gives the capacities in nature and grace and then calls upon us to cooperate with Him by using them for ourselves and for the whole Church.

Vocations in the Church then are based on the bestowal of life and grace in accord with the mission of the Trinity. Vocations are discerned and cooperated with freely, but they are not self-determined. They are initiated by God and understood by us progressively. Each person has certain and unique qualities of body and soul that make him or her able to make a specific contribution to the Body of Christ. Vocations are based precisely on what a person is especially capacitiated to do. A vocation calls forth the latent aptitudes and deepest inclinations in nature and grace in the person and puts them at the service of the whole. They deeply fulfill a

The Participation of Women in the Catholic Church

person who lives the vocation by unfolding in him or her an increasing cooperation with the natural and Trinitarian dynamism within the soul. Since union with the Trinity is only attained in and through Christ, an authentic vocation will also conform the person who lives it faithfully to Christ, crucified, died, and resurrected.

THE PROBLEM OF SIN

An account of woman’s vocation and participation would not be complete without addressing the problem of sin. We read in the proto-Gospel that after the fall God said to the woman: “I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.” (Gen 3:16). God predicts—and in a negative sense, promises—that after sin, because it introduced disorder into the world, the differentiation proper to the sexes would devolve into inequality, frequently to the exploitation of woman, changing the complementarity between man and woman to that of master-slave dynamic. This is not only due to man’s disordered lust to dominate, but to the woman’s disordered tendency toward servility or its cruel counterpart, manipulation to the end of reverse domination. These disordered tendencies have marred and continue to mar the integral sex complementarity along history that should have manifested in relationships between men and women.

(Sin, not necessarily personal sin, is also the ultimate cause of the possibility that a person could find disharmony or disintegration between his perception of his gender and his bodily sex.)

THE PARTICULAR VOCATION OF WOMAN IN THE CHURCH

Finally, I turn to what one could call the ‘marks’ of feminine differentiation that specify how she participates in the life of the Church. According to Pope St. John Paul II, whom Sr. Mary Prudence credits with the most fully developed articulation of integral sex complementarity, woman
is called in the Church to virginity and motherhood. The Church has remarkable examples of how women in her tradition have cooperated with grace and have achieved the heights of holiness and knowledge as women. For example, Hildegard of Bingen, recently declared a doctor of the Church, was known for her exemplary articulation of doctrine; St. Joan of Arc, for being heroic in defending France militarily; and St. Maria Goretti, a child capable of heroic virtue; or St. Felicity, who for the love of Christ died in the arena, leaving behind an infant she had given birth to not twenty-four hours earlier. Notice that each woman has qualities that are often associated with masculinity or that exceed the capacities and tendencies of nature. This gives a vivid example of the transcendent workings of grace in the souls of the saints. Yet, each woman achieved sanctity as a woman without renouncing or violating what is particularly feminine. Above all, one looks to the Blessed Virgin Mary to see how grace has worked in the heart of a woman unblemished by sin. As Pope St. John Paul II noted:

Grace never casts nature aside or cancels it out, but rather perfects it and ennobles it. Therefore the “fullness of grace” that was granted to the Virgin of Nazareth, with a view to the fact that she would become “Theotókos,” also signifies the fullness of the perfection of “what is characteristic of woman,” of “what is feminine.” Here we find ourselves, in a sense, at the culminating point, the archetype, of the personal dignity of women.

While both a man and a woman relate to the Mother of Christ, a woman uniquely imitates and participates in the motherhood of Mary and the spousal relationship of the Church to Christ.

Motherhood

Generating new life is a profoundly human desire and privilege, accomplished in men and woman with the help of God. In human beings, to respect their rational nature and dignity, and their capacity for virtue, friendship, and love, this inclination is fulfilled within marriage. Most

2 See John Paul II, Mulieris Dignitatem.
3 John Paul II, Mulieris Dignitatem, 5. His italics.
obviously then, since the Church loves marriage to the point of raising it to the height of a sacrament, a means of salvific grace, women and men are both called to the vocation of marriage and thus to become spouses. A woman, by the spousal union of marriage, becomes a mother—and a man, a father. This is the primordial vocation of all men and women.

THE SPIRITUALITY OF MOTHERHOOD

Each woman, whether she has physical children or not, is endowed with the physical, emotional and spiritual capacity to nurture life in a way differentiated from a man. “Motherhood,” to quote Pope St. John Paul II, “involves a special communion with the mystery of life […] Her unique contact with the new human being developing within her gives rise to an attitude towards human beings […] which profoundly marks the woman’s personality.”⁴ It is not only by physically carrying children that a woman relates uniquely to the human person, but in her innate potential to nurture life from within her body, to sacrifice herself for new life in an integral way that involves her whole person, and to rear and educate the person even from his or her preverbal stages of growth. Women are more capable than men according to Pope St. John Paul II of paying attention to people.⁵ Every woman has this potential and can develop whether she physically gives birth or not.

VIRGINITY

Without renouncing her primordial call to a spousal relationship and motherhood, some women are also called to virginity for the sake of the Kingdom of God. Nothing affirms the Church’s perspective that woman has a value in herself, apart from man, and that a woman’s motherhood is principally spiritual, as the vocation to consecrated virginity. The call to virginity becomes a symbol of the deeper call of women and men alike, of all persons, to spousal union of the soul with God by grace. The

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vocation to virginity for the Kingdom was initiated by and is entirely new following the coming of Christ, meaning that it signifies the new end to which man is elevated—that is, participation in the Trinitarian life, won by Christ’s passion, death, and resurrection. The woman is spousal to Christ by renouncing earthly marriage and vowing her virginity to God.

**WOMAN’S PRIORITY IN THE ORDER OF LOVE**

Looking again at how a woman uniquely encompasses life in her body and relates to the person out of this fundamental capacity, Pope St. John Paul II sees woman as having a particular priority in the Church’s mission in the order of love. She knows and loves the child first in a way more intimately and distinctly from the way a man does.

*God entrusts the human being to her in a special way.* Of course, God entrusts every human being to each and every other human being. But this entrusting concerns women in a special way—precisely by reason of their femininity—and this in a particular way determines their vocation.6

Man is first entrusted to woman, and woman in this sense is the educator of man.

To exemplify the feminine priority in the order of love, Pope St. John Paul II used the model of the Marian and Petrine dimensions of the Church, where the Marian is always prior.7 Christ chose to be born a man. He chose to become Incarnate through motherhood. Thus, He established in the Church a Marian dimension to every grace. All grace comes from Christ through the Blessed Mother. The grace of the hierarchical Church (the Petrine dimension), which distributes the sacramental graces of Christ, likewise comes first through the Marian dimension. Thus, the Marian dimension has a certain priority regarding the hierarchical Church. Yet, from another perspective, the hierarchical dimension of the Church precedes the Marian dimension since the priest’s role

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in distributing grace through the sacraments precedes the cooperation of the children of God in the Marian vocations of motherhood and virginity. There is a reciprocity and a circularity, or a complementarity so to speak, among the Marian and Petrine dimensions of the Church, as there is at the level of nature between men and women. There exists a complementarity at the level of grace in a way analogous to integral sex complementarity, where the relationship of Christ to His Church is the prime analogate and human marriage based on integral sex complementarity is the secondary analogy, pointing pedagogically to the life to come.

To conclude, the Church views men and women as relating according to integral sex complementarity. The Church calls women to full participation in her life and holiness according to a woman’s specific gifts and capacities to the joy of the woman called and the fulfillment of God’s wonderful and benevolent designs for the salvation of all who will receive Him.
Teaching virtue to young adults is one of the most rewarding and exciting elements of teaching on the university level. The young people I have encountered in the past twelve years are impressive and delightful, and the following analysis is by no means a reflection on their goodness. It is a generalized analysis of the challenges that they have inherited and which they are bravely facing. It is my hope that these challenges can be remedied as teachers of virtue take up the academic and moral task left to us by Fr. Servais Pinckaers, O.P., in the school of St. Thomas Aquinas.

In Thomistic fashion, I have divided these challenges into three categories, each section having 3 sub-sections, the last being further divided into 3 more sub-sections. The most common difficulties that I have encountered in teaching students for the past twelve years can neatly be summarized under three main categories:

I. Problems in Philosophy
   A. The Passions
   B. A Faulty Anthropology
   C. Lack of Understanding of Prudence

II. Problems Related to Grace
   A. Semi-Pelagianism
   B. Jansenism
   C. Voluntarism
III. Problems in Understanding Virtue Theory
   A. The Nature of Virtue Itself
      1. As that Which Perfects Man’s Powers by Disposing Man to Act Well
      2. Relationship between the Theological and the Moral Virtues
      3. The Primacy of the Interior Act
   B. Application
      1. Principle of Double Effect
      2. False Understanding of Conscience
      3. Superficial Denunciation of Nominalism and Voluntarism
   C. Conclusion

Anecdotal remarks about the students: the wide range of students I have taught on the undergraduate and graduate level since 2007 includes students who range in age from 17 to 85; from five continents; who have levels of education ranging from high school to doctorates; are mostly seeking degrees other than Theology and Philosophy; are mostly Christian, but also atheists, agnostics, and Muslims; and are of various nationalities, though mostly American, or at least residing in the U.S.A. They are wonderful people, energetic and filled with faith, devotion, optimism and hope. It is from them that I notice these same generalities, which are not at all a commentary on their openness and even holiness. These are their challenges, which they have inherited, and which their teachers are at pains to assist them to overcome.

1. Problems in Philosophy

A. The Passions

The first category of challenges in teaching virtue has to do with basic philosophy, and the first sub-category to be addressed has to do with the human passions. This is the number one problem among young people (and some older ones too): a misunderstanding of the passions themselves and especially their role in relation to virtue.
Most students view the passions as evil. Even if they maintain that intellectually they do not believe the passions to be evil, they have accepted it in practice as a subconscious principle. This is exemplified by feeling guilty when angry, accusing self (and others) of lacking faith when sad, and generally being in constant turmoil over their own (and other people’s) passions. Misunderstanding the passions themselves has a direct bearing on their misunderstanding of the role of virtues in relation to the passions.

Some are influenced by Stoicism in thinking that the goal is to have no passions, or as little movement of the passions as possible, because strong movements are out of control and usually lead to evil actions. The “virtuous” person never shows anger and should be able to overcome, hide, or suppress negative emotions. To not feel strong emotions is a sign of virtue for them. To have vehement passions, especially of sadness or anger, is considered sinful, irrational, and always an indication of fault (this is especially hard news for the choleric). They have been told repeatedly, “If you’re angry, it’s your fault.” “If you are emotional, you are not credible.” “If you’re angry, then you have some selfish motive going on, or something bad happened in your past that you haven’t dealt with.” If you have a strong emotion of anger, you have “anger issues.” All of this has led to a definite fear of anger itself, and great difficulty in acquiring virtues which govern anger.

Likewise, sadness is seen as a sign of a lack of faith for them. They have been told, “stop ruminating over the evil done to you. You must forgive and move on.” Virtuous people are happy people. Many of the young adults I have taught, therefore, have difficulty distinguishing between appropriate emotional responses and excessive (or deficient) responses to reality, and how to accept their passions without being ruled by them.

The opposite situation occurs less frequently, that is, the belief that one can never be at fault for choosing to act on his/her passions. This group seems to have jumped from the fact that the passions are morally neutral to the idea that this liberates a person from any need to control them. “If I’m angry, I must express it at all costs.” “Any offense requires an
apology.” “I have a right to show how I feel!” For one bent on evil, the results of this thinking are disastrous, but for one striving for goodness the consequences are subtler. They have difficulty distinguishing when to act according to passions and when it is virtuous to hold them in check. And both groups suffer from the inability to understand that feeling one’s passions is neither morally good nor morally evil, but instead is a necessary part of integrating them into one’s moral life.

Coupled with this difficulty in integrating their own passions, many young people are ruled by other people’s passions. Some will even state explicitly that their own choices are governed by who might be angry or sad. This is not only a case of the “door mat” or the “enabler.”1 These young people are very aware that someone else’s anger is dictating what he/she should do or not do, should say or not say. And furthermore, this is supposed to be virtuous, in fact the very essence of charity. Such young people are easily manipulated. They are considered “nice” because they never interfere, never make an imposition, are always generous and cheerful, and can put up with tension and outbursts. Such a definition of “charity” is hard to break. These people also have a very difficult time understanding prudence, because it is by nature so undetermined and allows for contradictory choices based on circumstances. They have difficulty understanding that in some cases it is virtuous to speak up, and in some cases it is virtuous to keep quiet. “How can I know?” they ask. They are looking for an absolute determiner, which can never be given. They cannot distinguish what would make the difference by way of prudence, because they are so accustomed to thinking that it is always virtuous to keep quiet, to stay in the background. And it is totally confusing to them that different people, in the same situation, can make different choices and both be virtuous. Admittedly, they make for lovely students (and subjects), but in the end they are not free and such ideas often end in depression or an emotional breakdown.

Most of the young people that I have taught are shocked upon learning

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that two of the four cardinal virtues govern the passions. Indeed, this would be shocking if one has believed that virtue means rising above the passions, never feeling them or being influenced by them, self-control having been a main concern for years. The concept that the passions are about love for the good and aversion from evil, and that they are not wrong in themselves, is mind-boggling for them. For some students, this is all that need be said. They read Aquinas and they are re-habilitated. But for most young people, it takes years to undo the partial truths that they have accepted in their lives. Conrad Baars has been a great help in this regard.² For some, this battle will be a life-long (but grace-filled) battle, not unlike St. Augustine’s battle for purity after his conversion.³ The battle of viewing their own passions wrongly while constantly (and unsuccessfully) suppressing them is itself a habit for them that must be undone by constant effort. Most of all, they have difficulty in the everyday practice of accepting their passions, and yet not allowing their passions to drive their decisions.

That the passions are meant to share in virtuous action is usually a surprise to them, as is the assertion that Thomas makes that a robber takes real joy in his desired (evil) end.⁴

B. A FAULTY ANTHROPOLOGY

Lack of knowledge and/or understanding of basic philosophical anthropology is normal for the average young adult nowadays. This void or misunderstanding of the powers of the human soul and how they work has caused no small difficulty in their lives. Here is one of the places where Fr. Pinckaers’ revolutionary work is so needed today.

Most young people, if they have any understanding of freedom and of the will are using the term “free will” to refer to the will itself and the

² Conrad W. Baars, Feeling and Healing Your Emotions, edited and revised by Suzanne M. Baars and Bonnie N. Shayne (Gainesville: Bridge-Logos, 2003).
³ Augustine, The Confessions, bk. 10, chap. 34 (51).
⁴ Thomas Aquinas, ST I-II, q. 33, a. 1; q. 35, a. 4.
will’s nature and are still thinking that the will’s “job” is “to choose.” Horrifyingly, they say that they got this idea from Aquinas. They are very much convinced that Aquinas teaches that the proper operation of the will is to choose, based on a superficial reading of question 13 in the Prima Secundae of the Summa Theologiae, and the unfortunate (mis)translation of liberum arbitrium as free will in recent centuries. Then it is an easy conclusion for them that the will is fulfilled by choosing (any object), regardless of whether or not the act is truly good, or about a true good.\footnote{John Paul II, Veritatis Splendor, 32: The truth about the good is what should determine good acts.}

Of course, we know that Thomistic anthropology is needed to teach them that the intellect receives truth into itself (and this is its proper operation) and the proper operation of the will is to desire the good (which is shown to it by the intellect) and to delight in the good once obtained.\footnote{Thomas Aquinas, Truth (Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate), 3 vols. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1994), q. 23, a. 1.}

The Magisterium of the Church has been calling for a renewed teaching of authentic anthropology for years.\footnote{Joseph Ratzinger, “The Renewal of Moral Theology: Perspectives of Vatican II and Veritatis Splendor,” Communio vol. 32, no. 2 (Summer 2005).} But the level of difficulty that the students experience in understanding this concept shows just how ingrained the subliminal message of “pro-choice” really has become.

Results of this faulty anthropology are staggering:

1. Freedom of indifference is still prevailing. The idea of moral obligation as a basis for morality has not gone away. Many good young people continue to look for moral norms as the basis for assessing good or evil actions. They consistently say that an act is evil \textit{because} it is against the law (even the civil law).

2. The relation between truth and morality continues to be defined by law for them. The intrinsic inclination of the faculties of the soul for the true and the good is a strange concept for them. It is a challenge for them to understand that this is the basic mechanism for morality (as
opposed to laws).

3. Many young people have believed that they cannot trust their intrinsic inclinations, because these inclinations so often lead to evil actions. Distinguishing between when these desires need subjugation and when not (hence virtue, especially prudence) is very often a foreign idea for them.

4. The relation between truth and conscience, truth and human nature, in fact, the nature of truth itself is a difficult concept for them. Naturally, this makes it difficult for them to apply truth to a situation. However, most of my students really desire the truth, and want to live by it. They simply have never heard what it is, at least in such a way that they can order their lives accordingly and understand how it relates to human freedom. They love to hear that “the truth will set you free,” but they cannot imagine how this can really happen. They reject the idea that morality is all subjective, yet they do not have the tools to counter the secular arguments against what is true and everlasting good and how to distinguish this from relative goods. They have been accustomed to relying on “sound bite” catechesis and emotional arguments.

5. Difficulty in understanding the powers of the soul leads to misunderstanding the virtues which perfect those powers—most notably prudence, which leads to the next point.

C. LACK OF UNDERSTANDING OF PRUDENCE

The crucial role that prudence plays for the whole moral life comes as quite a shock to the average young adult. They have been basing most of their moral choices, either on the goal of subjecting their passions, or on the prediction of other people’s reactions, or simply by avoiding what is forbidden. Sometimes they experience an increasing desire for more rules, because rules have been helpful to them, especially by outlining when something is forbidden. Submission and obedience, while of course not wrong, have been the cornerstone of their mode of operation for virtuous action. The assessment of what is virtuous usually
relates to how the agent feels or how other people feel. When the choice at hand is not a matter of objective evil, they have no small difficulty in explaining how different people can and should come to different choices and solutions in life.

If one thinks that the will’s fulfillment is found simply in choosing, then there is no need for prudence to modify the will as well as the intellect. Prudence becomes solely an intellectual virtue, and then prudence lies in apprehending, deliberating, and selecting the correct means to an end. And this further implies that everyone should come to the same conclusion, and that those who are more intelligent will more easily make the best choice. The necessity of the combined action of the will with the intellect is a difficult concept for them. Since they are accustomed to thinking that the will’s job is to choose, they think fortitude should govern the will. They are surprised when they find out that justice is the virtue which governs the will itself, and fortitude governs the irascible passions. It is usually a new concept for them to hear that prudence also governs the desire for right reason in action, and that prudence requires the will to want to investigate what is prudent.

Many good young people think that the virtuous person is the one who never says anything, never defends himself/herself, always acquiesces to another, and never needs anything. These are good young people, striving for holiness, and thinking that virtue lies in being moderate and silent. The “both-and” mantra has led some to interpret virtue as always inclusive, always moderate, always bending to another’s wishes, always finding a way to compromise. Contrary to the 1970s, they are amenable to absolutes and rules, which provide security and clear answers. Somehow formulating more absolutes takes away the fear of making a mistake and provides some certainty among all this confusion.

The astute student of Aquinas, however, knows that it is not prudent to create absolutes which are not necessary. Most of the time it might be better to moderate natural inclinations, to bend to another’s wish, or to find a way to compromise; however, it depends on the truth of the matter at hand. Sometimes it is necessary to resist another’s wish, to radically
stand firm, or to withstand the shattering position of having to disagree with someone. It is not only prudence which guides these decisions, but the truth. We all know that adhering to Christ will bring about persecution in some form. Most of the young people I see are in need of the virtue that will be their “muscles” for withstanding such persecution. They desire and need the training of the will that will enable them to stand up for the truth (justice), in spite of fear (fortitude) and to know when and how to do it (prudence), unhindered by selfishness (temperance). This is the training of the will that will enable them to be a hidden leaven in the world, according to what God has planned for each of them.

So, when asking the question, “How should virtue ethics analyze concrete cases?,” my overly simplistic answer is that a comprehensive treatise on prudence is needed. Being young, our students are at a natural disadvantage when it comes to prudence, and now there is a particularly extreme disadvantage due to the above-mentioned, deficient ideas of the passions and human anthropology. Prudence is not practiced by hit-or-miss applications of feelings and ideas. Prudence applies truth to the situation at hand, with a view toward action. This takes practice and a working knowledge of basic truths. It is not necessary to think of every possible option before selecting an act (although some people try to do that). All human action is based on what the agent thinks is true, and whatever is good is going to attract. The first difficulty is getting truth into the intellect (which involves desiring it), and the second difficulty is acting according to it.

The overlap and the distinction between acquired prudence and infused prudence is also in need of clarification. So far, we have considered difficulties that exist on a natural level, but now I turn to the supernatural level where I notice a misunderstanding of how God works in the soul. This falls generally under the next category of grace.

2. PROBLEMS RELATED TO GRACE

Even among the well-catechized, there seems to be a subtle misunderstanding of grace. These mistakes are quite common, and I believe these
mistakes have been inherited more than learned in a book. In fact, as Fr. Pinckaers maintained over 50 years ago, these misunderstandings are modern revivals of ancient heresies, and have become modern strongholds. The mistaken ideas that I see most often fall under the categories of Semi-Pelagianism, Jansenism, and Voluntarism (sometimes mixed together in the same brain).

A. **SEMI-PELAGIANISM**

This ancient heresy I believe is Church-wide, but it is under current examination with some attempts at reversal.

Strange as it may sound, most young people, as well as the older generation above them, have the idea that “I must do it all myself.” The idea is that I must cooperate with God’s grace, which is given if I ask, thus avoiding absolute Pelagianism. It sounds like this, “If I pray, God will give me grace.” The act of the will begins with me. In fact, many of the collect prayers for Mass and the Divine Office in English, before the new translation supported this view. While not *completely* wrong, this view is at best one-sided, and if we forget that all good things come from God’s gratuitous gifts, we tend to think even of virtue as *first of all* “my own effort.” This particular stumbling block promotes an over-concentration on self and one’s efforts. I do not think that it is over-simplifying to say that this has caused depression in many young people who understand (correctly) that they cannot make themselves holy or virtuous.  

It is clear that we have been breathing this semi-Pelagian air in the English-speaking world for some centuries now. Happily, we are seeing a slow reversal with encouraging results. The antidote to this heresy, I believe, is, as always, the classic teaching of St. Augustine.

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8 A notable exception in the past year has been a select group of students at the University of Dallas. Perhaps this stumbling block is successfully being addressed in certain parts of the U.S.A.
B. **Jansenism**

To be virtuous means suffering: “no pain, no gain.” Although I have not seen any evidence of self-inflicted masochistic penance, I have seen some evidence of a residual Jansenism. It takes the form of sayings like, “I must do violence to my evil passions.” “I’m not pleasing to God unless I’m suffering.” “If I do these extra penances, then I will be pleasing to God.” And worst of all, “God cannot really love me.”

Underneath these Jansenist tendencies is the terrifying fear that God cannot love us. These ideas sound like this: I must suffer to make up for my sins because otherwise God cannot really love me. He hasn’t blessed me with what I want, and so He really doesn’t love me. Somehow, I have to prove myself worthy of His love and grace. Grace must be earned. I must prove to God that I love Him, and then He will love me. Naturally, such a view can cause anxiety, the desire to escape, and even neurotic behavior such as anorexia and other obsessive compulsive disorder manifestations. It is a twisted kind of perfectionism that believes that God’s love is so easy to lose, and that His love depends on me. This heresy refuses to accept that God’s love is creative and unconditional, that He creates out of love, that true repentance always includes joy, and that His Love is what makes us creatures to exist and to be loveable.

The antidote to this residual Jansenism, I believe, is the doctrine of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Perhaps this is why she has been one of the most popular saints among young people and seminarians in recent decades.

C. **Voluntarism**

This heresy overlaps somewhat with Semi-Pelagianism but is not quite the same thing. It is more nuanced than Pelagianism. Voluntarism gets its name from an over-emphasis on the will. It does not reject the idea of grace outright, but places it “under” the human will, with the idea that I must ask God to help me to do any good. *I do it, and God helps me.* The emphasis is on my effort, my will, my action, and God of course will help me to do what is right. It sounds like this: “If I pray, I will become
holy. If I keep the rules, I will become holy. If I do not sin, I will become holy. In short, I must make myself holy. And especially if I follow certain rules, I will become holy.”

In upper-level English studies, the students are being taught that proper English writing is always declarative. The passive voice is being phased out as nebulous, not taking a stand, not clear, not “strong writing.” This is only one sign of a pervasive voluntarism which has been in the air that we have all been breathing for centuries. One aspect of it is being corrected by simply returning to a (more) literal translation of many prayers from Latin into English.9

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9 One can compare just a few of the recently translated collects from the Mass with the older translations.

Compare the collect from the 34th Week in Ordinary Time, 1970s translation (“Lord, increase our eagerness to do your will and help us to know the saving power of your love. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever”) with the 2010 more literal translation (“Stir up the will of your faithful, we pray, O Lord, that, striving more eagerly to bring your divine work to fruitful completion, they may receive in greater measure the healing remedies your kindness bestows. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever”).

Compare the collect from the feast of St. John Chrysostom, 1970s version: “Father, the strength of all who trust in you, you made John Chrysostom renowned for his eloquence and heroic in his sufferings. May we learn from his teaching and gain courage from his patient endurance. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever” with the 2010 version: “O God, strength of those who hope in you, you willed that the Bishop Saint John Chrysostom should be illustrious by his wonderful eloquence and his experience of suffering, grant us, we pray, that, instructed by his teachings, we may be strengthened through the example of his invincible patience. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.”

Notice the slight difference in the doxology and the difference in the emphasis on who is the main actor. The earlier translations emphasize man’s action, whereas the new translations emphasize God’s action in man. The earlier translations imply that we are in control of our own growth in holiness, whereas the newer translations imply that God is in charge and that holiness is something we receive from Him. This is
In voluntarism, obedience is the highest virtue. Love is subordinate to following commands. Freedom is seen as something we “possess” rather than something we receive. One does not grow in freedom, but either has it or not. Rules are desired to guide human action, rather than the interior work of the Holy Spirit. Externals are emphasized over the interior desires becoming purified. If you “keep the rules” you will become holy. If you want to know God’s Will, look at the law first. A voluntarist morality begins with Natural Law theory. The voluntarist idea of holiness sees growth in holiness as caused by and discerned by our exterior acts first of all. You can tell someone’s holiness by how well he or she keeps the law. Voluntarism involves an over-emphasis on law. The will is the most important faculty, not too much truth is needed, and obedience is the saving virtue. Submission to the Will of God is the main path to holiness, so everything is seen as submission or not. In my opinion, this is the very heresy that Vatican II wanted to address, which still needs to be done.

The heresy is subtle because not everything in the above description is completely wrong. There is certainly a place for the law and external behavior and obedience (especially for those who accept this as a vow!), but the relation to the internal act must be solidified and understood correctly. When love takes a back seat to law, then we know we have a voluntarist mindset.

The inner transformation of grace as primarily God’s work is a difficult concept for many young adults today, although they desire it intensely.

The antidote for this problem, which I find to be extremely prevalent, is the teaching of Servais Pinckaers, along with a solid foundation in Aquinas.10

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10 It is my opinion that we are in need of a complete and annotated anthology of all of Fr. Pinckaers’ works, including his prologue to the moral section of the Summa Theologiae in French and even his unfinished works perhaps never intended for publication, but very helpful for the spiritual nourishment for those of us recovering from voluntarism.
3. PROBLEMS IN UNDERSTANDING VIRTUE THEORY

The third category of challenges to teaching virtue to young adults is found on the level of theory. Usually, these difficulties occur on the graduate level, with students who have already studied the virtues or have already studied Aquinas’ works.

A. THE NATURE OF VIRTUE ITSELF

1. As That Which Perfects Man’s Powers by Disposing Man to Act Well

I have encountered a few times in my students an erroneous, or slightly slanted, definition of virtue itself. Usually, it is simply the case of having studied one author concerning virtue and memorizing one definition. In some cases, the students are simply unaware that virtue can be categorized in a variety of ways. Sometimes it is a matter of a simple definition of virtue as that which modifies an act, as opposed to a more general definition of that which enables man to act well.\(^\text{11}\) Failure to incorporate the idea that virtues perfect the powers of the soul themselves,\(^\text{12}\) seems to result in an over-emphasis on “getting the act right,” and, consciously or subconsciously, looking for a moral “norm” to describe that particular act as good (or “perfective”) for everyone. Consciously or subconsciously, these patterns of thinking remind me of Kant’s moral imperative as well as an underlying voluntarism.

For young people, it is convenient to think of the virtues as “muscles.” But I have noticed that this sometimes results in the idea that virtues are like isolated muscles, compartmentalized by each one’s proper object. A slavish adherence to one aspect of distinguishing virtues (that is, by their object) seems to have increased the voluntarist tendency to label something, put it in a box, and then make a norm out of it. This is especially distressing when it comes to charity, which is an overarching

\(^\text{12}\) *ST* I-II, q. 55 and q. 56.
virtue not limited to one type of act.

I have even heard a student insist that the charitable thing to do in a certain situation was to say, “Yes, Sister” (it wasn’t clear what action was supposed to follow). This student who was well-studied and well-intentioned, but unable to apply correct principles to concrete action, had an idea in her mind of what “charity” was, made the sweeping generalization that it is always to do the will of another (especially the Sister), and made this a moral norm that applies to everyone else.

Another example is seen in the inability to consider virtues from the standpoint of perfecting a power, which allows for a variety of ways to define and consider virtues in particular.13 Perhaps this is why virtues in a relative sense, the intellectual virtues,14 are often left out of modern treatises on virtues. This inability to distinguish types of virtues on the level of theory leads to the next problem.

2. The Relation between the Theological Virtues and the Moral Virtues

Many students of Aquinas seem to jump over the theory part of the virtues and how they are related and go straight to studying each virtue. I myself am guilty of teaching Aquinas on the virtues this way with a view toward “saving time.” It is an understandable problem. However, Aquinas’ theory of virtue is quite demanding and is not usually understood with one quick reading.

There is a strong tendency for many professionals and even theologians, not only young students, to say, “I’ve studied the virtues; I know what they are; here is the virtuous thing to do, and all should agree.” The creative aspect of choosing the good, which requires prudence as well as an array of other virtues,15 is still not the normal understanding of virtue. Exactly how every action is to be suffused with charity is not readily

13 ST I-II, q. 54, a. 2 and a. 4.
14 ST I-II, q. 56, a. 3.
understood.\textsuperscript{16}

This also leads to a misunderstanding of the nature of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit as perfecting the virtues. Possibly because the nature of the Gifts is so “free-flowing,” not reducible to a type of act, though considered as a habit, the young student has difficulty understanding that the Gifts are distinguished from the virtues by \textit{mode} of action. The Gifts, rather than being distinguished by proper objects, actually apply to the complete array of human action, inspired and undertaken in divine mode.

3. \textit{The Primacy of the Interior Act}

Most young people are really convinced that virtue is mostly about the exterior act, even when this makes no sense. Perhaps because Aquinas says that the act of virtue is imperfect unless brought to completion with the exterior act,\textsuperscript{17} an excessive emphasis on the exterior act has led some students, particularly students who have studied Aquinas, to think of virtue as in essence an exterior act, that is regulated by a norm. Again, we see the influence of voluntarism.

Instead of understanding \textit{the primacy of the interior object of the will} as the essence of virtue,\textsuperscript{18} many young people are “stuck” in the mode of worrying about how their actions appear from the outside because the virtuous person must always “look virtuous.” Perhaps this is unconsciously influenced by our media-driven society.

Most young people know that God sees their interior motives, and of course this is truly the most important thing, however if this conviction is only superficial, it will not sustain them through real persecution.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{ST I-II, q. 55, a. 1, ad 4: “When we say that virtue is the order of ordering of love, we refer to the end to which every virtue is ordered: because in us love is set in order by virtue.”}
\textsuperscript{17} \textit{ST I-II, q. 60.}
\textsuperscript{18} \textit{ST I-II, q. 19.}
I have noticed a decrease in the ability to think according to principles, and then apply them to human action. Of course, this implies that the principles themselves be correctly understood, otherwise the application cannot be done correctly. Just as the cook who has the art of cooking is able to creatively apply the principles of cooking and produce a marvelous result, so the virtuous man must understand the principles of right action in order to apply them on the level of theory as well as concrete action. I notice this defect most often with regard to the principle of double effect, and then in general with regard to prudence.

1. **Principle of Double Effect**

Students who have never heard of the principle of double effect usually require extra time and help, with lots of examples, in order to be able to understand and apply the principle. That is normal. But I am finding more and more that students who already know the principle, have difficulty in recognizing when it can be used and when not, and also recognizing misapplications of this principle. Worst of all is that they use this principle to do the very thing that we as Catholics decry when it is done to us (for example by the U.S. government), that is, refusing to allow exceptions due to conscientious objection. Very often it is the higher-level students who claim that if something is allowed by the principle of double effect, then everyone must choose it (the use of vaccinations involving questionable material being the prime example). When philosophers, lawmakers, and theologians are regularly doing this, it should not be surprising that students have this difficulty. Today more than ever, conscientious objection must be upheld, using the reasoning of the principle of double effect. It is not the principle itself that is in danger of being misunderstood, but rather its use. Because of its widespread misuse, many students have difficulty understanding that the principle itself can only ever be invoked to provide the permission to choose a certain act, never to mandate that an act be chosen.
2. False Understanding of Conscience

While there have been difficulties in understanding the nature of conscience for centuries, I have noticed a peculiarity in the misunderstanding of conscience in many young adults. Perhaps because conscience has been invoked to excuse many sins on the one hand, and yet has been continually denied its rightful place in the American legal system, many students have a misunderstanding of what the conscience is and how it should be formed.

Here is where I have found St. Thomas’ short description of conscience to be helpful in expounding John Paul II’s definition of the secret inner chamber. That conscience can be wrong, and yet one is still bound to follow it, is always difficult for them to accept. Conscience in relation to virtue is also a large chasm that must be reconciled. They have been accustomed to thinking that following their conscience absolves them from all sin and must therefore always be virtuous. It is quite a blow to realize that the judgment of conscience can be wrong, and this can sometimes excuse or diminish the sin but not always. Again, the desire for safe absolutes is being taken away from them, and this causes some anxiety. St. Thomas’ treatment of conscience as the second act of prudence is usually confusing for them, especially for those who have never considered the place of prudence in the moral life.

3. Superficial Denunciation of Nominalism and Voluntarism

The place of prudence is also needed to counter an over-zealous reaction to all of these modern problems. I have noticed that a few students have a superficial understanding of nominalism and voluntarism which leads them to make sweeping generalizations. They are “all in” in denouncing false ideas of freedom and morality, in denouncing evil acts such as abortion as always and objectively evil, and in denouncing the modern misinterpretation of Aquinas’ moral teachings. In the midst of claims that intellectualism, voluntarism, nominalism, etc. are wrong,  

19  ST I, q. 9, a. 13.  
20  John Paul II, Veritatis Splendor, 52–64.
why they are wrong is not so clear to them. They are lacking the necessary grounding for explaining exactly why a particular act is always evil, how to assess a particular act as good, and exactly what the essence of true virtue is. Not only is it necessary for them to understand prudence itself, but in order to do that, they need sound principles of moral reasoning, as well as an in-depth study of Aquinas’ whole moral theory. This is no easy task.

CONCLUSION

One of the most exciting aspects of teaching virtue to young people is witnessing their sincere relationship with Christ. Their honest good will, deep prayer lives, and love for the truth inspires me every day. In the end, it is not necessary to have perfect academic understanding of virtue theory and the principle of double effect in order to act well. The same truths about man and human action can be found in prayer, in reading the Scriptures, in receiving the sacraments devoutly—in a word, by loving God and neighbor. However, for those of us who are committed to teaching, we do so because we really believe that knowing the truth will set them free, and we have seen it happen in our students every semester.

Jonathan Sanford claims, in his book Before Virtue, that after 60 years Elizabeth Anscombe’s call for a “renewed Aristotelian analysis of human action”21 has not happened, mostly due to fundamental disagreements about Aristotle meant. While I agree with his assessment overall, and many of his proposals for solutions (which are still on the level of theory), I do not think it is because there is disagreement among Aristotelians and Thomists about what Aristotle meant. I think it is because we

21 Jonathan J. Sanford, Before Virtue: Assessing Contemporary Virtue Ethics (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2015). Sanford defends Anscombe’s original suggestion of returning to an Aristotelian (as well as Platonic) ethics. He charges that contemporary virtue ethicists have neglected imperative ethical questions that Plato and Aristotle engage, such as 1) what is a human being, 2) what is a human being for, and 3) what is the source of normativity in ethics?
are starting with such a warped idea of human nature, that Aristotle cannot be applied nor understood correctly.\textsuperscript{22} 

It seems to me that we are still at the level of establishing an adequate human anthropology and psychology, which Servais Pinckaers claimed that Aquinas has already done and which Pinckaers tried to re-propose to the modern mind.

Another part of the antidote on a higher level, in my opinion, requires a deeper understanding of the nature of virtue itself, balanced with a coherent and true human anthropology along with concrete formation in the practice of virtue. None of the academic knowledge can be of use without emphasis on the daily living out of virtue, which is practiced for the most part in our family or community life. As one of my teachers at the Angelicum often said, “Happiness is having more and more problems on a higher and higher level.” Knowing the truth is only the first half of the battle. We should not be surprised that the exercise of virtue is quite another thing. It is the daily living out of prudence, and all the virtues and gifts, that is needed. In short, holiness is needed. Young people need help in the application process, which is mostly the job of prudence and fully the job of grace. They seem to have this intuition themselves; perhaps this is why so many are flocking to find a “spiritual director” and why some religious communities even require that they have one. Young people are intuiting the truth that the application process is difficult, usually after experiencing a conversion, and they are rightly asking for help. Whether we call this “accompaniment” or “spiritual direction” or a “spiritual friend,” we can no longer simply correct their notions of God, virtue, grace, and sin. What is needed are gifted “counselors,” who can recognize the Holy Spirit “by counsel and correction” (2 Tim 3:16) in their everyday lives and are able to help lead young people to Christ Himself—the One Who IS the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6). While we attempt to teach virtue, as well as remove obstacles to learn-

\textsuperscript{22} Some people today are asking, “After 60 years, why has nothing been accomplished?” I can’t help but ask, why is it that 734 years after Aquinas, and 2,340 years after Aristotle, we still do not agree on what Aquinas and Aristotle meant?
ing and practicing it, we acknowledge the mystery that Christ, the True Teacher, can do all things and is at work in each soul. May He continue to create masterpieces in all of us (Eph 2:10). Young people today desire holiness, and this is itself a gift of grace already at work. May He bring it to completion.
Aristotle argues that “friendship is necessary for our life” and that “no one would choose to live without friends even if he had all the other goods.”¹ But does friendship actually require another human being? Would a robot or an operating system make for a good friend? Has technology advanced to the point where friendship with a ‘virtual personal assistant’ or a ‘love doll’ is a real possibility? If so, what would cause someone to want to befriend a robot, an operating system, or some other form of artificial intelligence rather than a human being in the first place? And what would be the consequences of these new kinds of friendships for human beings and culture in general? A century ago such questions were generally limited to the arena of science fiction, but today, due both to the dizzying advancements (e.g. organ transplants, automated assembly lines, smart phones, virtual reality, etc.) in the field of artificial intelligence and the presentation of the possibilities of these advancements to audiences through popular films such as *A Space Odyssey* (1968), *Terminator 2* (1991), *Her* (2013), and *Ex Machina* (2014), as well as the entire fourth season of the Netflix series *Black Mirror* (2017), these questions demand serious philosophical attention.

Aristotle would never have imagined asking the kinds of contemporary questions presented above, but his ancient philosophy does offer a surprising and satisfying way of making some very fundamental distinctions, which prove most helpful in understanding and then answering the primary question at hand, “Is friendship with artificial intelligence

possible?” Although our study is not limited to Aristotle, his treatise on friendship (Books 8–9 of *Nicomachean Ethics*) and his study of biology (Book 2 of *De Anima*) will ground our argument. Our goal is to determine whether or not artificial intelligence is the kind of thing that can enter into friendship with a human being, and if not, why not? For now we will leave the other questions regarding cultural and ethical implications of AI to other philosophers in other papers, but we hope that this paper will set a secure foundation upon which those questions can be addressed in the future.

The first two sections of this paper will offer a general overview of the nature of friendship according to Aristotle and the general ‘nature’ of artificial intelligence. The third section will make two major Aristotelian distinctions between humans and AI—*living and non-living things* and *natural things and artifacts*—upon which our argument will stand. In section four we will support our main argument with a series of minor arguments that flow from the major distinctions made in the third section. Our conclusion will not only summarize our argument, but also offer some thoughts for moving forward in regard both to friendship and human interaction with artificial intelligence.

I. THE NATURE OF FRIENDSHIP

There are a handful of important thinkers to consider when exploring the philosophy of friendship or attempting to understand the role of friendship in human living and flourishing. Kevin Vost’s recent study focuses on four classic contributors to the discussion: Aristotle, Cicero, Aelred of Rievaulx, and Thomas Aquinas. Augustine could surely be added to this list, but for our purposes, we will focus primarily on the work of Aristotle, as his treatise on friendship is foundational to the entire tradition.

The first and perhaps most important thing to note about Aristotle’s trea-
tise on friendship is where it is discovered within his canon. His study of friendship is not found in isolation, as in some separate volume, but within the context of his most celebrated presentation of virtue and the good life in the *Nicomachean Ethics.* According to Aristotle, “Every craft and every line of inquiry, and likewise every action and decision, seems to seek some good; that is why some people were right to describe the good as what everything seeks.”³ But Aristotle is concerned not simply with some good, but the best good, and he thinks that all human beings, by their very nature, have a natural end, which is happiness, and the way that human beings come to be happy is through practicing virtue, which is an acquired habit of excellence of choosing the mean between excesses in human living.⁴ It is in this broader context of his discussion of ends, goods, virtue, and ultimately human happiness, that we find his treatise on friendship.

In the very first line of this treatise Aristotle states that friendship “is a virtue, or involves virtue.”⁵ This claim is important, and it can only be understood against the conversation on virtue he has already presented in the first part of the *Ethics.* Robert Sokolowski observes, “Several virtues, including courage and temperance, are treated in books 3 and 4, and justice is discussed in book 5, but friendship is treated in two books, 8 and 9, toward the end of the work.” What does this placement suggest about Aristotle’s view of the role, nature, or purpose of friendship? Sokolowski answers, “I think that friendship, and specifically noble friendship, is the culmination of moral virtue; the ability to be a friend in the highest and best way is the moral perfection of human nature, according to Aristotle. Justice is not the highest virtue after all: friendship is.”⁶ For Aristotle, then, noble friendship is proof of a virtuous life, and since a virtuous life is a happy life—a flourishing life—friendship

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⁴ *NE*, 1094a1–3, a22.
⁵ *NE*, 1155a.
must be something to be desired by everyone, and, in fact, something necessary for living well.

In his introductory remarks on friendship in book 8, Aristotle presents a short litany of pairings which display the universal need for friendship: the rich and powerful, the poor and misfortunate, the young and the old, as well as parents and children (both human beings and other animals)—they all participate in friendship. He then makes two observations: “friendship is not only necessary, but also fine” and “having many friends seems to be a fine thing.” Aristotle is not so sure why certain people become friends, acknowledging that some friendships are of the ‘birds of a feather flock together’ type, while others are of the ‘opposites attract’ type, but he does think that there are certain types of friendships that can be defined on a deeper level, regardless of similarities or differences between individuals, and he presents these friendships in three distinct types: friendships of utility, friendships of pleasure, and friendships of nobility.

According to Aristotle, the types of friendship are defined by the telos of the friendship. Those who are engaged in a friendship of utility are so engaged in order to gain some good from the friendship. Those who are engaged in a friendship of pleasure are so engaged in order to gain something pleasurable from the friendship. Aristotle explains, “Those who love for utility or pleasure, then, are fond of a friend because of what is good or pleasant for themselves, not insofar as the beloved is who he is, but insofar as he is useful or pleasant.” Only the third type of friendship, a noble friendship, is primarily concerned not with what one gains from the friendship (although such a friendship may very well involve both utility and pleasure) but rather with the beloved—

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7 NE, 1155a1–23, 1155a30–31.
8 See NE, 1156a7.
9 NE, 1156a15–17. Italics mine.
10 This highest form of friendship, which I am calling a ‘noble friendship’ is also referred to as complete, perfect, real, good, virtuous friendship, or friendship of character.
with the other, the friend. Since according to Aristotle the greatest good for a human being is happiness, and since happiness is only achieved through personal virtue, and since virtuous living (that is, good action) is what makes one virtuous, then only a friendship concerned with the greatest good (happiness flowing from a life of virtue) can be said to be the highest form of friendship.

Aristotle thinks that noble friendship “is the friendship of good people similar in virtue; for they wish goods in the same way to each other insofar as they are good, and they are good in their own right.” The point is that a noble friend is not concerned with his or her own good as much as he or she is concerned with the good of his or her friend. Aristotle argues that this is why only noble friendships last: whereas a friendship of utility or pleasure lasts only as long as something is being gained (once the friendship is no longer useful or pleasurable, it ceases), a noble friendship endures because the friendship exists for the sake of the other. In his commentary on Aristotle’s treatise, Thomas Aquinas notes, “the virtuous who wish good to their friends for their sake and not for the sake of something that may come from them are the highest types of friends.” Aristotle thinks that this highest form of friendship, although possible for virtuous people, is rare. Even though the desire for friendship comes quickly, and no one wants to be without friends, Aristotle asserts that most of our friendships are actually friendships of utility and pleasure, not noble friendships.

For the sake of our study, it is also worth noting that Aristotle thinks that the good person “finds it pleasant to spend time with himself” and that he “is related to his friend as he is to himself, since the friend is another himself.” In other words, there is an important element of ‘self-love’ involved in noble friendship. Self-love is a good, and it makes the agent

11 NE, 1156b7–8.
13 NE, 1156b25.
14 NE, 1166a24, 1166a31–32.
good (if one does not enjoy oneself, one cannot enjoy the company of another, and one’s company will likely not be enjoyable to the other). A person who cannot handle solitude and is constantly seeking to be around others is not likely to be a virtuous person capable of entering into a noble friendship. Aristotle thinks such people abhor being alone because “when they are by themselves they remember many disagreeable actions, and anticipate others in the future; but they manage to forget these in other people’ company.”

Kevin Vost reminds us that for Aristotle, any defining feature of friendship with another is first a characteristic of how we relate to ourselves. He summarizes the heart of Aristotle’s treatment of noble friendship by naming the five things that good people wish for themselves and for their friends: 1) A friend desires his friend to be, to exist; 2) A friend desires good things for his friend; 3) A friend does good deeds for his friend; 4) A friend takes pleasure in his friend’s company; 5) A friend is of one mind with his friend, rejoicing and sorrowing in almost the same things. Aristotle offers examples for each point, but for our purposes simply listing the points is sufficient, as they are self-explanatory.

Although our study of friendship comes primarily from the work of Aristotle, it is worth considering a brief quotation from Aelred of Rievaulx’s classic work on the nature of true friendship. Aelred proclaims:

But what happiness, what security, what joy to have someone to whom you dare to speak on terms of equality as to another self; one to whom you need have no fear to confess your failings; one to whom you can unblushingly make known what progress you have made in the spiritual life; one to whom you can entrust all the secrets of your heart and before whom you can place all your plans! What, therefore, is more pleasant than so to unite to oneself the spirit of another and of two to form one, that no boasting is thereafter to be feared, no suspicion to be dreaded, no correction of one by the other to cause pain, no praise on the part of one to bring a charge of adulation from the other.

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15 NE, 1166b16–18.
16 Vost, Four Friendships, 55.
According to Aelred, to participate in this highest form of friendship, which is synonymous with Aristotle’s understanding of noble friendship, is to be truly happy, truly free, and, therefore, truly human. This form of friendship actualizes a potential (to use Aristotelian terms) in that it allows a human being to find rest in the friendship of another, and in that the experience of rest, or happiness, is mutual. Such a description is reminiscent of Cicero’s famous definition: “For friendship is nothing else than an accord in all things, human and divine, conjoined with mutual goodwill and affection.”

As we move now from our investigation of the nature of friendship to our investigation of the ‘nature’ of artificial intelligence, it will be necessary to keep Aristotle’s treatise on friendship in mind; the distinction that he makes between the three types of friendship; his observation that one can only be a true friend to another if one is a true friend with one’s self; his recognition that true friendship is associated with happiness and a life of virtue; and the fact that Aristotle situates his treatise on friendship not in isolation but as part of the culmination of his study of virtue and the good life for human beings.

II. THE ‘NATURE’ OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The question, “Can machines think?” is historically associated with the father of computer science, Alan Turing, who is responsible for the concept of the Turing machine, “a hypothetical machine that can simulate any computer algorithm, no matter how complicated it is.” Turing was convinced that his primitive computing machine concept would eventually develop into the kind of things that smart phones, self-driving cars, and facial recognition systems that have become in today’s society, and he was correct. For our purposes, we will begin with a short study

19 Jeffrey Lee, “What is a Turing Machine?,” University of Cambridge Department of Computer Science and Technology website: Raspberry Pi Tutorials.
of Turing’s renowned article “Computing Machines and Intelligence,” which deals directly with the historical foundations of artificial intelligence (AI) and will help us move into a study of the ‘nature’ of AI itself.

Turing’s famed paper begins, “I propose to consider the question, ‘Can machines think?’” but in the following sentences of this initial paragraph introducing his argument, he states that it would be absurd to try to answer the question by using colloquial (rather than technical or philosophical) understanding of the terms involved. Because the words “machine” and “think” are difficult to define, Turing opts to clarify the initial question by replacing it with another. His new question is based upon the imitation game, which is played with three people: A) a man, B) a woman, and C) an interrogator, who may be of either sex. The man and the woman are put into a room separate from the interrogator, and the interrogator asks them questions through a teleprinter. The interrogator’s task is to figure out which respondent is the man and which is the woman. Then Turing asks,

> What will happen when a machine takes the part of A in this game? Will the interrogator decide wrongly as often when the game is played [between a machine and a human being] as he does when the game is played between a man and a woman? This question will replace the original, “Can machines think?”

Turing believes that this new question is significant because it “has the advantage of drawing a fairly sharp line between the physical and the intellectual capacities of man.” This distinction between the physical and intellectual properties of man is an important part of Turing’s argument, because although he does not want to speak of machines as ‘thinking,’ he believes that such talk will inevitably occur because ma-

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21 According to Aristotle, an artifact does not have a nature because an artifact is not a natural thing. More on this distinction in the following pages.
22 Turing, “Computing Machinery and Intelligence,” 433.
23 Ibid., 434.
24 Ibid., 434.
chines will eventually be able to fool an interrogator in the imitation game seventy percent of the time. He states, “I believe that at the end of the century the use of the words and general educated opinion will have altered so much that one will be able to speak of machines as thinking without expecting to be contradicted.”

It’s a strange argument, but what Turing suggests is that regardless of what we traditionally have understood as ‘intelligence’ or ‘thinking’—a capacity traditionally understood to be limited to rational animals—machines will be spoken of as having the same intellectual powers to those of human beings, especially once they master the imitation game.

Turing’s research presents us with a foundation upon which to understand the nature of artificial intelligence, although it is admittedly difficult to pin down one precise definition of AI. The first thing that we can say about the nature of artificial intelligence is obvious: it is not natural, but artificial. In Aristotelian terms, AI is not biological, it is an artifact. Therefore, anything AI can do is accomplished not by some internal powers that are natural to it, but by powers given to it from without by a rational animal.

Even so, there remains something about AI that resembles, mimics, or simulates a rational animal, and it is this—the ‘I’ part of ‘AI’—to which we now turn.

The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* notes that although there are a variety of ways to speak of artificial intelligence, there are only four basic types of AI, and they are confined to two basic dimensions:

One dimension is whether the goal is to match human performance, or, instead, ideal rationality. The other dimension is whether the goal is to build systems that reason/think, or rather systems that act. The situation is summed up in this table:

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25 Turing, “Computing Machinery and Intelligence,” 442.
26 More on this important distinction in the next section.
An example of ‘systems that think like humans’ would be something like an Amazon.com account, which is able to predict the kinds of things that one would be interested in purchasing based on the kinds of things that one has purchased in the past. An example of ‘systems that think ideally’ would be something like Watson, the computer program that dominated all the competition on Jeopardy! An example of ‘systems that act like humans’ would be the machine in the Turing test, as the point of the test is to see if one can determine whether one is dealing with a human or a machine. And an example of ‘systems that act rationally’ would be something like a self-driving car, which would have to make decisions about the best way to act in a particular situation.

A further way to describe AI is to say that it is the sort of thing with has two important qualities: autonomy and adaptivity. Autonomy is the ability to perform tasks in complex environments without constant guidance by a user, while adaptivity is the ability to improve performance by learning from experience. Anything that claims to be AI must contain these two characteristics, and it is these two characteristics that give the appearance that such an agent can think as a human being thinks, or act as a human being acts.

Regardless of the type of system, but keeping in mind Aristotle’s demonstration that friendship depends on thinking and acting rationally and humanly, the question remains: Are such agents capable of friendship?


III. ARISTOTELIAN DISTINCTIONS: LIVING AND NON-LIVING THINGS; NATURAL THINGS AND ARTIFACTS

Now that we have defined the nature of friendship and the ‘nature’ of artificial intelligence, it is time to determine whether or not AI is the kind of thing that is capable of the kind of friendship that Aristotle presents in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In order to answer this question, we will begin by examining distinctions that we only touched upon briefly in the previous section, but which now command our full attention: the distinction between living and non-living things and the distinction between natural things and artifacts. Robert Sokolowski reminds us that “Philosophy does not come up with new information about hidden objects. It merely reflects on what has been there all along, but it knows the familiar in a new way, in relation to the whole.” So although these Aristotelian distinctions might seem merely to state what has always been obvious, in light of recent advancements in AI and the bold predictions of many technologists, we cannot assume they are obvious to everyone. We reflect on these ancient distinctions (“what has been there all along”) to clarify and contextualize the question at hand.

Living and non-living things

In the introductory paragraph of book 2 of *De Anima* Aristotle notes, “Of natural bodies some possess life and some do not: where by life we mean the power of self-nourishment and of independent growth and decay.” Plants, animals, and humans are all natural bodies that possess life, while a stone is an example of a body that does not. What is it that gives life to living things? Is it some power or attribute of the body? Aristotle answers:

And since in fact we have here a body with a certain attribute, namely, the possession of life, the body will not be the soul: for the body is not an attribute of a subject, it stands rather for a subject of attributes, that is, matter. It must follow, then, that soul is substance in the sense that that it is the form of a natural body having in it the capacity of life. Such substance is actuality. The soul, therefore, is the actuality of the body above described.32

What distinguishes a living thing from a non-living thing, therefore, is the presence of a soul, which is the form of the body of all living things. But since there are different kinds of living things (i.e., plants, animals, humans), Aristotle’s next move is to show that living things can be categorized by the degree to which each type can participate in activities of the soul: growth, nutrition, reproduction, locomotion, sensation, and intellection.33 Plants, animals, and humans all grow, nourish themselves, and reproduce; so all living things possess a nutritive soul. Animals and humans are able to move and perceive, but plants cannot; therefore animals and humans (but not plants) also possess a sensitive soul. Finally, humans alone have the ability to reason, setting them apart from plants and animals and making humanity unique among all living things in possessing a rational soul.34

The highest function of the soul, therefore, is intellection, which is specific to humans. According to Aristotle, of all things living, only humans can think. Although Turing predicted that we would someday speak of computers as being able to think, Aristotle would surely answer that whatever a computer is doing when it appears to be thinking cannot be the same activity as when a human actually does think. Intellection is the activity of a rational animal, but a machine lacks even the most basic functions of the nutritive soul—the ability to grow, nourish itself, and reproduce. In other words, artificial intelligence cannot participate in activities of the soul even to the degree that a plant can, let alone a human being. A machine is not a living thing.

32 Aristotle, De Anima, 412a.
33 Ibid., 413a. Although Aristotle doesn’t list reproduction in this section, it is implied, and he mentions it specifically in 415a.
34 Ibid.
According to Aristotle, intellection is a function of the soul, and the soul is the form of a natural body, of a living thing, but AI is not a natural thing, nor is it a living thing; AI is an artifact. Beth Preston notes, “A standard philosophical definition of ‘artifact’—often assumed even when not explicitly stated—is that artifacts are objects made intentionally, in order to accomplish some purpose.” Aristotle makes a distinction between natural things (e.g. plants, animals, humans) and non-natural things that are produced, or come to be, by way of craft (e.g. a house, an axe, a doll), and he calls these non-natural things artifacts. Because they are not natural, Aristotle shows that artifacts differ from natural things in that they are “something whose principle is in the producer and not in the product.” Whereas plants, animals, and humans all contain powers within themselves (i.e. soul) by the fact that they are natural and alive, artifacts contain a principle that is put there not by nature, but by the artisan or craftsman or maker of the particular artifact. This distinction is most important to our investigation, because we have shown that humans naturally have the power of intellection, whereas AI, because it is not natural and is non-living, and therefore is an artifact, has “intellectual powers” that do not come from within, but from without, from the one or the ones who produced AI. Artificial intelligence is something that is made intentionally in order to accomplish some purpose; it is not something natural or living.

Because this distinction between natural things and artifacts is central to the question at hand, we turn now to language—etymology in particular—to further clarify this distinction. The word artifact comes from two Latin words, arte and factum, and literally means to be made by (human) art. (In Greek, the word techne is often translated craft, which again is something intentionally made by a human for some purpose, hence technology.) The reason this distinction is so important to our discus-
sion is that in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle is concerned with human virtue, and, therefore, human friendship, if, as he states, “friendship is virtue, or involves virtue.” 37 Artificial intelligence, or intelligence that is artificial, is not natural—it is not part of what the thing is by nature, but something that is put there by the one or the ones who produced it, and would seem incapable of the kind of friendship that Aristotle presents in his treatise on friendship because AI, as an artifact and a non-living thing, is not the type of thing that is capable of such friendship.

Friendship, Aristotle admits, is something that takes place “not only among human beings but also among birds and most kinds of animals,” 38 but nowhere in his treatise on friendship does he consider the possibility of friendship between a human being and an artifact, or between an artifact and an artifact. Why? Because artifacts, by the very fact that they are artificial—made by human beings and therefore having no natural or internal powers—are a type of thing not capable of friendship. Friendship, according to Aristotle, is reserved for natural and living things: “Members among the same species, and human beings most of all, have a natural friendship for each other; that is why we praise the friends of humanity.” 39

Although Aristotle does not state it explicitly, it would seem that Aristotle would be much more likely to grant the possibility of some sort of ‘friendship’ between a human and an animal, or a human and a plant, or a human and nature in general, than he would between a human and AI; for plants, animals, and nature in general are living things, whereas AI is not. Such a friendship between a human and an animal or a plant or nature itself would certainly not be the same kind of thing as a friendship between two humans, but it would be at least closer in rank than a friendship between a human and AI on the account of biology. For example, dogs are said to be “man’s best friend” not in the Aristotelian sense of the word ‘friend,’ but in the sense of a certain sort of com-

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37 *NE*, 1155a4.
38 *NE*, 1155a19–20.
39 *NE*, 1155a20–21.
panionship and faithfulness that benefit both the human and the pet.\textsuperscript{40} In regard to vegetation, studies have shown that human beings benefit from gardening and that plants benefit from being gardened (i.e., being fertilized, pruned, and even spoken to.)\textsuperscript{41} And simply spending time in nature or, we might even say, ‘befriending nature’ has proven to be effective in promoting human health and happiness.\textsuperscript{42} Because there is a sort of natural friendship between living things that is not present between a living thing and a non-living thing, or a living thing and an artifact, it would seem that the best AI could do in this regard would be to \textit{imitate} some living thing, thereby engaging in some sort of \textit{artificial friendship} in imitation of the kind of relationship that is only truly present between living things.

\textbf{IV. Supporting Arguments}

Our task has been to determine whether or not it is possible for AI to have friendship the way that humans have friendship, but so far it seems that an imitation or simulation of human friendship is the only possibility, as AI, which is an artifact and non-living, lacks the capacity for human friendship, at least insofar as it is presented by Aristotle. As John Searle famously argued, simulation is not duplication,\textsuperscript{43} and it is to his famous argument that we now turn.

\textsuperscript{40} “In addition to providing emotional benefits, pet ownership improves one’s physical and mental health. Studies show that pet ownership reduces stress, lowers blood pressure, helps to prevent heart disease, helps to fight depression, and therefore lowers one’s healthcare costs.” Michael J. Dotson and Eva M. Hyatt, “Understanding Dog-Human Relationship,” \textit{Journal of Business Research}, vol. 61, (May 2008), 457.
**SIMULATION AND INTENTIONALITY**

John Searle’s ‘Chinese Room’ argument is a direct response Roger Schank’s story-understanding machine,44 but it is also a general response to “any Turing machine simulation of human mental phenomenon.”45 Here is the argument succinctly stated:

Searle imagines himself alone in a room following a computer program for responding to Chinese characters slipped under the door. Searle understands nothing of Chinese, and yet, by following the program for manipulating symbols and numerals just as a computer does, he produces appropriate strings of Chinese characters that fool those outside into thinking there is a Chinese speaker in the room. The narrow conclusion of the argument is that programming a digital computer may make it appear to understand language but does not produce real understanding.46

This “appearance” of understanding language is helpful in regard to our attempt to answer the question at hand regarding friendship. Thus far we have shown that the best that AI can do in terms of friendship is to “appear” to do the kind of things that humans do in friendship, but appearing to be a friend is not the same thing as being a friend, just as appearing to understand is not the same as understanding. When it comes to dealing with AI, Searle thinks that mistaking appearance (or imitation or simulation) for duplication (i.e., reality) is a common pitfall that must be avoided. He writes, “For simulation all you need is the right input and output and a program in the middle that transforms the former into the latter. That is all the computer has for anything it does. To confuse simulation with duplication is the same mistake, whether it is pain, love, cognition,”47 or, we could add, friendship. Ultimately, Searle thinks that what sets humans apart from AI is intentionality,48 which

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44 Schank’s thesis is that real intelligence depends upon storytelling and story understanding. If AI can tell and understand stories, then AI is truly intelligent.
48 Although intentionality is key to Searle’s argument (and the conversation surround-
he argues, “is a biological phenomenon”\footnote{Searle, “Minds,” 424.} and therefore impossible for an artifact to engage in, as artifacts are non-biological things.

There are three other aspects of being human that show up in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and are worthy of our attention at this point, because all three further reveal the important differences between humans and AI and point to elements of human friendship that are necessarily absent from any attempt at friendship with AI.

**Happiness**

Aristotle thinks that happiness is the ultimate human good, and that a natural desire for the good, shared by all humans, is part of what it means to *be* human.\footnote{See *NE*, 1095a16–18.} According to Aristotle, to be a natural, living thing is to have an end—a goal, a *telos*—and for a human, that end is happiness. The way to happiness for humans is found “in the activities in accord with virtue,”\footnote{*NE*, 1177a9–10.} and a real proof of virtuous living, as we have seen, is the flourishing of noble friendship. But what is happiness to AI? What is good living? What is virtue? If artificial intelligence lacks a natural end (happiness), then it can have no use for the means toward achieving that end (virtuous living, including friendship).

If we return to Aristotle’s comments on solitude within his treatise on friendship, we see that happiness is something unique to human beings, as the character of a human is revealed in the way one experiences solitude. The virtuous “person finds it pleasant to spend time with himself,” while “vicious people seek others to pass their days with, and

\begin{footnotesize}
\footnote{Searle wants to make clear that the kind of thing a human being does when it thinks is not the kind of thing a computer does when it engages in computational operation, even if such operations simulate human thinking.}
\end{footnotesize}
shun themselves.”52 AI is not the kind of thing that has the capacity to reflect on its own life, its history, its choices, and the good that it has chosen or rejected, and is therefore not the kind of thing that can experience happiness or unhappiness. The powers of AI are not natural to AI because, as we have shown, AI is not a natural thing, and therefore has no natural end, which renders AI incapable of experiencing happiness.

**Pleasure**

Aristotle acknowledges a relation between happiness and pleasure, and he thinks that the virtuous life is not a miserable life, but on the contrary, one that is accompanied by pleasure. He writes, “That is why all think the happy life is pleasant and weave pleasure into happiness quite reasonably. For no activity is complete if it is impeded, and happiness is something complete.”53 According to Aristotle, the natural end for a human is happiness, the happy life is pleasurable, and the happy life includes bodily pleasures, because having a body is part of being human (although he also observes that “since these are the only pleasures they know, people suppose that they are the only pleasures”).54 He shows that although we share the capacity for bodily pleasure with animals, we also experience another type of pleasure unique to being human, and that is the pleasure derived from the activity of understanding, which he argues “is superior in excellence because it is the activity of study, aims to no end in itself, and has its own proper pleasure which increases its activity.”55 Yet if we consider this discussion of pleasure in light of what we have seen thus far regarding AI, we will have to admit that pleasure, which naturally accompanies the virtuous and happy life, and therefore the life of friendship, does so because it is part of human nature. Friendship, then, because it is a good, will be accompanied by pleasure, but since according to Aristotle only animals and humans ex-

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52 *NE*, 1166a24, 1166b15.
53 *NE*, 1153b15–17.
54 *NE*, 1154a1–2.
55 *NE*, 1177b20–22.
experience pleasure, whatever kind of friendship one might attempt with AI would be lacking—it would be incomplete—for AI lacks a body and is incapable of pleasure, and even if some sort of ‘pleasure’ was programmed into AI, it would be artificial pleasure, not the natural pleasure of human friendship.

**Reciprocity**

Aristotle states, “For friendship is said to be *reciprocated* good will,”\(^{56}\) and Simone Weil echoes him in her claim that “a certain reciprocity is essential for friendship.”\(^{57}\) Although this notion of reciprocation—of mutual benefit—is most true for friendships of nobility, in which one wills the good of the other for the sake of the other and not simply for utility or pleasure, it is nonetheless true for friendships of utility and friendships of pleasure as well. Athletes on sports teams work together and benefit from each other as friends of utility, as do partners in business, or classmates working on a group project. Everyone involved in a friendship of utility is not only gaining some good from the friendship—whether it be a championship, some new business deal, or a good grade in class—but they are also aware that the good is gained because of their friendship. Yet once there is no longer a good to be gained, the friendship dissolves, as such is the nature of a friendship of utility. The same holds true for friendships of pleasure. Young lovers often engage in friendships of pleasure (although they often believe they are involved in a noble friendship) but when one or both of the friends no longer receives pleasure from the friendship, the friendship dissolves, and hence reveals itself to have been a friendship of pleasure. Aristotle observes, “Young people are prone to erotic passion, since this mostly accords with feelings, and is caused by pleasure; that is why they love and quickly stop, often changing in a single day.”\(^{58}\) The point is that there

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56 NE, 1155b34.
58 NE, 1156b2–4.
is reciprocity in all human friendships, and that in friendships of utility
and pleasure in particular, the friendship dissolves once the reciprocity
ends, which coincidentally reveals the nature of the friendship.

As we have seen, those involved in friendships of nobility love the other
not for the sake of pleasure or utility, but for the sake of the other. Aris-
totle explains that this kind of friendship “is the friendship of good peo-
ple similar in virtue; for they wish goods in the same way to each other
insofar as they are good, and they are good in their own right. Hence
they wish good to each other for each other’s own sake.” The reciprocity
of this friendship is not based in utility or pleasure, but in love for the
friend himself or herself. Aristotle continues, “Moreover, in loving their
friend they love what is good for themselves; for when a good person
becomes a friend he becomes a good for his friend. Each of them loves
what is good for himself; and repays in equal measure the wish and the
pleasantness of his friend; for friendship is said to be equality.” 59

Is such reciprocity possible for AI? Would a machine, a robot, a self-driv-
ing car, a love doll, an operating system, or a facial recognition program
gain any benefit from its interaction with humans? It would seem not.
For technology is, by its ‘nature,’ produced by humans to assist humans
in human living, and in fact, because AI is not natural, it does not have a
‘nature’ the way that living things do, as we have already seen above. AI
(and technology in general) is made by humans for the sake of humans,
but it is not the kind of thing that benefits from its interaction with hu-
mans they way that humans benefit from other humans in friendship. It
is true that AI can be designed in such a way that it can appear to act in
very human ways, and may even be programmed to communicate in-
formation that would indicate some sort of reciprocity such as, “Where
have you been?” and “I missed you,” and perhaps even imitate on-point
facial expressions associated with human emotions like pleasure or grat-
itude, but such communication does not prove reciprocity of friendship,
it only displays an often excellent and therefore believable imitation of
something natural and human. Yet a simulation of friendship, includ-

59 NE, 1156b7–10, 1157b34–39.
ing a simulation of the reciprocity involved in human friendship, is just that—a simulation.

**MEALS**

Although he only mentions it briefly in his treatise on friendship, Aristotle insists that sharing meals is an important aspect of human friendship, citing the proverb, “they cannot know each other before they have shared their salt.”60 Partaking in a meal is a human activity, and it sets humans apart from animals, as animals nourish themselves but they do not share in meals. In his pseudo-classic study on human eating, Leon Kass explains, “Human beings, like the animals, must be fed. Human beings, unlike the animals, not only feed but usually eat. But civilized human beings, at least on special occasions, not only eat, but dine, and sometimes feast.”61

At meals, humans gather around tables and share not only food and drink, but conversation, and in doing so get to know one another better and deepen friendships. Friends who share meals together are literally companions, as they break bread together. AI is not capable of sharing a meal; it is not even the sort of thing that takes nutrition, and therefore is incapable of one of the most central activities of human friendship, according to Aristotle.

**V. CONCLUSION**

Our task has been to examine the possibility of friendship with artificial intelligence and we are now able to answer the question with certainty. Friendship as Aristotle defines it is not possible between a human and AI for a variety of reasons: most notably because AI is not a natural thing, it is not a human thing, it is not even a living thing, and therefore it is not the kind of thing that is capable of friendship, as friendship is a kind of virtue, and virtue is the way by which humans achieve their

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60  NE, 1156b27–28.
natural end, which is happiness. AI is artificial, has no natural end, and is, therefore, incapable of virtue and has no need for friendship.

It is true that sometime in the near future there may be such a thing as artificial friends, but adjectives are important, as they disclose realities. Operating systems, robots, love dolls, and virtual assistants all lack three very important things that human beings have by nature: life, a human body, and intellect. To simulate life, a human body, and intellect is not to duplicate it, so no matter how much technology advances, the best possibility of friendship with AI would be a simulated friendship, or shall we say, an artificial friendship.

What an artificial friendship would look like is hard to say (although some filmmakers have attempted to imagine it, as we noted in our introduction), but what we can say is that because artificial friendship is artificial, it is not real friendship, and therefore it is incapable of doing what friendship does, which is to offer living proof of a life of virtue, or to be a virtue itself.62

Finally, it is worth noting that according to our line of reasoning, a ‘friendship’ with a plant or animal may actually prove more beneficial to humans than any attempt at friendship with AI like a robot or an operating system, as there is a relation present between humans and other living things that is not present between humans and AI: both are natural, both are alive, and, therefore, a certain level of reciprocation is possible between all living things. Indeed, studies have shown the positive effects that therapy pets, gardening, and simply spending time in nature have on humans, while similar studies have increasingly alerted us to the ill effects of modern technology. Granted, such ‘friendships’ with animals, plants, and nature would not be the same kind of friendship that Aristotle presents in books 8 and 9 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, but they would seem to assist human flourishing in a way that is impossible for AI by the very fact that animals, plants, and nature itself all share one feature that AI lacks: life.

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62 NE, 1155a.
INTRODUCTION

The idea of ‘liturgical inculturation’ has again come to the forefront of discussion, as some representatives to the Amazonian Synod and commentators raised the idea of an ‘Amazonian Rite.’

An equally historic moment happened shortly afterwards, though not as noted by the media: on Sunday, December 1, 2019, Pope Francis celebrated Mass for the Congolese community of Rome. This Mass was celebrated according to the Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre, a special liturgical text sometimes referred to as the ‘Zairian Rite,’ which was approved in the 1980s for use in what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo. While several commentators have pointed towards the ‘Zairian Rite’ as a way of legitimizing the call for an ‘Amazonian Rite,’ none have yet to provide a full explanation of the liturgical texts approved.

While the citation of an approved liturgy does not legitimize the project, we must nonetheless realize that inculturation is a vital source for evan-

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1 This article was originally written as a paper for the completion of the Bachelor’s in Sacred Theology. Special thanks to Fr. John Cush, who directed my research; and Fr. Dennis McManus, who articulated many of the themes which I developed here when I first began showing and interest in liturgical studies.

2 See Francis, Querida Amazonia (2 February 2020), fn. 120.


gelizing a culture, defined broadly as “the intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures,”\(^5\) and referenced in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

In this paper, we will analyze the concept of inculturation, and then use the *Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre* as a springboard for analyzing how inculturation has been applied to an approved liturgical text. Finally, we will attempt to use two methods to analyze what may and may not be included in liturgical inculturation before the integrity of the Roman Rite is compromised.

### 1. Review of Literature on Inculturation

The concept of inculturation in the liturgy is something which did not receive interest until the twentieth century. The watershed moment for the development of this theology is found in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* which states, “Even in the liturgy, the Church has no wish to impose a rigid uniformity in matters which do not implicate the faith or the good of the whole community; rather does she respect and foster the genius and talents of the various races and peoples.”\(^6\) At least one twentieth-century liturgical theologian has called this line and those that follow it “the Magna Carta of Liturgical Adaptation,”\(^7\) which began a new movement to adapt liturgical texts to speak to individual cultures and peoples.

Before proceeding on our exploration of the theology, prerequisites, and consequences of inculturation, it would be wise to define ‘inculturation’ so that our discussion may be fruitful and avoid confusion. For the purpose of this paper, we will understand ‘inculturation’ as referring broadly to when the Gospel takes on some cultural elements which are

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5  John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio* (7 December 1990), 52.
6  *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (4 December 1963), 37.
neither native nor vital to the kerygma to better articulate the truth of its proclamation to a certain group of people. More specifically, in liturgy, it refers to those elements which may be adopted into the Church’s Sacred Liturgy to better articulate the Gospel through the drama of Liturgy to a specific audience. With this definition established, we can proceed with our development of our ideas of the theology of inculturation.

When defining how inculturation takes place, some scholars will state the Gospel being told and projected in an originally Semitic context before being moved into a Greek world, before finally being inculturated into a definitively Roman context. Even before the Paschal Mystery of Christ, commentators on the topic of inculturation speak of the inculturation which is evident in the Old Testament. The Congregation for Divine Worship speaks of how the people of Israel took from neighboring peoples certain forms of worship, but its faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob subjected these borrowings to profound modifications, principally changes of significance but also often changes in the form, as it incorporated these elements into its religious practice in order to celebrate the memory of God’s wonderful deeds in its history.

It appears, then, that Christianity itself has an inherited Semitic and Hellenic inculturation: the Semitic elements originating from the context in which the Gospel was originally preached; and the Hellenic context in which Christianity was able to become a global phenomenon. This concept is mirrored in the words of St. Paul, writing to the Romans, when he states that salvation comes “to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Rom 1:16). From this Semitic and Hellenic origin, then, Christianity began to be adapted by various cultures, namely the Latins, the Byzant-

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8 “The transformation of the liturgy in Rome during the fourth century from Greek to Latin, with the adoption of a style of language that was influenced by both the pagan Roman sacrificial rites as well as by the stylized language and ceremonial of the Imperial court, would be an example of inculturation in the full sense of the word.” Francis, “The Future of Liturgical Inculturation,” 6.


10 All Biblical citations in this paper are taken from the Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.
tines, the Alexandrians, and the Syrians, and from these spread to the whole world.

The spread of the Gospel through these cultures (visible in the six ritual families of the Catholic Church) underlines a central concept of the theology which we will analyze in this paper: inculturation is meant to lead to evangelization.

Lastly, we should realize that although inculturation deals primarily with liturgy and culture, it ultimately affects the Church’s sense of itself, its ecclesiology. Karl Rahner spoke of how the Church “must be inculturated throughout the world if it is to be a world church.”

1.1. History

When embarking on our analysis of the pre-existing literature regarding inculturation in the liturgy, it becomes difficult to find sources or authors commenting on the topic of inculturation before the Second Vatican Council. This lack of information, however, does not imply that the topic is ahistorical and an invention of the twentieth century. An analysis of documents issued by the Holy See regarding the interaction between the Catholic Church and various cultures.

1.1.1. The Chinese Rites Controversy

One of the first cases of the Holy See’s commentary on what we can call inculturation is the Chinese Rites controversy, which began with the arrival of the Society of Jesus in Asia. Alessandro Valignano, the Jesuit visitor for Japan, formulated two documents regarding the inculturation of the liturgy in Japan, his Résolutions and Cérémonial.

When Jesuit missionaries, included Matteo Ricci, arrived in China they adopted Valignano’s Cérémonial and adapted it to a Chinese context. Pope Alexander VII authorized these customs. These opinions eventu-

ally came under criticism because of the involvement of offerings made to the ancestors and the Emperor, as well as disagreements over the name of God in Chinese worship. Pope Clement XI condemned the Chinese rites in his bull *Cum Deus optimus* in 1704. In 1715, Clement issued *Ex illa die*, which officially condemned the rites. These views were later reiterated by Pope Benedict XIV in 1742, in *Ex Quo Singulari*.

These opinions were later reversed by Pope Pius XII, shortly after his election. In 1939, the Holy See issued *Plane Compertum*, which allowed Catholic participation in ‘civil ceremonies’ honoring Confucius or civil authorities, and reversed the opinions of Benedict XIV, calling them “superfluous.”

We should note that while we can see a seed of the theology of inculturation in these events, the final verdict on the Chinese Rites is that they were allowed ‘civil ceremonies,’ not religious rites accepted by the Catholic Church.

### 1.1.2. Leo XIII

Particularly interesting among the current discussion are the works of Leo XIII, which deals with the question of the relationship between the culture of the Eastern Churches and the Latin Church. Two of these documents, *Praeclara Gratulationis Publicae* and *Orientalium Dignitas*, specifically address these questions. In the former, Leo assured the Christians of the Oriental Rites that there is not “any reason for you to fear on that account that We or any of Our Successors will ever diminish your rights, the privileges of your Patriarchs, or the established Ritual of any one of your Churches.” This statement vows that the Latin Church

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12 The official name for God in Chinese is *Tiānzhǔ* (天主, “Lord of Heaven”), while the Jesuits allowed the use of *Tiān* (天, “Heaven”) or *Shàngdì* (上帝, “Supreme Emperor”).


will not interfere with the patrimony of the Eastern Churches, with Leo later stating that “It has been and always will be the intent and Tradition of the Apostolic See, to make a large allowance, in all that is right and good, for the primitive Traditions and special customs of every nation.”\textsuperscript{16} These provisions show an openness to non-Latin cultures by the Latin Church which, while not directly related to the question of inculturation as it is often discussed in the twentieth century, is useful in asserting the cultural variety of the Universal Church.

In \textit{Orientalium Dignitas}, Leo goes on to state that it is the job of the Holy See to “guard and preserve in them [the Eastern Churches] whole and entire forever the customs and distinct forms for administering the sacraments that she had declared legitimate in her wise jurisdiction.”\textsuperscript{17} Leo sees the presence of the Eastern Churches as a sign of unity, stating that it “is so breathtakingly effective for illustrating the mark of Catholicity in God’s Church than that striking sight of differing forms of ceremonies and noble examples of the tongues of the ancient past—made all the more noble by their use by the Apostles and Fathers—rendering their submission to the Church.”\textsuperscript{18}

While during his pontificate, Leo spoke only of the Eastern Churches, his writings show an openness to a diversity of cultures pre-existing within the Church. In doing this, Leo takes a middle ground: he does not forbid the involvement of non-Latin cultures like his predecessors Clement XI or Benedict XIV, he does not affirm new practices like later inculturation would move towards.

\textbf{1.1.3. The Indian Mass}

An important movement in the development of the idea of inculturation took place in the Americas in the mid-seventeenth century. While until this point in history new liturgical practices were not included, the so-called ‘Indian Mass’ introduced songs and chants in the Native

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{17} Leo XIII, \textit{Orientalium Dignitas} (30 November 1894).
\item \textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
American languages to the Latin Rite Mass, normative in the seventeenth century.

The celebration of the Mass on Native American missions in this way is significant because it again modifies the liturgy. The Chinese Rites controversy led to a ban on modifying the liturgy until more than one hundred years later in the Americas. While neither the actions of the Mass, nor the priestly prayers, nor the ordo was modified on Native American missions, the modification of the propers of the Mass does touch the liturgy itself, showing again an openness to change.

The author hopes that, over the course of the history above, it is evident that while the term ‘inculturation’ was not used in the Church until the mid-twentieth century, evidence of it exists from earlier times. This realization helps us understand that inculturation is not entirely removed from history when scholars and theologians begin discussing it at the Second Vatican Council, nor is it frivolous or an innovation.

1.1.4. Modern Developments

Before proceeding to our analysis of concrete examples in the Use of Zaire and a criticism of how inculturation is applied. We will very briefly look at the Church’s contemporary opinions and writings on inculturation.

Paul VI

Due to Paul VI’s position during the Second Vatican Council, almost all of contemporary thought and opinion of inculturation can be attributed to his influence; indeed, he may properly be called ‘the Father of Inculturation.’ While the appropriate parts of Sacrosanctum Concilium have already been referenced, above, another Vatican II document, Ad Gentes, is also important in discussing inculturation.

Ad Gentes, or the Constitution on the Missionary Activities of the Church, theologizes some of the idea of inculturation which is already mentioned in Sacrosanctum Concilium. Referencing Psalm 2, the document speaks of how “in harmony with the economy of the Incarnation, the
young churches, rooted in Christ and built up on the foundation of the Apostles, take to themselves in a wonderful exchange all the riches of the nations which were given to Christ as an inheritance.”

This phrase allows for an appreciation of the theology of inculturation, which we will briefly embark on below; the rest of the document mentions culture and inculturation only in reference to specific missionary activities.

The critique that inculturation is without theology does not always seem inaccurate, but the fonts from which we can draw this theology forth are present. The Incarnation provides a fertile ground for us to cultivate this idea, which takes place there allows us to appreciate what inculturation actually means. Pregnant in the statement is that, in the Incarnation, Christ did not simply take on human nature in his Incarnation, but also human culture. Moreover, since Christ is the prototype of man, Christ in a way takes on all parts of all cultures that are not contrary to the Gospel.

Paul VI develops this idea in his homily at the conclusion of a symposium organized by African bishops and shows his characteristic sympathy towards the need for missionary efforts. He begins by asking, “Must the Church be European, Latin, Oriental … or must she be African?” and offers a two-fold reply. “First,” he states, “your Church must be first of all Catholic. That is, it must be entirely founded upon the identical, essential, constitutional patrimony of the self-same teaching of Christ, as professed by the authentic and authoritative tradition of the one true Church.”

He warns against this deposit of faith being compromised in any way, stating, “we are not the inventors of our Faith; we are its custodians. Not every religious feeling is good; but only that religious sentiment which interprets the thought of God, according to the apostolic teaching authority established by the sole Master, Jesus Christ.”

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19 Ad Gentes (7 December 1965), 22.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
definite statement by the Holy Father states that, despite some common contemporary opinions or responses, inculturation cannot change the deposit of faith.

Paul VI goes comparing the faith to a language and stating that how it is spoken “may be manifold; hence, it may be original, suited to the tongue, the style, the character, the genius, and the culture, of the one who professes this one Faith. From this point of view, a certain pluralism is not only legitimate, but desirable. An adaptation of the Christian life in the fields of pastoral, ritual, didactic and spiritual activities is not only possible, it is even favored by the Church.”23 Finally, Paul VI notes that the mission of inculturation begins on an individual level, stating that the mission of adapting the Gospel to Africa will:

require that your African soul become imbued to its depths with the secret charisms of Christianity, so that these charisms may then overflow freely, in beauty and wisdom, in the true African manner. It will require from your culture that it should not refuse, but rather eagerly desire, to draw, from the patrimony of the patristic, exegetical, and theological tradition of the Catholic Church, those treasures of wisdom which can rightly be considered universal, above all, those which can be most easily assimilated by the African mind.24

Here, Paul VI exemplifies the evangelical roll of inculturation and asserts that it may be understood in light of African culture and worldviews.

Lastly, brief mention should be made of Paul VI’s exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi about evangelization and called by Pope Francis “the greatest pastoral document that has ever been written to this day.”25 In this document, Paul VI speaks of the relationship between faith and culture and again notes, “though independent of cultures, the Gospel and evangelization are not necessarily incompatible with them; rather they are capable of permeating them all without becoming subject to any one of

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23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Francis, “Address to Participants in the Pilgrimage from the Diocese of Brescia,” Rome (22 June 2013), 2.
them” and that “every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly of cultures.” These two statements affirm two truths: The plurality of cultures and the need for the Gospel to permeate all of them. These ideas summarize Paul VI’s thought. Evangelii Nuntiandi also provides a point of transition as we begin to speak of John Paul II’s contribution: then-Cardinal Karol Wojtyła was the recording secretary for the synod which Evangelii Nuntiandi is the product of.

**John Paul II**

During John Paul II’s long reign, one document was specifically authored in relation to missionary activity, *Redemptoris Missio*, and other documents mention the topic in a secondary way.

Regarding inculturation in the liturgy, *Redemptoris Missio* does not make many new statements, but instead serves to restate the opinions and decrees of previous pontiffs and deals with more of the missiological dimension of inculturation. It does, however, note that it is the responsibility of bishops to guard whether or not cultural themes are compatible with the Gospel. An important note is made in *Familiaris Consortio*, which states that the family is a *locus* for inculturation. In *Slavorum Apostoli* John Paul II follows the line of his predecessor, Leo XIII, and mentions how the Slavic Churches have already been inculturated and how Saints Cyril and Methodius dealt with this.

**Benedict XVI**

To fully appreciate Pope Benedict XVI’s contribution to the discussion about inculturation, we must begin by reviewing his work before his election to the papacy. In particular, as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, he

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27 Ibid.
pioneers the idea of moving from inculturation to ‘interculturality.’

In his book written in 2003, *Truth and Tolerance*, the question of inculturation and interculturality is treated in relationship to world religions. Ratzinger treats the topic of culture more systematically than other authors we have discussed so far. Importantly, Ratzinger states that religion is inseparable from culture, and states that the concept of a religion without culture meeting a culture without religion is impossible.

Relying on this, Ratzinger treats the term ‘inculturation’ as a misnomer: A religion cannot be entirely without culture, and so Christianity has those elements of it which are cultural and may come into conflict with elements of another culture. Likewise, another culture will have some religious elements in it which will come in conflict with Christianity when the culture is evangelized.

Realizing this, Ratzinger instead seems to prefer the term ‘interculturality.’ This terminology refers not simply to a religion (Christianity) taking on parts of a culture, but instead speaks of a meeting of cultures. This conflict will be, in part, what we treat in chapter three of this thesis.

Ratzinger notes that this idea can quickly become exclusivist unless one believes that it is possible for all cultures to be potentially universal. At the same time, a purely pluralistic position cannot be possible. Before Christianity, when polytheism or henotheism were both more common, every culture had its own religion; the state was inherently the Church and all religion was ‘civil religion.’ Monotheism, present in later Judaism and in Christianity, rejects this pluralism, stating that there is only one God and all others are ‘false gods’ or non-gods. We then find ourselves between a religious-cultural exclusivist imperialism (one must

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32 Ibid., 70.
33 Ibid., 59.
34 Ibid., p. 63.
35 For an excellent treatment of the concept of a civil religion, see N.D.F. de Coulanges, *The Ancient City* (1864).
accept a religion with all of the cultural accoutrements) and a radical pluralism (all religions are equally valid which, according to Ratzinger “denies the unity of mankind and denies the dynamic of history, which is a process of various unions”\textsuperscript{37}).

Ratzinger goes farther, however, seeming to mimic the Christian concept of the freedom of the individual in his treatment of non-Christian religions. While the Church has long taught that one is most truly oneself when living in Christ, Ratzinger states that, by the purgation of those cultural elements not compatible with Christianity from a culture, the culture becomes more truly itself.\textsuperscript{38}

Ratzinger illustrates the entire movement to a definite Christian culture and then towards evangelization using the story of the Exodus of the Israelites. The Israelites left Egypt, a land of many gods and religions, and forged their own, monotheistic identity. Christianity, then, is commissioned to go to all peoples and nations and must leave a unicultural place and re-enter Egypt, engaging the many and purifying them in the light of Christ.

1.2. \textit{Moving Forward}

Over the course of this chapter, we have outlined the concept of inculturation and the development of the idea over the course of the history of the Church. Before proceeding to our analysis of inculturation in liturgy reviewing the Use of Zaire, we should further assert the relationship between inculturation and the liturgy.

Liturgy is often understood as prayed reality. More appropriately, we can understand liturgy as the action of \textit{being} Christian. David Fagerberg, a liturgical theologian at the University of Notre Dame, states succinctly, “to swim is to swimmer; to liturgy is Christian.”\textsuperscript{39} When analyzing litur-

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{37} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 63.
\end{itemize}
Inculturation and the Roman Rite

gical texts, then, we can see the conflict that arises when two cultures (and their inherent ideas towards religion) encounter each other. This analysis will go forward by, in the second chapter, analyzing certain examples of inculturated liturgy and, in the third chapter, isolating these examples and analyzing them in light of what we will try to deduce of the Latin Rite.

We hope that this process will allow us to grow in better understanding of the project of inculturation in the past sixty years, as well as the native genius of the Latin Rite.

2. The Zairian Use

The project of inculturation ultimately aims to adapt the liturgy to a particular cultural circumstance, as noted in the chapter above. In the twentieth century, Africa became a special point of interest in the application of the idea of inculturation. While missionaries had arrived in north Africa during the Apostolic era, and to Sub-Saharan Africa in 1490, the liturgy was not adapted and largely remote from the people it sought to evangelize.

The value of universality was at stake in the remoteness of the liturgy from the African people: In Belgian Congo, which later would be named Zaire, it was seen as something foreign and a colonizing power; it remained something European. Archbishop Peter Sarpong, formerly an Ordinary in Ghana, stated: “If Christianity’s claim to be universal is to be believed, then it is not Africa that must be Christianized, but Christianity that must be Africanized.”40 With this in mind, we will begin our analysis of the liturgy promulgated in the *Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre*, a uniquely African liturgical expression of the Roman Rite.41

41 Conférence Épiscopal du Zaïre, *Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre* (Kinshasa: 1989), hereafter MRDZ.
2.1. The Naming of the Liturgical Use

For the purpose of our discussion, I will refer to the order of liturgy approved for the dioceses of what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo as the ‘Zairian Use’ or the ‘Use of Zaire.’ Before proceeding with our analysis of this liturgical use, we would like to dedicate a brief amount of time to summarizing the verbiage used, since it can often be a source of confusion.

We should note, also, that the name ‘Zaire’ is still often applied to this liturgical use, despite the name of the country Zaire changing with the First Congo War in 1996.42 The Missal has, in recent times, been referred to as the “Congolese Missal” as a result of this change.

The most common way of referring to this liturgical use is the ‘Zairian Rite’ (or, in French, ‘Rite Zaïrois’). The tension between the language of “Rite” and “Use” has been discussed at length in recent decades. We should note that the Vatican has authorized neither a rite nor a use, but instead has limited itself to authorizing only a Missal.43 More discussion about this will take place below, in section two of this chapter.

For the purpose of our discussion, I will refer to the liturgical ceremonies surrounding this Missal as a ‘use.’ While the language of ‘rite,’ ‘use,’ and ‘church’ are frequently confused and mistakenly applied (especially in regard to the Eastern Churches), this distinction is important in recognizing the place of the Zairian Use within the Church Universal.

While ‘Rite’ remains the most common nomenclature applied to the Roman Missal for the Dioceses of Zaire, that title belongs more properly to the liturgy of a Ritual Church sui iuris. This concept of the relationship is explicitly determined in the Code of Canons for Eastern Churches: “A rite is the liturgical, theological, spiritual and disciplinary patrimony, culture and circumstances of history of a distinct people, by which its

42  Laurent-Désiré Kabila, Presidential Order (29 May 1997).
43  Congregation for Divine Worship (30 April 1988).
own manner of living the faith is manifested in each Church *sui iuris.*”\(^44\) The application of the term ‘rite,’ then, is inappropriate to the Roman Missal of the Dioceses of Zaire, as the Dioceses of Zaire themselves do not constitute a church *sui iuris,* since they do not fulfill the requirement of law as having being recognized expressly or tacitly as *sui iuris.*\(^45\)

I propose, then, that the word ‘use’ can accurately be applied to the Roman Missal of the Dioceses of Zaire, allowing for the term ‘Zairian Use’ or ‘Use of Zaire’ to be utilized colloquially. While the term ‘use’ has not been defined by any authority, a twentieth century commentator summarizes the word ‘use’ as denoting “the special liturgical customs which prevailed in a particular diocese or group of dioceses.”\(^46\) In modern scholarship, this terminology is most often applied to the various Gallican missals that were used throughout the Middle Ages, but we will accept it as the most fitting terminology to refer to the Zairian liturgy in our argument.

### 2.2. The Development of the Zairian Use

While the Use of Zaire is frequently viewed as a product of the Second Vatican Council, the origins of the Use are actually pre-Conciliar. In 1961, one year before the Council and nine years before the publication of the new Missal,\(^47\) the Bishops of Zaire drafted an official statement that the Mass (then, the Missal of 1962) “is not yet adapted to the proper character of our populations, and therefore has remained foreign to them. The return to the authentic traditions of the liturgy greatly opens the way to a fundamental adaptation of the liturgy to the African environment. Such an adaptation is very necessary or the edification of the traditional

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\(^{44}\) *Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches* (CCEO), can. 28, §1.

\(^{45}\) CCEO, can. 27.

\(^{46}\) Herbert Thurston, “Use of York,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia,*

\(^{47}\) It is important to remember the difficulties in arranging the publication of the *Novus Ordo Missæ.* While it was authorized in April of 1969, the *ordo* was not officially published until the following year. Episcopal Conferences would have been given copies in advance.
(pagan) community.” This statement precedes the official statements on inculturation in Sacrosanctum Concilium by two years, which would later allow for experiments in inculturation anew.

With the publication of the Novus Ordo Missæ of Paul VI after the Second Vatican Council, countries and cultures across the world began the process of translating the editio typica of the new Mass and preparing various hymns and other materials in the vernacular languages of their unique contexts. Despite the permissions given in adaptation the editio typica, some of the bishops of Zaire believed that it could not be sufficiently adapted to culture of their people. In December of 1969, the Bishops of Zaire submitted a schema for a new Zairian liturgy to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, asking for permission to develop this liturgy. The Congregation gave its permission for the bishops to begin their work. The Zairian bishops eventually proposed the Rite Zaïrois de la Célébration Eucharistique.

The Congregation for the Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments received the draft of the new use and agreed to approve it for use in the Dioceses of Zaire, if three changes were made. The three points which the Congregation drew issue with were:

1. The title of the Zairian project, asking that the new title be “Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre.”

2. Concerning the invocation of the ancestors at the beginning of the liturgy (see the following section, below); the invocation itself was not criticized, but some of the theological explanations offered for this practice.

3. Concerning that the Institution Narrative was changed in the Zairian draft, requesting that it be changed to match that of the Roman

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50 Congregation for Divine Worship, Notitiae 23 (1987), 139.
51 Congregation for Divine Worship, Prot. #2217/70.
Rite.\textsuperscript{52} The Zairian bishops began making these changes.

The work on this liturgical project was mentioned by Pope John Paul II when he received the Zairian bishops for their \textit{ad limina} visit. The Pope acknowledged the process, saying: “As for the celebration of the Eucharist, the form currently \textit{ad experimentum} still requires some examination and certain clarifications from our Dicasteries to establish a Missal for the Use of the Dioceses of Zaire.”\textsuperscript{53} One week after the audience with the Holy Father, the Congregation for Divine Worship gave formal approval for the \textit{Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre}.\textsuperscript{54}

2.3. \textbf{DIFFERENCES FROM THE ROMAN RITE}

Having established the history and approval of the Zairian Use, we will now begin an analysis of the features that make this Use of the Roman Rite unique. Our discussion presumes a knowledge of the basic structure of the Roman Rite as it is found in the \textit{editio typica} of 1969/70. In beginning our analysis, I will provide a graph which highlights the structural differences between the \textit{editio typica} and the \textit{Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre}.

2.3.1. \textbf{Structural Differences}

Before we proceed with the structural analysis, we will make several caveats. The \textit{Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre} gives the option for either a ‘solemn rite’ or a ‘simple rite,’ which the Missal provides texts for separately. For the graph, below, we will analyze the solemn rite, as

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{b} \textit{Acta Apostolicae Sedis} 1988, cap. VIII, p. 1452, no. 5. “Pour ce qui est de la célébration de l’Eucharistie, la forme actuellement \textit{ad experimentum} demande encore quelque examen et certaines précisions de nos Dicastères pour entrer dans un missel à l’usage des diocèses du Zaïre.” My translation.
\bibitem{c} Congregation for Divine Worship, \textit{Notitiae} 24, 454–72.
\end{thebibliography}
the simple rite is a reduction thereof. The graph will show the individual parts of both Missals, with empty spaces showing omissions in either. Those parts of the Zairian Missal which are significantly different, but bear the same name as their counterparts in the *editio typica* will be marked with an explanatory footnote.

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<tr>
<th><strong>Roman Rite (1969/70)</strong></th>
<th><strong>Zairian Use (Solemn)</strong></th>
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<td>Introductory Rites</td>
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<td>Penitential Rite</td>
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<td>Invocation of Saints and Right-Hearted Ancestors</td>
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<td>Reader requests blessing / Priest blesses reader / Gesture of gratitude</td>
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<td>First Reading</td>
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<td>Sprinkling Rite</td>
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<td>Sign of Peace</td>
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<sup>55</sup> Since, in the Zairian Use, the Penitential Rite is moved to the end of the Liturgy of the Word the “remembering the presence of God” serves as a means of recollecting the assembly before proceeding.
As we are able to see in the above, the primary structural differences between the Roman Rite and the Zairian Use are the role of the announcer, the invocations at the beginning, the blessing(s) of the reader(s), and the placement of the Penitential Rite. These differences will be commented upon at length in the following section.

Note that we will not comment on the “Homage to God,” since it appears to function as an introduction to the Collect and Liturgy of the

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56  Included in the Zairian offertory procession is the instruction that the gifts are danced to the altar, and a set dialogue with the priest is established in which those offering the gifts say “O priest of God, here are our gifts, receive them: they manifest our spirit of solidarity and of sharing, and that we love one another as the Lord loves us” (no. 31, p. 99), and the priest blesses those who bring the gifts.

57  We should note that while the editio typica allows for the use of thirteen Eucharistic Prayers (four included in the original publication, four for ‘various needs,’ two for reconciliation, three for children), the Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre includes only one Eucharistic Prayer, which is specially prepared for this Missal.

58  Hommage a Dieu, p. 88, which is a three-fold dialogue between the priest and the assembly in which they address each person of the Trinity asking them to receive their homage.
Word.

2.3.2. Unique Parts of the Zairian Mass

After having shown the difference in structure between the editio typica of the Mass and the Zairian Missal, we will now comment on individual parts of the liturgy, and how they reflect or embody the concept of incul- turation within the liturgy.

The Announcer

When reading through the text of the Zairian Liturgy or seeing it celebrated, the first difference that one observes is the role of the announcer. The goal of this minister is meant to “act as the liaison between the priest and the assembly and discreetly direct the active participation of the faithful and guide their prayer.” This ministry dresses in a way to signify his role, uses a bell or gong to draw attention, introduces the liturgy and its ministers, welcomes any guests, invites the assembly to join the opening song. We should note that this role is not meant to ad-lib their comments or introductions, but that specific dialogues and statements are provided for them in the Missal.

In particular, the announcer draws attention to actions at the beginning of the Mass, the readings and the Gospel, and the Eucharistic Prayer. The liturgical purpose of the announcer is simply to call attention to important moments in the liturgy using prescribed statements.

In this way, the announcer (‘l’annonciateur’) fulfills a role similar to that of the ‘commentator’ provided for in the Institutio Generalis Missalis

60 MRDZ, p. 83, n. 2.
61 MRDZ.
62 MRDZ.
63 MRDZ, p. 89, n. 11; p. 90, no. 15, 17.
64 MRDZ, p. 101, n. 37.
Romani since 1969. The current General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) in the United States (issued in 2010) states that the function of the commentator is one who, if appropriate, provides the faithful briefly with explanations and exhortations so as to direct their attention to the celebration and ensure that they are better disposed for understanding it. The commentator’s remarks should be thoroughly prepared and notable for their restraint. In performing this function the commentator stands in a suitable place within sight of the faithful, but not at the ambo.

The role which the GIRM envisions for the commentator seems to be fulfilled and expanded upon by the Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre’s announcer. Notably, the copy of the GIRM provided at the beginning of the Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre retains the mention of the ministry of the commentator. This Missal provides a script for the announcer to use and emphasizes this role according to the cultural customs of sub-Saharan Africa.

The cultural value of the announcer relates to the role of an announcer in African villages and assemblies. Cardinal Laurent Monsengwo Pasinya, Archbishop Emeritus of Kinshasa, comments that the announcer’s role in introducing the presider and calling the assembly to attention “recalls what happens in local meetings.” Nathan Chase, a researcher at the University of Notre Dame, states that the use of a bell or gong “helps to draw out the connection between the announcer and the town crier, who through the beating of a tshionda issued messages to the peo-

65 General Instruction of the Roman Missal (1969), n. 68.
ple of the village.”69 The role of the announcer, then, takes a pre-existing cultural role (the town-crier) and uses it to expand upon an oft-forgotten liturgical ministry (the commentator).

Invocation of the Saints and Ancestors

Mass according to the Zairian Use includes an invocation of the saints at the beginning of the celebration, but this is followed by what is perhaps the most controversial part of the *Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre*, the invocation of the ancestors.70 Two forms for this invocation are given, the first invoking the Blessed Mother, Holy Patriarchs and Prophets, Holy Apostles and Evangelists, all saints; the second invoking the Blessed Mother and allowing for two saints (the patron of the parish and the saint of the day) to be named. Each of these forms are followed by an invocation of “our ancestors of right heart.”71

Each of the saints is invoked differently (the Blessed Mother being invoked as “You who are the Mother of the Church,”72 the apostles and evangelists as “You who have transmitted the faith of Christ to us,”73 etc.), though the final statement remains the same: “Come, let us glorify the Lord together; R/ with all who celebrate the Mass at this hour.”74 These lines are interspersed with the petition “Be with us.”75

When invoking the ancestors, the final statement and petition remain the same, and the ancestors are invoked as “You who, helped by God, have served him faithfully.”76 The controversy which this invocation has been the subject of bases itself on the fact that the ancestors who are

70 MRDZ, pp. 85–86, n. 7.
71 MRDZ.
73 MRDZ, “Vous qui nous avez transmis la foi au Christ.” My translation.
74 MRDZ, “Venez/Viens glorifions ensemble le Seigneur ; R/ avec tous ceux qui célèbrent la messe à cette heure.” My translation.
76 MRDZ, “Vous qui, aidés par Dieu, l’avez servi fidèlement.” My translation.
invoked are not only Christian ancestors, and thus this cannot be considered an invocation to the Church Triumphant in the traditional sense (note, too, that a previous invocation in one form has already invoked all the saints). Nor can this be considered a prayer for the dead (“Eternal rest …” or similar).

Theologically, this invocation relies the concept of salvation of non-Christians, or perhaps Karl Rahner’s theory of the ‘anonymous Christian.’ The validity of these theories or similar questions about the salvation of non-believers is beyond the scope of this paper, but instead we will focus on the liturgical and cultural sources of these prayers.

One should note that the concept of acknowledging ancestors is not original to the Use of Zaire but has a history in the Church which stretches back to the Chinese Rites controversy. We should note, however, that the objection to the rites surrounding ancestors in the Chinese Rites controversy commonly called ‘ancestor worship.’

We should note that the difference between the customs which existed in China and those which exist in Africa. In China, the customs in question involved offering incense and/or foods to the spirits of ancestors in familial shrines. This practice differs greatly from the African custom, which does not involve offering an oblation: we will now begin the explanation of the African custom.

Culturally, the role of the ancestors is important within African life. We should note that the Missal appends a qualifier to those ancestors it invokes: it invokes only the ancestors of ‘right heart’ (droit au coeur), meaning those who lived upright lives. Pasinya comments that ‘ancestor’

77 See Lumen Gentium (21 November 1964), 14.
80 Called 敬祖 (jìngzǔ) or 拜祖 (bàizǔ).
does not refer generally to all deceased but only to those who have lived in an exemplary way, promoting unity and harmony of the group, inspiring respect for the elderly, loyalty to traditional customs. In short, those who have supported everything that refers to the promotion of the authentic life.81

This definition does fit with the understandings of just non-Christians being saved or the anonymous Christian.

We can speculate that the ancestors are included in the Zairian Use because of how important their position is held in daily life in Congo. One Congolese scholar comments, “Africans have a strong attachment to their ancestors. Ancestors are seen as means through whom the God has transmitted life to the present generation.”82 In particular, there is a cultural and religious precedent for invoking the ancestors before approaching God in the African worldview. Another scholar notes how these “rites of contact” are common in African religion, acknowledging ancestors and transcendent reality before approaching God.83

This inclusion into the Zairian Use seems well-founded on African principles, though thoughts on it will vary greatly depending on how one understands the salvation of non-Christians and the worship of the saints. If one accepts a more open understanding of salvation, the inclusion of the ancestors could simply be an Africanization of a litany of saints; if one does not there is a tension with this part of the rite. We ought to understand, however, the role of the ancestors in the African worldview and realize that this is vital to realizing the value of the invocation at the beginning of the Missel pour les Diocèses du Zaïre.

Blessing of Reader

The Zairian custom of blessing the reader before he or she proclaims the Scripture may easily be misread: it could be understood as a devolution

of blessing the deacon before he proclaims the Gospel,\textsuperscript{84} or of blessing
the reader before he proclaims the Scripture in the Ambrosian Use,\textsuperscript{85} or
the blessing of the reader after the proclamation of Scripture in the Byzan-
tine custom.\textsuperscript{86} In understanding the principles applied to creating the
\textit{Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre}, however, the blessing of readers
in the Zairian Use does not rely on any of these, but instead draws upon
the African understanding of authority in public meetings.

The source of this rite, then, is not liturgical, then, but from a cultural
font. One scholar notes, in developing the Zairian Use, the model of a
village chief was combined with that of the priest-presider.\textsuperscript{87} A Congo-
lese commentator notes that, in a village assembly, none would speak
without seeking first the permission of the chief.\textsuperscript{88} In this way, the cele-
bration of the Use of Zaire follows the model given to it of the African
village meeting, in which the lector (a speaker) seeks the authority of the
chief (the priest-presider).

There has been a legitimate resistance to this model and the ideology
pregnant within it. Egbulem notes that the inclusion of this model of
the priest-presider as village chief and his permission being necessary
to speak has had an adverse effect on the development of ministry in
Congo.\textsuperscript{89} He goes as far as to say “While this revitalizes the ministry
of the Word, it promotes clericalism, and diminishes the sense of the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{84} Roman Missal, no. 14.
\item \textsuperscript{85} See Archdiocese of Milan, \textit{The Ambrosian Liturgy: The Ordinary and Canon of the Mass
According to the Rite of the Church of Milan} (Milan: 1909), 49.
\item \textsuperscript{86} See Eparchy of Newton, \textit{The Divine and Holy Liturgy of Our Father Among the Saints
John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople} (Newton, MA: 2009), 48. This blessing
is custom and is found in all Byzantine \textit{liturgikons} and \textit{typikons} which the author is
familiar with.
\item \textsuperscript{87} Nwaka Chris Egbulem, \textit{The Power of Africentric Celebrations: Inspirations from the Zair-
\item \textsuperscript{88} Kapola, “The Zairian Mass,” 41.
\item \textsuperscript{89} Nwaka Chris Egbulem, “The ‘Rite Zaïrois’ in the Context of Liturgical Inculturation
in Middle-Belt Africa Since the Second Vatican Council” (PhD diss., Catholic Univer-
sity of America, 1989), 291.
\end{itemize}
priesthood of the baptized.”

In this moment, we can see a tension between the cultural and theological values which have been made by the architects of the *Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre* to share the same place.

The tension between these two points is especially evident when considering the question of how the ministry of Instituted Lectors cooperates with the understanding of the authority of the priest-presider in the Zairian Use. Cardinal Pasinya notes that the consent of the priest-presider is necessary because “to announce [the Word of God] one must be in some way ‘sent.’” The ‘sending’ which is represented by the priest-presider’s blessing allows someone, on a temporary basis, to be commissioned to proclaim the Word of God. The Latin Church also provides rites so that a man or woman may be instituted a lector permanently, commissioned for an indeterminate amount of time.

While no commentary exists in any authoritative document, many commentators suggest that those who have been commissioned as lectors (and, we would suggest those who have been instituted as well) would not request the priest-presider’s blessings, as they would already have permission to proclaim the readings in the church. It is possible that this already-existing permission could place some tension on image of priest-presider as chief in the African assembly.

While the cultural font of this rite is clear, it is evident that there may be some legitimate theological issues to be had with the results of this inculturation. While these issues would be secondary and are not grievous, they may merit further study.

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90 Ibid.
92 See Paul VI, *Ministeria Quædam*, in *Acta Apostolicæ Sedis* 64 (1972); see also “Rite of Institution of Lectors” in *Roman Pontifical* (Rome, 1978); see also Francis, *Spiritus Domini* (10 January 2021).
Placement of the Penitential Rite and Sign of Peace

Structurally, the movement of the Penitential Rite and Sign of Peace is perhaps the greatest change between the Zairian Use and the editio typica of the Roman Rite. Much of the genius for this move has to do with the themes of the African culture. We will explore the reasons and ramifications of this concept in this section.

We should note, as well, that the Penitential Rite is not simply moved in the Zairian Use: It is replaced by the rite of “Standing in the Presence of God.” This is a statement in which the priest makes. This statement does include a reference to sin, in which the priest says to the assembly, “Let us walk confidently towards the throne of grace, in order to obtain mercy.” Despite this statement existing where it does in the Zairian Use, there is no further reference to a Penitential Rite until after the homily.

Kapola notes that the placement of this has to do with an inherent African cultural value. He states that the Mass of Zaire instead “portrays the need for communion between the human and the divine as the first movement of worship.” In doing so, the Use of Zaire attempts to use the Introductory Rites and readings to establish communion before proceeding to any form of penitential prayer. Moloney comments that this follows general structure of African religious ceremonies, in which penitential prayers are only conduct after preparatory rites have taken place.

Perhaps the best articulation of the cultural difference between the what is embodied in the Roman Rite and the Use of Zaire was given by Bishop Anselme Sanon of Bobo-Dioulasso, in Burkina-Faso. He stated on the occasion of an extraordinary Synod of Bishop in Rome that the placement of the Penitential Rite according to the editio typica of the Roman

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95 MRDZ, no. 6, p. 84–85. “Avançons avec confiance vers le trône de la grâce, afin d’obtenir miséricorde....” My translation.
Rite is “altogether contrary our own mentality.” He explains this by saying that “we [Africans] have the custom of first of all greeting one another before anything else, and then listening to the message which is brought to us … Therefore, according to our own custom, the Word of God and the homily precede the confession of sins.” The font of this change, then, seems to be an African cultural value which may not be directly linked to a village assembly or other definitive event in the community.

After the Penitential Rite, the priest will sprinkle the people with Holy Water. At this point, the priest may also lead the congregation in renewing their Baptismal promises. This rite is typically considered to be part of the Penitential Rite and itself is not often commented on by scholars.

The sprinkling rite is then followed by the exchange of the Sign of Peace. The placement of the Sign of Peace here is especially interesting given both the placement of the Sign of Peace in the Roman Rite compared to other liturgies and the Congregation for Divine Worship’s circular letter on the Sign of Peace in 2014.

The Roman Rite is unique among the other Rites of the Catholic Church in that it places the Sign of Peace in the Communion Rite and not before the Liturgy of the Eucharist, as do the liturgies of all other Churches sui iuris. The Use of Zaire, however, does not follow the Roman model and instead opts for a placement of the Sign of Peace which resembles other liturgical models.

In his post-synodal Apostolic exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, Pope Benedict XVI requested that the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments investigate the possibility of moving the sign of peace in the Roman Rite to before the Offertory procession.

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99 Ibid.
100 *MRDZ*, no. 24, p. 96.
The Congregation responded that the placement of the Pax in the Roman Liturgy has a theological rationale, which it explains by citing the Tridentine Missal, the instruction *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, and the post-Conciliar Missal. The post-Conciliar Missal provides perhaps the most succinct example, stating that “The sign of peace, therefore, is placed between the Lord’s Prayer, to which is joined the embolism which prepares for the gesture of peace, and the breaking of the bread, in the course of which the Lamb of God is implored to give us his peace.”

The relationship placement can also be summarized as the relationship between the *sanctissimum* (the Blessed Sacrament) and the *sancti* (the holy ones, i.e., the faithful).

The Sign of Peace in the Zairian Use, however, is intimately connected with the Penitential Rite. Pasinya explains:

> only after listening to the Word of God, and enlightened by this, the faithful can recognize his condition of being a sinner, and then ask for forgiveness to the Creator of his failures. Once the forgiveness is received (fountain of real peace), reconciled with God and with our brothers, the Christian can give it and exchange it with his brother and then offer his pleas, but also his gift to the Lord.

The Sign of Peace according to this explanation, then, serves as a transitory period between the Penitential Rite and the Offertory, in which one, having been reconciled with God, expresses his unity with those around him before proceeding to offer his sacrifice.

An alternative explanation is offered by Kapola, who notes that the placement of the Sign of Peace after the Penitential Rite might be an “outward manifestation of an inward conversion.”

### 2.3.3. Secondary Differences

While most of the major differences between the Zairian Use and the
more standard version of the Roman Rite are mentioned above, we recognize that often it is the secondary differences which are more visible and more often commented on. We will, briefly, treat two of these secondary differences before proceeding with our study, namely: the vesture of the priest and ministers, and differences in posturing and movement in the celebration of the Mass.

The Vesture of the Priest and Ministers

When one begins searching for information on the Use of Zaire, one is frequently presented with statements that, when celebrating Mass according to the Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre, the priest will vest in ‘tribal vestments.’ There has been some misunderstanding that the priest will not vest according to the Latin Rite, then, but in a traditional African (pagan) manner. Despite this, the Présentation Générale de la Liturgie de la Messe pour les Diocèses du Zaïre clearly states that “the vesture proper to the priest-celebrant and to the concelebrants is the chasuble,” although it notes that the chasuble is “according to the form received in the Dioceses of Zaire.” One commentator notes that the ‘specific form’ refers to the patterns and colors customary of the area.

These frequent comments very likely refer to two auxiliary pieces of clothing which commentators frequently associate with the priest-presenter of the Zairian Use. Kapola notes that it’s common that the priest-presenter will frequently use costumes involving horse tails, or caps made of goat or leopard skin, which are emblematic of the role of a chief in the African assembly. The use of these costume pieces seem to work to strengthen the emphasis between the roles of priest-presenter and head of the assembly in the African community.

Other ministers at the Mass are also instructed to dress in some way

107  Chase. “A History and Analysis,” 34.
emblematic of their roles. The announcer is specifically mentioned in dressing “in a costume expressive of his function.”\textsuperscript{109} The other ministers are also mentioned as vesting in a tunic,\textsuperscript{110} and carrying “the instruments of their ministry.”\textsuperscript{111} Kapola also notes that, in the original proposal, that each minister would have a staff of office.\textsuperscript{112}

Interestingly, although it’s mentioned nowhere in the Missal nor the instructions, Kapola notes that the ministry of altar server is not permitted to women in Mass according to the Zairian Use,\textsuperscript{113} and that the altar servers would carry spears.\textsuperscript{114} None of these differences seems significant enough to comment on theologically, and the cultural bases seem evident.

\textit{Posturing and Movement}

A minor note, and one not necessarily restricted to the Use of Zaire is the posturing of the people at different moments during the Mass. This difference begins, in a way, with general comportment: The African custom of gesture and dance is rich within the liturgy, and dancing is called for during processions,\textsuperscript{115} and around the altar at the Gloria.\textsuperscript{116} While there are moments which specific gestures and dancing is prescribed in the liturgy, it is also not uncommon for the faithful to move rhythmically at other portions of the celebration. This presence of movement is not restricted to the Zairian Use but is often found in African communities that use the Roman Rite as well.

A curious inclusion within the gestures of the Zairian Use is the manner in which the altar is venerated. The Preamble of the Missal states that

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{109} MRDZ, no. 2, p. 83: “\textit{en habit expressif de sa fonction}.” My translation.
\item \textsuperscript{110} Conférence Épiscopal du Zaïre, \textit{Présentation Générale de la Liturgie de la Messe pour les Diocèses du Zaïre}, no. 37, in \textit{Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre}, p. 79.
\item \textsuperscript{111} MRDZ, no. 3. “\textit{l’instrument de son ministère}.” My translation.
\item \textsuperscript{112} MRDZ.
\item \textsuperscript{113} Kapola, “The Zairian Mass,” 74–75.
\item \textsuperscript{114} Ibid., p. 43.
\item \textsuperscript{115} MRDZ, p. 78, no. 28.
\item \textsuperscript{116} MRDZ, p. 78, no. 29; p. 87, no. 8.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
the priest can reverence the altar with a bow, a genuflection, a prostration, or “his arms extended in the shape of a V, kisses the altar at its front and at its four sides while the ministers remain bowing.” The particular reference to the gesturing of the hands seems to be unique to the Zairian Use. The author has been unable to find any source indication the meaning of the gesture of the hands during this rite.

Besides the gestures of the celebrant, the people also have gestures prescribed to them at various points during the liturgy. The preamble of the Missal notes that, “They [the faithful] raise their hands during the prayers said by the priest and the moment of silence which precedes them, during the doxology of the Eucharistic Prayer and during the common recitation of the Our Father.” This practice, which is occasionally seen in other countries and up for the individual country’s Bishops’ Conference to legislate, is included as part of the liturgy in the Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre.

Perhaps most interesting and different from practice outside of Africa is the normative posture for the reading of the Gospels which the Zairian Use prescribes. Whereas the normal posture in most places in the word is to stand for the proclamation of the Gospel, the Zarian Missal states that the faithful should sit for its proclamation. This difference is again encouraged by African cultural values. “The faithful remain seated while listening to the Liturgy of the Word, because in the traditional Congolese culture, is the attitude that expresses the respect and the disposition to listen.” This summarizes the idea that sitting is more respectful in Zairian culture, and better disposes those present to hear the Gospel proclaimed.

117 MRDZ, p. 78, no. 30. “[…], les bras étendus en forme de V, touche l’autel du front, sur les quatre côtes, pendant que les concélébrants et tous les ministres restent profondément inclinés.” My translation.
118 MRDZ, p. 78, no. 25. “Ils tiennent les mains levées pendant les oraisons dites par le prêtre et le temps de silence qui précède, pendant la doxologie de la prière eucharistique et pendant la récitation commune du Notre Père.” My translation.
119 MRDZ, p. 91, n. 18.
Kapola provides a more illustrative example in how this posturing affects and relates to its cultural context. He states:

The practice of being seated for the proclamation of the gospel is taken from native experience where the Chief delivers an important message before a seated audience. People who are standing look in a hurry to go away. The Good News, according to the Zairean customs, must be proclaimed before willing, respecting, and patient ears. For this reason, sitting during the gospel, as during any other proclamation of the Word in the assembly, is preferable to standing.121

Kapola’s direct comparison of the proclamation of the Gospel to the village assembly allows for us to understand the context in which those who are members of the culture would understand their own gestures as signaling. The prescription to sit during the Gospel reading allows for an inculturation of listening to the Word of God.

The Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre proves to be the most ambitious project of inculturation undertaken since the Second Vatican Council. By understanding its purpose and context, we are able to see inculturation not just as a numinous ideal which is recommended to us, but a lived reality.

Moreover, the Zairian Use provides a lens which we can use to understand the extent to which the principle of inculturation has been applied to the Roman Rite. In the next session, we will attempt to analyze the limits of these projects, using the Zairian Use, which we have presented in this chapter, as a model.

3. The Nature of the Roman Rite and Evaluating Individual Occasions of Inculturation

Having introduced the Zairian Use and explained its fonts and motivations, we now have developed an understanding of the goal of a specific liturgical project of inculturation. Again, while the Zairian Use is not the only such example, it seems to be the best developed one, and the project with the most documentation available.

Before liturgically and theologically analyzing individual accounts and occasions of the Roman Rite, however, we must attempt to make clear the unalienable parts of the Roman Rite. This question has been called by a variety of names, but for our purposes, we will call it the nature of the Roman Rite.

A recent contribution to this discussion was included in the most recent edition of the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. Nearly at the end of the *Instruction*, it reads:

> Finally, the pursuit of inculturation does not have as its purpose in any way the creation of new families of rites, but aims rather at meeting the needs of a particular culture, though in such a way that adaptations introduced either into the Missal or coordinated with other liturgical books are not at variance with the proper character of the Roman Rite.\(^{122}\)

This paragraph contains three points related to our argument: 1) It supports the rejection of the idea of a ‘Zairian Rite;” 2) it notes that the best sense of a nature of the Roman Rite is held in its liturgical books, and; 3) it introduces the concept of some changes being disharmonious with the ‘proper character’ of the Roman Rite. The first point, while encouraging for our argument, has already been asserted.

Regarding the sense of the nature of the Roman Rite being found in its liturgical books: this idea is certainly positive, measurable, and in need of further study. Unfortunately, it ultimately lies outside of the purview of our research. We might note, however, that if we understand the vehicle for the nature of the Roman Rite as its books, we may understand that different facets of that nature can be identified. The Missal would give a core textual and spoken aspect of the Rite; the lectionary gives further spoken aspect and, more importantly, the relationship of the Rite with Scripture; and the Gradual provides a musical or artistic aspect. The Use of Zaire retains the same lectionary as the Roman Rite, making that difference minimal. There is no Gradual published for the Use, making an analysis of the artistic difference impossible. I would posit, then, that

\(^{122}\) *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (2010), no. 398.
although we have not completed an exegesis of the Roman Rite in the current *editio typica*, we have completed a review of the Missal, contributing in some small way towards this larger goal.

As mentioned, the exegesis of the current books of the Roman Rite must be left to further research so, in this last chapter, we will rely on two other means of understanding the nature of the Roman Rite before we continue to analyze how well the Zairian Use conforms to that nature.

### 3.1. Means of Determining the Nature

We will analyze two different fonts to establish some basic understanding of the Roman Rite, one of which is structural and the other of which is a cultural basis for theology.

#### 3.1.1. The Genius of the Roman Rite

Few contributions to liturgical theology have been more commented upon than Edmund Bishop’s *Genius of the Roman Rite*. This presentation, later published as a pamphlet, sought to remove any elements which would have been originally foreign to the Roman Rite to present an image of a primitive Roman Rite. In doing this, Bishop removes what he deems of Gallican or Eastern provenance from the *ordo* of the Roman Rite to present a hypothesis of its earliest stages. In doing so, he provides a structural model of the nature of the Roman Rite, namely that the Rite consists of, at its core:

1. The Collect
2. The Epistle
3. The Blessing before the Gospel
4. The Gospel
5. The “Orate Fratres” and the collect, called the secret, and all that follows up to the *Pax Domini* (viz., the Preface, the Canon, Lord’s Prayer and the short prayer immediately following).
6. The collect called the Post-Communion
7. The *Ite missa est*. Bishop also provides several notes for what original music to the Roman Rite would be, but that is beyond the purpose of this paper.

Bishop’s purpose for outlining this primate hypothesis of the Roman Rite is to assert what he deems to be a central theme in the nature of the Roman Rite: its simplicity. Bishop states, regarding the presentation of the primitive Roman Rite given above, “What can be more simple? It is the mass reduced to its least possible expression. There is not a single element that is not essential.” Bishop, then, gives us a structural model for understanding the nature of the Roman Rite. We should note that although Bishop outlines a simple *ordo*, he does not go so far as to advocate that the Roman Rite be stripped of all non-Roman influences.

We could suggest that Bishop’s idea is later canonized in the Second Vatican Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. This document states, “The rites should be distinguished by a noble simplicity; they should be short, clear, and unencumbered by useless repetitions.” We would suggest that only by understanding Bishop’s ideas can we properly interpret this paragraph of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*. In the twentieth century, too often the phrase ‘noble simplicity’ was used to pillage liturgy in the name of a false *aggiornamento*. By understanding Bishop’s position, we can know that the simplicity of the Roman Rite lies primarily in its form, not its matter. Thus, the stripping of altars and destruction of liturgical art cannot be defended using this phrase.

When using Bishop’s principle to analyze any liturgical change, then, the analysis must be of the structure of the liturgy. We will conduct this analysis below.

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125 *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no. 34.
3.1.2. The Roman Rite as a Vehicle for Roman Culture

The second measure which we propose for understanding the nature of the Roman Rite and analyzing inculturation has to do with the native culture of the Rite. Bishop himself notes, “we must not separate in idea the Roman of pre-Christian days and the Roman under Christian dispensation; at bottom in his instincts, in his powers, in his limitations, he is the same.” This method of analysis, then, has to do with those elements of culture which were inherent in pre-Christian Rome and were adopted as part of the Roman-Christian culture and were canonized in the Roman liturgy.

This idea has not been touched upon by many scholars, but an important contribution has been made by Fr. Dennis McManus. In a response to David Fagerberg’s idea of ‘liturgical asceticism,’ McManus searches for the *romanitas* of the Roman Rite in an article published by the Institute for Priestly Formation.

McManus begins this exposition by stating, “to capture the genius of any rite, it is important to return to the initial encounter of its host culture with the Gospel,” going on to state that this might have happened in the Roman synagogues or through other Christians. In Roman culture, McManus points to the story of Æneas, the *Æneid*, as the fertile seedbed in which the Gospel took root and gave birth to the genius of the Roman Rite. The *Æneid*, McManus contends, shows the story of a dutiful son who follows the commands of a loving and providential father-god, Jupiter, and goes on to found the city of Rome.

McManus insists that, in the Roman imagination, this story of the relationship between Æneas and Jupiter became the model on which the relationship between the Son and the Father is superimposed. Moreover,

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126 Ibid., p. 15.
129 Ibid., p. 120.
McManus explains the actions of each of these parties using a clever graph, which is reproduced below:

McManus’s chart highlights major themes and roles in both the Gospel and the Æneid and shows their relationship. Upon studying the chart, it is obvious that all themes and roles portrayed can be applied to the figures listed in both the pagan-Roman and Christian contexts.

McManus hypothesizes that the Gospel, then, was attractive to Romans because it extended the story of the Æneid: It moves from a story of Father-Son love in establishing a city that will extend to an empire to one which will extend to the world. He furthers this claim by stating that the center of Roman spirituality until today can be summed up in

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130 McManus, “The Liturgy as Formator,” 120.
131 McManus, “The Liturgy as Formator,” 120–121.
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a major theme which is embraced by both the Æneid and the Gospel: sonship.

McManus ultimately supports his position with reference to the difference in vocabulary between the Latin and Greek references to Christ and his action: How Christ is *Filius* to the Romans and *λόγος* to the Greeks; how his death is *fides* to the Romans and *κενώσεις* to the Greeks. McManus, therefore, states that this concept of sonship or filiation is the centerpiece of the Roman Rite and its spirituality. We may hypothesize, then, that if anything endangers this concept of filiation, it is incompatible with the Roman Rite.

It is possible that there are other themes in the pagan-Roman consciousness that are also mirrored in the Roman Rite and are equally inalienable, but they have not yet been unraveled and explained by scholars like McManus has done for the theme of filiation. This cultural basis for the Roman Rite, however, will provide for us another means for measuring liturgical inculturation.

3.2. *The Combination of Other Cultures with a Liturgical Rite*

Having presented these two ideas, which we have identified as means for measuring how inculturation can interact with the native genius of the Roman Rite, we can proceed with a brief attempt to superimpose these theological values over the *Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre*. We should note that this analysis is not meant to disprove or disparage the Use of Zaire but, it being an early example of a contemporary liturgical text which is a product of inculturation, our analysis is meant to provide a context for future liturgical projects.

3.2.1. *The Zairian Use in Light of Noble Simplicity*

Bishop’s concept of the ‘genius of the Roman Rite,’ published in a pamphlet of the same name, may prove useful in providing a structural analysis of the Use of Zaire. We should note that, although Bishop’s

132 Ibid.
model of the Roman Rite is fairly threadbare, he does not advocate for a Mass that is without any accretion; he notes that the Mass celebrated at the time of his paper’s publication (the Tridentine Mass) was home to several Gallican and Greek influences.

Bishop’s idea could be summarized the ‘noble simplicity’ which came to be canonized in Sacrosanctum Concilium. Structurally, the Zairian Use does not invent many parts of its liturgy but either retains parts, in their original order, according to the editio typica of the Roman Rite or moves parts from the editio typica to another part of the Mass.

Specifically, three parts of the Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre constitute additions to the Mass: 1) Standing in the Presence of God; 2) Invocation of Saints and Right-Hearted Ancestors, and; 3) Homage to God. All of these parts take place during the introductory rites and have been noted in Chapter II.

Structurally, the addition of these parts do seem to complicate the overall ordo of the Zairian Use. They are not only minor additions, but new structures inserted within the liturgy. To the credit of its creators, however, these parts which are inserted into the Introductory Rites of the Use of Zaire do follow a certain identifiable projection. The ‘Standing in the Presence of God’ is primarily directed towards the assembled people, the ‘Invocation of Saints and Ancestors’ focuses on what could be called the Church Triumphant, and the Homage to God is directed towards God himself. In this way, the additions go from the assembly, to the saints, to God. This program of dynamic movement is not without its value.

Bishop notes what composes the Roman Rite is best summarized as “simplicity, practicality, a great sobriety and self-control, gravity, and dignity.” We would suggest that, while we have already spoken of

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133 Minor additions in other uses of the Roman Rite would include additions to pre-existing parts, but not the creation of new parts. In the approved Uses of various religious orders, it’s not uncommon for the names of the founder or prominent saints of the order to be added to the Confitore.

134 Bishop, “Genius of The Roman Rite,” 15.
'simplicity' as referring to structure, simplicity can be defined as “practicality, a great sobriety and self-control, gravity, and dignity.” The question, then, is do the changes to the editio typica approved for the Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre embody practicality, sobriety, self-control, gravity, and dignity? Given the scope of our project, we will spend some time focusing on practicality.

Before analyzing the practicality of the changes, we should note why those parts of sobriety, self-control, gravity, and dignity will not be analyzed. Although not all scholars would agree, I would suggest that those values which we are excusing from our analysis are uniquely culture-bound. While in many areas of application in the Roman Rite are culturally similar: While details may differ, there is largely a first world, developed culture which is present in both Europe and North America. While precise values of culture are best defined by ethnologists or sociologists, I believe we can approximate that the culture in Europe or North America is significantly different from that in Africa.

An example of this difference may be seen in the concepts of solemnity between other liturgical families: the ancient, Greater Blessing of Water which takes place on the Feast of the Theophany in the Byzantine tradition may seem raucous to someone who is only familiar with the Roman Rite. When contrasting these two ideals, we understand that the concept of ‘solemnity’ can very vastly between two equally valid liturgical traditions. I would suggest that, should proper research be done, it would be possible to explain this difference by contrasting Latin and Greek ideas of solemnity. It stands to reason, then, that there would be a different understanding of solemnity in African cultures.

Returning to the question of simplicity and how it is embodied in practicality, however, we may be able to trust the testimony of various schol-

135 Ibid.
136 While we are unable to provide any exact reference, a quick search for ‘theophany blessing’ on a video sharing site will undoubtedly yield results of a Greek priest thoroughly soaking his parishioners with the water which has just been blessed in honor of the Theophany at Christ’s Baptism.
ars and the creators of the Use of Zaire that these additions to the Introductory Rites are practical in nature, insofar as they focus on adapting the Introductory Rites, which is meant to “establish communion and dispose themselves properly to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily,” to an African mindset.

One criticism may be lodged, however, that what the GIRM presents as the goals of the Introductory Rites have been moved to the time after the homily, in which the Penitential Rite and Sign of Peace are located. Nonetheless, the added parts through their dynamic movement do establish some sort of communion by framing the place of the assembly in relation to the Church Triumphant and God.

3.2.2. The Zairian Use in Light of Roman Cultural Values

Given what we have said about the differences in culture, it may seem difficult to criticize any difference between African culture and the Roman culture which was explained by McManus. We should remember, however, that McManus prioritizes a concept of filiation and sonship over all other cultural values in his analysis.

While a more in-depth analysis of the culture pregnant within the Zairian Use and African culture as a whole would be more necessary to make a full analysis, our point of research at this point would be to ask if any part of the Zairian Use comes in conflict with these principles of filiation or sonship.

There do not seem to be any parts of the Zairian Mass which are directly contrary to the idea of sonship, and there is even one addition in the ‘Homage to God’ which specifically affirms it. A point which may be worth further study to determine how it coalesces with the theme of sonship is the Invocation to the Saints and Ancestors, specifically in how it refers to the ancestors.

In the Roman liturgy, references to filiation are often limited to God

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137 General Instruction of the Roman Missal (2010), no. 46.
138 MRDZ, p. 88, no. 8. “O Dieu, notre Père …”
(who is Father) or the saints (who became spiritual fathers or mothers through preaching or virtuous deeds). While we have determined that ‘ancestors,’ as referred to in the Zairian Use is broader, it does seem to include a concept that it is a biological relation. While the question of how this concept of natural parenthood is related to one of spiritual parenthood may be debated, we should realize that it is possible that some scholars might interpret these two themes as being in competition.

I would argue that these two themes are neither in direct conflict, nor are they directly in agreement. There seems to be a certain struggle between the two in which the natural fatherhood of the ancestors is not able to be completely cancelled out by the spiritual fatherhood of God or the saints. One would hope that this struggle is one that produces fruit, similar to how faith and reason can struggle in the human mind while remaining harmonious. Indeed, this struggle can sometimes elevate both ideals so that they can be better understood and appreciated by men. It appears, then, that there is nothing with the Use of Zaire which is directly contrary to the theme of filiation and sonship within the Roman Rite.

After our analysis of the Zairian Use, it appears as though nothing within the Use is so contrary to the ideals which we have laid forth so as to be incompatible with them. Those authorities which initially judged the use seem to have done so wisely, though with the possibility of further refinement or explanation of the themes of the Zairian Use and those of the Roman Rite.

CONCLUSION

We have established over the course of our study that inculturation is not a new idea but is still intensely debated. The end of such a study often leaves us with more questions than answers, but the author hopes that this jaunt through theology and liturgy has proved useful in understanding the scope and direction of the project of liturgical inculturation.

The production of the Use of Zaire was based on a desire and idea to
adapt the Roman Liturgy to African culture, specifically that which is manifested in what is now called the Democratic Republic of Congo. This project was completed over the course of several decades and was initially well-received by the hierarchy and people of Zaire, now Congo.

The question stands how enduring the Use of Zaire is in Congo today. The author lodged several inquiries with another researcher, who also has not been able to find how frequently Mass according to the *Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre*. Inquiries made with the Congolese Bishops’ Conference and pastors in Kinshasa went unanswered.139 There is a significant opinion that the Zairian Use has not been celebrated as regularly as intended, but no numbers are available on this. Some people will point to the fact that Pope John Paul II did not celebrate Mass according to the *Missel Romain pour les Diocèses du Zaïre* when he visited Zaire in 1985,140 though the Missal was still *ad experimentum* during that time.

With the recent Amazon Synod which took place last fall at the time at which this was written, the question of large projects of inculturations have again come to the forefront of liturgical and theological discussion. The idea of an ‘Amazonian Rite’ was raised at the synod, although the only mention of such an idea is included in the Holy Father’s Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation as a footnote.141 The document speaks of inculturation further, however, stating:

> we can take up into the liturgy many elements proper to the experience of indigenous peoples in their contact with nature, and respect native forms of expression in song, dance, rituals, gestures and symbols. The Second Vatican Council called for this effort to inculturate the liturgy among indigenous peoples; over fifty years have passed and we still have far to go along these lines.142

The question remains how such inculturation will take place. It’s very

140  15 August 1985.
141  Francis, *Querida Amazonia*, fn. 120.
142  Francis, *Querida Amazonia*, 82.
possible that such ideas as gestures and songs can be included without creating a new liturgical use, but simply by decision of the local Bishops’ Conference and approval from Rome.

We would hope that any work which would be done on such a liturgical use, if it ever moves forward, would be cognizant of the theological heritage of the Roman Rite and careful in adapting or accepting any ideas which may not cooperate with the genius of the Roman Rite. Special attention might be paid to the concept of filiation and sonship, remembering that this theological concept is the relationship between a father and a son.

The value of liturgical inculturation cannot be overlooked: That dialogue between culture and faith is not manifested anywhere in such an explicit way. We hope that, by growing in understanding previous projects in liturgical understanding, we will be able to better communicate the Gospel to those who have not yet found it permeating their own culture.
Marcus Mescher, in his recent book *The Ethics of Encounter*, seeks to apply the principles of Catholic Social Teaching to ordinary life so that Christians can fulfill the duty of “Christian neighbor love by practicing solidarity on the personal, social, and structural levels” (20, Kindle Edition). Mescher proceeds in five steps: first, he addresses the problem of social separation in the United States; second, he develops a theology of neighbor based on the parable of the Good Samaritan; third, inspired by the liberation theology of Gustavo Gutiérrez, Mescher outlines the ethics of encounter as one marked by courage, mercy, generosity, humility, and fidelity; fourth, the ethics of encounter is applied practically, taking as an example Greg Boyle, SJ and Homeboy Industries; finally, he presents a vision of the transformation that is possible when an ethics of encounter is practiced in every facet of life (20–24). Mescher, who serves as associate professor of Christian ethics at Xavier University, concludes that “when Christian neighbor love illuminates our interdependence and generates mutual respect, responsibility, and tenderness, it helps to dismantle illusions, divisions, and unjust inequalities,” features of contemporary society he laments in chapter one (301).

The great strength of Mescher’s book is the fifth and final chapter, “Toward a Culture of Belonging,” particularly the sections “Family: The First Community of Belonging” and “Encountering Through a Screen.” Here is where Mescher practically applies the theology of neighbor and the ethics of encounter so that the reader can concretely apply the principles to daily life. For example, he notes that families must be “schools of life-giving communion” where family members grow in the virtues
needed for proper relationships (249). Mescher suggests that families should practice “nearing,” i.e., doing things that “move us toward those who look, think, and live differently than we do” (249). He suggests that what is learned at home will influence how people interact with others in the various encounters they experience in life.

Stronger still is Mescher’s analysis of the difficulties of encountering others because of technology and screens. He notes that a person’s identity today is a hybrid of one’s corporeal self and one’s digital self, which unfortunately do not always align (262). Online interactions must be at the service of personal interactions, but “the danger arises when screens replace—rather than complement—meaningful connections” (264). Mescher worries that if technology consumption is not monitored and used virtuously it can prevent a true culture of encounter. However, the flipside is also true, if technology is used properly and fosters “meaningful and diverse connections” they could be of service in connecting people and creating true encounters (269). Mescher notes that something similar is to be said for online activism, namely that to post a petition or make a Facebook post is not enough to be active but should be a springboard for further activity. Whether online or in person, Mescher notes that “a culture of encounter relies on intimacy, rapport, and love through a willingness to be vulnerable” (268). I think that Mescher’s call to practice an ethics of encounter in every facet of life is the great strength of this book and the practical applications regarding family life, technology consumption, group membership, and the environment will prove beneficial to any reader.

Mescher’s book offers an assessment of the current cultural and political landscape of the United States as outlined in chapter one. It read as one-sided and agenda driven, rather than being a truly honest assessment of the current state of affairs. The text seemed to create an “us-them” distinction, the very reality that Mescher was arguing should be avoided. The analysis rested heavily on polling and articles published in secular media outlets which can at times exacerbate tensions between opposing groups. In calling for a culture of encounter, there was a ten-
dency to ostracize those he was actually trying to call from their com-
fort zone to true encounter, rather than engaging them with the ethics 
of encounter proposed. It would have been helpful for Mescher to ad-
dress the distinction between equality and equity. At times, it seemed 
as if Mescher was calling for equality amongst all, but in reality, true, 
authentic neighbor love would require equity. It is important to make 
this distinction because a call to equity is a call to help all fulfill their 
potential.

Mescher’s *The Ethics of Encounter* is a helpful and thought-provoking 
book that provides the reader the opportunity to examine one’s rela-
tionships with others and how one can better encounter all those one 
meets.
Those of us who regularly use the Magnificat publication have been seeing for the last twenty-two days an image of a very young king, an image simply called Jesus.¹ This portrayal of Jesus, so young and yet with a golden circular cross behind him that evokes kingship, reminds us that Jesus, more than anyone else in history, was destined to be king. Indeed, before he was even born, at the Annunciation, the angel Gabriel says to Mary, “Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end” (Lk 1:31–33). In his humanity, the kingship of Jesus is inherited and has a beginning, but unlike earthly kingship, the kingship of Jesus, as we proclaim every Sunday in the Creed, has no end. And at the end of the Gospel, after Jesus has fully established his kingdom through his death and resurrection, he says to his disciples, “All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:18–19). And so, in addition to his kingdom being without end, Jesus himself tells us that his kingdom extends to all nations, and that all power in heaven and on earth has been given to him.

Like earthly kingship, Jesus’ kingship involves a governance over and a care for those in his charge, but unlike earthly kingship, Jesus’ kingship has no limit in time, in space, or in power. He alone is capable of govern-

¹ Emile Munier (1840–1895), Jesus, Oil on canvas, 1893, Private Collection, in Magnificat (November 2020), cover.
ing and caring for his subjects in such a way that their perfection, their destiny, what they were made for, is entirely realized.

And how does he do this? St. Paul told us today in the First Letter to the Corinthians, “Just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life, but each one in proper order: Christ the firstfruits; then, at his coming, those who belong to Christ” (1Cor 15:22–23). If we are among those who belong to Christ, if we are among his people, the flock he shepherds, then we will be brought to life after our death; then we will live forever with Christ our King.

When St. Cecilia, whose feast is today, was brought to be martyred and was asked for her name, she said, “Men call me Cecilia, but my most beautiful name is that of Christian.” I love that. And if there are any historical questions about whether she said it with her lips, she certainly said it with her martyrdom. The most important thing to her was that she belonged to Christ, and she knew that, because he had conquered death, she did not have to be afraid of it.

But do we believe this? Are we like St. Cecilia? Is Christ truly our King, or have we chosen for ourselves other kings, kings whose reign does not destroy death, kings whose reign will not last forever?

All of us today can give thanks to God for the fact that we have, at least in the first instance, chosen, or really recognized, Christ to be our king. That is why all of us are here. Each and every one of us has traveled to Rome to be present here because we know that Christ is our king and because we want him to remain our king; we want to put ourselves more and more under the rule of his kingdom, and we want everyone to know about our king and theirs who has conquered death and whose eternal life we all can share.

But before we embark on a lifetime of sharing the kingdom of Christ with others, we must ourselves be firmly rooted under his rule. He must

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reign in our minds and in our wills and in our hearts and in our bodies.\textsuperscript{3} Knowing that Christ our King is in himself the fullness of what it means to be human, knowing that we are members of his body, this time of seminary is a time for us to become more and more like unto Christ our King.

On the one hand, it should be so easy. On a fundamental level, we know how great a gift we’ve been given. On the other hand, in this fallen world, there are so many other kings competing for our attention; kings that offer us cheaper and more readily apparent satisfaction. And so the fundamental grace that we beg our King for today is the grace to persevere every day and even to be truly vigilant every day in the holy way of life that we have begun, in the various things that we do each day that put us under the kingship of Christ. And what are these things?

First, prayer. We beg our King today for the grace to spend the time we ought to spend in this chapel, in the other chapels in this building, in prayer in our own rooms, in the beautiful churches of this city and, hopefully sometime somewhat soon throughout this continent. Wherever we are, we beg our King for the grace to move ourselves to the places we pray in order to be ruled over and guided by Christ our King through that most intimate means that we have to be with him, the means of prayer.

Second, liturgical prayer in particular. We ask that Christ, destined to be king from before his birth, may reign over us throughout the whole year in each of the mysteries of his life that we celebrate, that we may be “imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy” that constantly forms our Christian life and so forms us into Christ’s subjects and ministers.\textsuperscript{4} In setting this feast at the end of the liturgical year, Pope Pius XI said that, “the feast of the Kingship of Christ sets the crowning glory upon the mysteries of the life of Christ already commemorated during the year.”\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{3} See Pope Pius XI, \textit{Quas Primas}, (11 December 1925), 33.
\textsuperscript{4} Second Vatican Council, \textit{Sacrosanctum Concilium} (4 December 1963), 15.
\textsuperscript{5} Pius XII, \textit{Quas Primas}, 29.
And third, the rest of the time we are given. When I return to my room after a class or a meal or a rehearsal, do I take out my phone right away, or go right to my computer, to check Facebook, or to watch videos on YouTube, or to see the latest political news and get caught up in reading about our current earthly kings, or do I rather turn perhaps to my bookshelf, where I am probably more likely to find things to read that will more firmly ground me in the kingship of Christ? The former things are not in themselves sinful, of course, but they can distract us from the opportunity we have each and every time we return to our room, each and every moment of the day, to grow—even in some small way—in the knowledge and love of Christ our King.

If we allow Christ to reign in us through faithfulness to the holy way of life we have begun here, then we will be all the more disposed for a second grace, the grace that Jesus describes in our Gospel scene, this powerful and sobering scene of the last judgment: that is, the grace to be men of mercy (see Mt 25:31–46). Men who see in others, especially in those most in need, those who are hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, the glorious dignity of the image and likeness of God, the dignity of a child of God, the dignity even, as Jesus tells us, of Jesus himself. If we let Christ reign in our lives, then we will know ourselves not as the sleek and the strong, the self-sufficient whom God destroys, as he describes to us through the prophet Ezekiel, but rather as the lost whom God seeks out, the strayed whom he brings back, the injured whom he binds up, and the sick whom he heals (see Ez 34:16). And, becoming familiar with this mercy every day in our own lives, and having the Merciful One as our King and our Shepherd, we can in turn show his mercy to others. Every single person we meet, every single person on this earth, has been made by God for nothing less than union with him, and, brothers, if we come to know Christ intimately, deeply, as our King and our Shepherd, it is only then that we can approach everyone we meet with his mercy because we will have eyes formed to look beyond anything we might find unattractive in them and instead to see the very presence of Christ.
As we come to the end of the liturgical year of 2020 and prepare to watch for the coming of Christ this Advent, we beg God for the grace more definitively this coming year to have Christ and Christ alone as our king. And we ask him: help us truly to believe that by your death and resurrection you have conquered death and that you will bring those who belong to you into your kingdom, which has no end. Help us to persevere in the holy life to which you have called us so that we will become more firmly rooted in you, as members of your body, with you as our Head and Shepherd and King. And help us in turn to be men of mercy, sharing the merciful love we have received from you with everyone we meet, so that, when you come in your glory, with your angels, seated upon your glorious throne, with all the nations assembled before you, we will hear you say to us, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” (Mt 25:31–32, 34)
**Contributors**

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