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TASK AND MISSION OF THE CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION IN INDIA IN THE POST-TRUTH ERA

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Abstract

Since the Oxford dictionary has selected 'Post-truth' as the word of the year in 2016 it gets our special attention in many ways. The word 'post-truth' is defined thus: 'where objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.' Post-truth describes a type of political campaigning, fuelled by emotive arguments rather than fact-checks, with gut instincts, disinformation and misinformation that turn the political world upside down. It has its special significance in the context of US election, wherein Donald Trump became the President of USA and later the event of Brexit. Political observers argue that the ideology of post-truth works in India too especially with the regime of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This article describes the challenges and role of the catholic theological education in India in the post-truth era. First, it explains the term, post-truth and its salient features. Second, it explains how it works in Indian political and ecclesial domains. There are many events wherein facts are fabricated, truths are hidden and false information is circulated. Third, this article brings out the challenges of catholic theological education in India based on the apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis, *Veritatis Gaudium* and the letter he has written to the faithful on 20 August 2018.

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Introduction

The word 'Post-truth' gets our special attention, as the Oxford dictionary declared it as the 'Word of the Year' in 2016 due to numerous disinformations about US presidential elections and Brexit referendum.¹ Though the word was first used in the context of first Gulf war in 1992 by Steve Tesich, the late Serbian-American playwright, its use has increased to two thousand percentage in 2016 compared to 2015.² Post-truth describes a type of political campaigning, fuelled by emotive arguments rather than fact-checks, with gut instincts, disinformation and misinformation that turns the political world upside down. Political observers point out that the ideology of post-truth works in India too, especially with the regime Mr Narendra Modi as its Prime Minister.³ This article is an attempt to bring out the challenges of the catholic theological education in India in the post-truth era. First, it explains the term, post-truth with its important features. The second part exhibits some of the key features of post-truth that appear in India both in political and ecclesial domains. Finally, it analyses the task of the theological education in Indian Church today in the light of the Apostolic Constitution of Pope Francis, *Veritatis Gaudium* and the letter he has written to the faithful on 20 August 2018.⁴

¹See the different comments on the media after Trump's inauguration, *Slate* announced that "It's Time to Give Up on Facts," *Rolling Stone* declared "The End of Facts," *The New Yorker* told us "Why Facts Don't Change Our Minds," and *The Atlantic* ran through "The Facts on Why Facts Alone can't Fight False Beliefs." See, *Slate*, "It is Time to Give Up on Facts; Or at Least to Temporarily Lay them Down in Favor of a More Useful Weapon," February 08, 2017, in <https://slate.com/technology/2017/02/counter-lies-with-emotions-not-facts.html>; *Rolling Stone*, "The End of Facts in Trump Era," February 08, 2017, <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-features/the-end-of-facts-in-the-trump-era-105884/>; *The New Yorker*, "Why Facts Don't Change Our Minds," February 27, 2017, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/02/27/why-facts-dont-change-our-minds>; *The Atlantic*, "This Article Won't Change Your Mind," <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/03/this-article-wont-change-your-mind/519093/>. March 13, 2017; accessed on 14 July 2019.

²Hudson Lockett, Josh Noble, "Oxford Dictionaries word of the year: "Post-truth," *Financial Times*, November 16, 2016, available in <https://www.ft.com/content/a0bdd476-fbe8-32d1-969b-a2173bcaaf02>; accessed on 19 August 2018.

³Editorial, "Post-Truth India," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol 52, Issue No. 1, 07, January 2017, available at <https://www.epw.in/journal/2017/1/editorials/post-truth-india.html>; accessed on 19 August 2018.

⁴Pope Francis, *Veritatis Gaudium*, Apostolic Constitution for the Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties, 29.01.2018, available at <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2018/01/29/180129c.html>; accessed on 14

The Post-Truth Era

The Oxford Dictionary defines the term post-truth as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.”⁵ In the post-truth era, the facts and figures as well as truth are secondary things and people go after religion, nationalism or other similar sentimental issues. In the post-truth ideology, one can purposefully make different ideas with fictions, stories and narrations. We cannot even believe its visuals or narrations!⁶

It is generally presumed that the politicians tend to tell lies to win during the elections or to justify their policies.⁷ Harold Pinter in his Nobel Prize lecture in 2005, ‘Art, Truth and Politics’ says; “the majority of politicians, on the evidence available to us, are interested not in truth but in power and in the maintenance of that power. To maintain that power, it is essential that people remain in ignorance, that they live in ignorance of the truth, even the truth of their own lives. What surrounds us therefore is a vast tapestry of lies, upon which we feed.”⁸ For example, the war against Iraq in 2003 was justified by the claim that Saddam Hussein possessed ‘weapons of mass destruction’ which later proved to be non-existent. However, in a speech in 2004, Tony Blair dodged the issue, saying: ‘I only know

November 2018; Pope Francis, “Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Faithful of God,” 20 August 2018, available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2018/documents/papa-francesco20180820_lettera-popolo-didio.html; accessed on 14 October 2018.

⁵English Oxford Living dictionaries, available at <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/word-of-the-year/word-of-the-year-2016>; accessed on 19 August 2018.

⁶Mathew Ponsford, quoting Anna Dannemann, argues that in this post-truth era even photography can never be perceived as truthful, with all photoshops and all those things we know about. As Dannemann asks, “what is shared more than anything is a question: of what the image is, now, and how does it relate to reality?” Mathew Ponsford, “In the Post-truth Era, Photographers use Lies to Spread Facts,” in CNN, 22 March 2018, available at, <https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/post-truth-photography/index.html>; accessed on 04 October, 2018. For another description on the falsification of facts, see, Anna Codrea-Rado, “Wolfgang Tillmans Explores the Role of Art in a Post-Truth World,” *The New York Times*, March 21, 2018, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/21/arts/wolfgang-tillmans-fake-news.html>; accessed on 04 October, 2018.

⁷See an interesting article by Glenn Kessler, Salvador Rizzo and Meg Kelly, titled, “President Trump has Made 6,420 False or Misleading Claims over 649 days,” in *Washington Post*, November 02 2018, available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2018/11/02/president-trump-has-made-false-or-misleading-claims-over-days/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.062c8545ca6c; accessed on 26 November 2018.

⁸Harold Pinter, Nobel Lecture, “Art, Truth & Politics,” available at <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2005/pinter/25621-harold-pinter-nobel-lecture-2005/>; accessed on 19 August 2018.

what I believe.⁹ In 1967, the philosopher Hannah Arendt argued that the truth-seekers and truth tellers have been aware of the risks of their business and she powerfully articulated this problem in her essay in *The New Yorker* titled "Truth and Politics."¹⁰ Her suspicion on the politics that engages with war on truth actualised by the Nazi regime which would be significant in the contemporary political scenario too.

The intellectual root of the present post-truth is the postmodern philosophical ideology of relativism, which perceives everything as relative and argues that there is no such a thing as the truth for stories are being made up of all things. In the Postmodernity, when people are in fantasy and ceaseless journeying, the different experiences of 'tasting, sampling, and passing on, truth, knowledge, and facts all only turn into dots of light on a screen, evanescent and consumable.'¹¹ While projecting nothing as definitive, relativism leaves the self with its desires as the ultimate criterion. "And under the semblance of freedom it becomes a prison for each one, for it separates people from one another, locking each person into his or her own self."¹² With the denial of universals and truth, one can observe how these ideas are filtered its way indirectly into post-truth. As Kathleen Higgins points out, post-truth involves with the emotions of people, rather than their critical abilities to make distinctions.¹³ What follows are some of the important traits that prevalent in the post-truth era.

Creation of Disinformatzya

The spread of disinformatzya (disinformation) is one of the important designating features of the post-truth. Though the term was used much earlier to denote the tactics of KGB during the cold

⁹See, The Full Script of the speech given by the Prime Minister Tony Blair to the 2004 Labour conference in Brighton on 28 September 2004, *The Guardian*, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2004/sep/28/labourconference.labour5>; accessed on 04 October 2018.

¹⁰Hanna Arendt, "Truth and Politics," Originally published in *The New Yorker*, February 25, 1967, available at <https://idanlandau.files.wordpress.com/2014/12/arendt-truth-and-politics.pdf>; accessed on 10 August 2018.

¹¹ Graham Ward, "Introduction, or a Guide to Theological Thinking in Cyberplace," in *The Postmodern God: A Theological Reader*, ed. Graham Ward, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002, xvi.

¹²Benedict XVI, "Educating Young People in Justice and Peace," Message on the World Day of Peace, 1 January 2012, 3, available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20111208_xlv-world-day-peace.html; accessed on 15 October 2018.

¹³See, CBC Radio, "The truth about 'post-truth,'" January 20, 2017, available at <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/ideas/the-truth-about-post-truth-1.3939958>; accessed on 04 October, 2018.

war by Luke Harding, *The Guardian* journalist, today it is widely used to explain the situation of spreading misinformation and disrupt through social media with abusive, hateful and insulting words or visuals with certain calculated agenda that prevents rational conversation or arguments. The matters circulated through these disinformatzya are not necessarily fake, but contain biased or incomplete views of events in order to have a persuasive effect on the reader.¹⁴ It is a well-calculated, algorithmic or organized move to confuse and bamboozle everybody else by floating conspiracy theories, wherein the line between fact and fiction has been blurred critically.¹⁵ Here, truth, freedom, dignity and fairness are highly challenged and flouted. Therefore, it is also described as the 'plague of our time.'¹⁶

Spreading Fake News

Another important trait of the post-truth era is the wide spreading "fake news" stories. It is observed that "today's media environment is severely impaired by the strategic dissemination of fake news, by trolls herding masses on social media platforms, and by filter bubbles reinforcing already present homogenous zones of consensus."¹⁷ One of the best examples of this kind of fake news is the claim of Tony Blair, that Saddam Hussein has been developing weapons of mass destruction.¹⁸ Though many read it as the most important rationale for the war on Iraq when it was published, only half of them read a correction to that news report, noting that the CIA had found no evidence of such weapons in Iraq. After the oath ceremony of Donald Trump as US president, Sean Spicer claimed that "Trump had garnered 'the largest audience ever to witness an inauguration period.'" But when this appeared at odds with images comparing Trump's inauguration with Barack Obama's in 2008, it is understood that Spicer was calling on 'alternative facts.' Later on, Spicer admitted that he 'screwed up' on the number of people,

¹⁴See the article of Tim O'Reilly, "Media in the Age of Algorithms," in *Economy*, 16 November 2016, available at <https://www.oreilly.com/ideas/media-in-the-age-of-algorithms>; accessed on 04 October 2018.

¹⁵Burk Arikkan, "The Year 2016 Marked the Post-Truth Era, What now?" available at <https://medium.com/graph-commons/the-year-2016-marked-the-post-truth-era-what-now-5b20e4e5c16a>; accessed on 04 October 2018.

¹⁶Fatih Erkli, "Post-Truth: How Disinformation Spreads in a Network," available at <https://fatiherkli.github.io/post-truth/>; accessed on 04 October 2018.

¹⁷Arikkan, "The Year 2016 Marked the Post-Truth Era, What now?."

¹⁸See, BBC News, "In quotes: Blair and Iraq weapons." available at, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/2955632.stm; accessed on 14 July 2019.

telling that “we all make mistakes.”¹⁹ Another example is the claim of Pro-Brexit movement that an amount of £350 million pounds per week could be spent on healthcare instead of sending it to EU, if the UK voted to leave EU.²⁰ In recent years we can see many similar propaganda or fake news of similar kind in different places and situations.

Victory of Demagogues

The word ‘Demagogue’ is taken from the Greek literature. It was used in ancient Greece and Rome to describe a leader who stands for the cause of the common people. However, in course of time it acquired a distinctly negative connotation to mean a political personality who plays up to popular prejudices rather than use rational arguments to seek support and gain power. Rather than rational arguments and honest data, demagogue uses popular prejudices and sensitive assertions to fascinate and mesmerize the audience. In the contemporary world, wherein the society is guided by the neo-liberal political economy, democracy is diminishing and we witness the victory of demagogues during the elections by appealing to the emotions rather than facts. In a floating world of consumerism, fashions, colours and emotions, the voters are given too little credit for working out the difference between truth and lies and the net result would be autocracy, authoritarianism and tyranny. In a nutshell, the present post-truth era gives us a doomy picture of deformed and distorted society which is poisoned with hatred, enmity and disgust as the consequence of the infliction of conspiracy theories, fabricated facts and hidden agendas.

The Ideologies of Post-Truth in India²¹

Ranjith Goswami claims that India is the home of post-truth politics and post-truth era in India cannot be traced to a single year. According to him, its complexities go back generations, and from education to health care and the economy, India can be considered as

¹⁹See, Daily Online Report on 24 July 2018 available at, <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5984783/Sean-Spicer-admits-screwed-number-people-attended-Trumps-2017-inauguration.html>; accessed on October 05, 2018.

²⁰“Why Vote Leave’s £350M Weekly EU Cost Claim is Wrong,” in *The Guardian*, Friday 10 June, 2016, available at <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/reality-check/2016/may/23/does-the-eu-really-cost-the-uk-350m-a-week>.; accessed on 05 October 2018.

²¹For a recent analysis on the post-truth in India See, Karnika Kohli, “What to Believe – And Not Believe – About Fake News in India,” in *The Wire*, available in <https://thewire.in/media/fake-news-india>; accessed on 26 November 2018.

a 'world leader of post-truth politics.'²² We have witnessed to many incidents in the last few decades that challenged and altered the fundamental ethos of the nation in many ways. The Godhra train carnage followed by the communal riot in 2002 and the Kandhamal conflagration in 2008 are the two major incidents wherein the fabricated stories and conspired rumours played a significant role in the implementation of those riots.²³ It is an undeniable fact that the progressive ideologies of the Indian independence leaders are sidelined now and the long cherished secular ethos of the country are weakened.

Many key decisions of Modi government like demonetization, execution of GST, promotion of digital India, etc. have drastically affected the citizens of India, and the government's basic attitude and many policies fundamentally altered India's social, political and economic milieu. During these years there was drastic increase in communal riots, cow vigilante violence, caste clashes, mob attacks by extremist Hindu groups against minority communities, etc. In Many places the minorities and the Dalits were treated with sedition allegations, journalists faced increasing pressure to self-censor due to the threat to legal actions, independent journalist like Gauri Lankesh, and rationalists Narendra Dabholkar and Govind Pansare were brutally murdered and many human right activists were accused of and arrested. On the other hand, we can also see an increase in scams at various levels and intrusion of multinational corporates into the financial sphere of the country.²⁴ Majority of the media are either hijacked or hired for spreading fake news or creating stories that favour the ruling government. The independence of the constitutional institutions such as Attorney General, Comptroller and Auditor General and Election Commission, etc. are minimised and the power and autonomy of judiciary, CBI, RBI, etc. are under threat. The long-cherished secular, social and democratic ethos of the country are weakened now and the ruling government is trying to silence the voice of the dissent. As CJI (Rtd.) Deepak Mishra cautioned the government: "Dissent is the safety valve of democracy. And if you don't allow

²²Ranjit Goswami, "Post- Truth: How India and the US are Similar," in *The Conversation*, 23 January, 2017 available at <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2017-01-23/post-truth-how-india-the-us-and-the-uk-are-similar>; accessed on 06 October, 2018.

²³See the investigative book of Anto Akkara, *Who Killed Swami Laxmanananda?*, Thrissur: Veritas India Books, 2017.

²⁴For the different scams of Modi government visit, <http://corruptmodi.com/p.html>; accessed on 16 October 2018.

these safety valves, it will burst.”²⁵ The distortion of the motto of the country, “*Satyameva Jayate*” (Truth alone Triumphs), in seventy years of independence is a tragic irony.

Elements of the Post-Truth in the Sphere of the Church

The Church, as a part of the larger society which is polluted and contaminated with false assumptions, fake news and disinformation, is not free from the flaws of post-truth and its elements in the Church exist in many ways and forms like nepotism, favouritism, simony, spiritual worldliness, tepidness, hypocrisy, triumphalism, arrogance, self-gratification and so on.²⁶ The simple way to understand it is the systemic corruption operated in the administrative systems of the Church. The answer of Pope Francis to the question on corruption in the Roman Curia that “there’s a steam of corruption,”²⁷ shows the seriousness and intensity of corruption in the Church. After his enthronement, on many occasions, especially referring to the sexual abuse scandal, Pope Francis warned the clergy and the religious of their corruption, deception and untruthfulness and in the recent letter to the faithful he painfully accepts the depth and gravity of insincerity and deception of the clergy telling, “with shame and repentance, we acknowledge as an ecclesial community that we were not where we should have been.”²⁸

²⁵“SC says dissent is 'safety valve' of democracy,” in *The Times of India*, 29 August 2018, available in http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/65595981.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst; accessed on 11 October 2018.

²⁶For a detailed analysis of the corruption in the Church, See, Saji Mathew Kanayankal CST, “Corruption in Society and Church: Theological Responses”, *Encounter: A Journal of Interdisciplinary Reflections of Faith and Life* 9, 1 (January-June 2018) 108-125.

²⁷To the question regarding corruption in the Roman Curia Pope Francis says: “in the Curia, there are holy people, truly, there are holy people. But there’s also a stream of corruption – there’s that, too, it’s true.” Pope Francis “Message, The Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Religious Men and Women,” 20 June 2013, *Catholic Herald*, available at <http://www.catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2013/06/20/the-holy-father-says-he-is-too-disorganised-to-reform-the-roman-curia-but-the-corruption-has-to-be-driven-out-what-he-needs-is-a-godly-hit-man/>; accessed on 11 October 2018.

²⁸“With shame and repentance, we acknowledge as an ecclesial community that we were not where we should have been, that we did not act in a timely manner, realizing the magnitude and the gravity of the damage done to so many lives. We showed no care for the little ones; we abandoned them. I make my own the words of the then Cardinal Ratzinger when, during the Way of the Cross composed for Good Friday 2005, he identified with the cry of pain of so many victims and exclaimed: “How much filth there is in the Church, and even among those who, in the priesthood, ought to belong entirely to [Christ]! How much pride, how much self-

At present the Church in India is undergoing a serious crisis due to many external and internal problems. On the one hand, the present government controls and restricts the activities of the Church by introducing many new laws that restricts its charitable activities and missionary works. On the other hand, the allegations, especially against the bishops and the clergy, have tarnished the image of the Church and have scandalized the faithful as well as the public. It also has placed the Church in a defensive state. Apart from it, we also see many fake stories or anonymous illustrations spreading through social media either to tarnish or to whitewash some personalities in the Church without confronting truth. The attempts and traits to silence the voice of the dissent is much more dangerous. The present situation of the Indian Church is well summarised in the following words:

retreat centres and prayer houses have multiplied; new devotions are introduced; and pilgrimages are promoted as religious tourism by the Church personnel. At the same time, practice of the Christian values like justice, respect for human dignity and human rights, sensitivity, raising voice against injustice and exploitation, etc. have taken a back seat.²⁹

However, these scandals and ignominy are to be seen as an opportunity to make deep introspection for renewal and transformation and to regain the authentic spiritual genre of it.

The Task and Mission of the Theological Education

Pope Francis, from the very beginning of his pontificate, speaks of the renewal of the Church and has advanced quite far in this realm. In his apostolic exhortation on Catholic Education, *Veritatis Gaudium*, he accepts that the Church lacks a 'culture necessary to confront' the crisis of today.³⁰ Throughout his papacy, he focuses on a Church that promotes love, mercy, simplicity and justice. According to him, apart from making an effort to listen and understand, it is the task of the catholic theological education to make a study of the legacy of values, of the ideas and instruments capable of breaking down tendencies towards isolation, closure and the logic of force that lead to violence

complacency! Christ's betrayal by his disciples, their unworthy reception of his body and blood, is certainly the greatest suffering endured by the Redeemer; it pierces his heart. We can only call to him from the depths of our hearts: *Kyrie eleison* – Lord, save us! (cf. *Mt 8:25*)" (Ninth Station). Francis, "Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Faithful of God," 1.

²⁹Jacob Peenikaparambil, "Convert Crisis into Opportunity," in *Indian Currents*, Vol. 30, Issue 32, 06 August 2018, <http://indiancurrents.org/convert-crisis-into-opportunity-2221.php>; accessed on 11 October 2018.

³⁰Francis, *Veritatis Gaudium*, 3.

and destruction.³¹ It is a challenging question to the Indian Church how far we have opened to the different initiatives of Pope Francis in the process of renewing the internal persona of the Church.

In the wake of contemporary challenges and dilemmas in India, theological education should make a genuine attempt to rebuild the faithfulness of the Church by curing the domestic brokenness and the damages. For Pope Francis, the ecclesial education should 'be ready to embark upon a new stage of 'spirit filled' evangelization which calls for a resolute process of discernment, purification and reform.' It should help one to 'witness to the joy born of encountering Jesus and proclaiming his Gospel'³² and the task of catholic education is to 'articulate and express in a new, challenging and realistic way' the Gospel of Jesus.³³ The priests and the religious as well as committed lay people with the ecclesiastical studies are 'called to be a sort of providential cultural laboratory, in which the Church carries out the performative interpretation of the reality' which is brought by Christ event and nourished by the gift of wisdom and knowledge of the Holy spirit and is articulated in many ways through the charism of the prophets, the doctors and theologians. In the face of many crises, we still lack "the culture necessary to confront this crisis. We lack leadership capable of striking out on new paths."³⁴ In order to open new paths we must be ready to open and accept the truth and reality in its totality.

In his letter to the faithful, Pope Francis invites the whole Church for a conversion, a conversion wherein we accept "the truth of what has happened."³⁵ In order to have true conversion, rather than covering up the unjust and deceitful acts, we should open ourselves to the realities 'with reason and with truth,'³⁶ which may lead to

³¹Francis, "Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to Cardinal De Donatis for the Inauguration of the Academic Year of the Pontifical Lateran University," 12 November 2018, available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/letters/2018/documents/papa-francesco_20181112_lettera-cardinale-dedonatis.html; accessed on 22 November 2018, 1.

³²Francis, *Veritatis Gaudium*, 3.

³³Francis, *Veritatis Gaudium*, 5.

³⁴Francis, *Veritatis Gaudium*, 3.

³⁵Francis, "Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Faithful of God," 2.

³⁶The terms are taken from the statement of Cardinal Raymond Burke in the present US context of sexual abuse of minors where he says; "We are dealing here with the gravest of sins ... We have to focus our attention on that, and do what is just with regard to all parties involved... It is simply a matter that needs to be approached with reason and with truth. Where we discover that the appropriate action has not been taken, then that bishop has to be corrected. If the bishop had failed very grievously, then he would simply have to be removed... For the bishop to prey upon

'personal and communal conversion that makes us see things as the Lord does.'³⁷ In his foreword for the book of Cardinal Peter Turkson, Pope Francis warned that the spirit of worldliness can corrupt us all, leading to a hardening of our hearts and indifference to those around us. As he says, "the Church must listen, raise herself and bend herself on the sorrows and hopes of people according to mercy, and must do so without fear of purifying herself, assiduously seeking a way to improve."³⁸

Authentic theological education helps one to open him/herself to truth, justice, righteousness and mercy. The task of theology requests us to interpret the actual realities within the spectrum of the values of the Kingdom of God revealed through the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to reform and refine the existing systems if necessary in the light of the Gospel.³⁹ A genuine theologian should have the moral and psychic competence and determination to stand for truth, justice and righteousness, despite displeasure and resentment he/she may face. A pure critique on the reality brings out new perceptions and thoughts with clarity of vision and precision overcoming the socio-cultural taboos, unease disorientation and fear by which we will be able to free ourselves and others from falsehood, illusion and idolatry. Through proper theological education, one should be able to enter into an intuitive thinking with creative insight that may help one to overpower the menace of post-truth and to look upon friends and foes as well as success and defeat with equal eyes. Quoting his predecessor St John Paul II, Pope Francis asserts; "the Church's mission of spreading the Gospel not only demands that the Good News be preached ever more widely and to ever greater numbers of men and women, but that the very power of the Gospel should permeate thought patterns, standards of judgment, and norms of behaviour."⁴⁰

the flock, committing mortal sins, this is simply unacceptable and it has to stop." See, in "Cardinal Burke: We Face a Grave Crisis, Touching the Heart of the Church," in *Catholic News Agency*, 16 August 2018, available at <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/cardinal-burke-we-face-a-grave-crisis-touching-the-heart-of-the-church-99840>; accessed on 16 October 2018.

³⁷Francis, "Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Faithful of God," 2.

³⁸Pope Francis, 14 June 14 2017. From the Foreword of Cardinal Peter Turkson's Book, *Corrosion*, News from, <https://cruknow.com/vatican/2017/06/17/book-foreword-pope-francis-calls-corruption-cancer/>; accessed on 11 October 2018.

³⁹See, Kuncheria Pathil CMI, "Theologizing in India: Trends and Methods," in *Moral Theology in India Today: The DVK Workshop on Moral Theology*, ed. Shaji George Kochuthara CMI, Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2013, 31.

⁴⁰Francis, *Veritatis Gaudium*, 2

On this journey of promoting the Gospel values, we have to acknowledge the mistakes occurred in the past and the wrongs that we have committed. As Charles Curran rightly points out, “Catholic moral theology should be understood not only as determining whether acts are right or wrong but also with the need to bring about change so that what is right becomes present in our society and justice replaces injustice.”⁴¹ According to him, the intertwined problems of social sin require repentance, conscientisation and radical conversion. For him, conversion is a genuine change of heart which is required for us to live out over time the full requirements even of natural law.⁴² However, Pope Francis brings out its radicality by saying, “while it is important and necessary on every journey of conversion to acknowledge the truth of what has happened, in itself this is not enough.”⁴³

In this context, the call of Pope Francis for solidarity plays a significant role. In the process of regaining justice, peace and truthfulness, solidarity is the next step to be promoted. “In the past,” says Pope Francis, “the response was one of omission, today we want solidarity, in the deepest and most challenging sense, to become our way of forging present and future history.”⁴⁴ Solidarity demands from us basic sincerity and truthfulness so that we would be able to condemn ‘whatever endangers the integrity of any person.’ It summons us to fight all forms of corruption, especially spiritual corruption. In order to execute this solidarity, one must be free from the ‘comfortable and self-satisfied form of blindness,’ the blindness that accepts all kinds of ‘deception, slander, egotism and other subtle forms of self-centeredness.’⁴⁵ It requires fairness and impartiality, freedom from self-interest in thought and in judgment.

Theological education promotes one to acquire the virtue of fortitude which helps us to ‘refuse to be silent.’⁴⁶ Speaking out

⁴¹ Charles Curran, Plenary Talk given in the Third International CTEWC Conference, Sarajevo, 28 July 2018, in National Catholic Reporter, “Charles Curran Lays Foundation for Social Justice Action,” available at, <https://www.ncronline.org/news/theology/charles-curran-lays-foundation-social-justice-action>; accessed on 15 October 2018.

⁴² Charles Curran, Plenary Talk given in the Third International CTEWC Conference.

⁴³ Francis, “Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Faithful of God,” 2.

⁴⁴ Francis, “Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Faithful of God,” 2.

⁴⁵ Francis, “Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Faithful of God,” 2.

⁴⁶ I take this term from the message of Bishop Morlino: “‘Homosexual subculture’ is source of ‘devastation’ in the Church,” in *The Catholic News Agency*, available at, <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/bishop-morlino-homosexual-subculture-source-of-devastation-in-the-church-54040>; accessed on 14 October 2018.

bravely is not only a necessity to regain the lost credibility of the Church but also is inevitable in achieving justice and righteousness in a broken world. In the biblical tradition, the aim of all prophetic interventions was to re-establish the Kingdom of God by promoting justice and righteousness and to make accessible justice to those who are weak in the society. Through the intervention of the prophets in the crucial moments, the word of God became refuge and hope for the oppressed and marginalised, threatening the unjust exploiters and perpetrators in political, social and religious realms. With a sincere heart and open mind, along with 'sorrow and shame' we should be able to "acknowledge and condemn, the atrocities perpetrated by consecrated persons, clerics, and all those entrusted with the mission of watching over and caring for those most vulnerable."⁴⁷ Pope Francis invites the students and teachers in the catholic universities and institutions not to be afraid of risking, and dreaming of peace for all people and all nations.⁴⁸

Finally, as Pope Francis urges, "penance and prayer will help us to open our eyes and our hearts to other people's sufferings and to overcome the thirst for power and possessions that are so often the root of those evils."⁴⁹ It is our moral responsibility to take some serious acts of reparation in order to overcome the suffering and scandals that have been inflicted upon the members of the Church. Through prayer and penance, we close ourselves to the Lord who leads, guides and enlightens us.

Conclusion

The violence, deception and treachery may destroy truth, but they cannot replace it. The theological education is a tool through which one is opened to the wider horizons of human realities that enables him/her to see and experience the truth in its fullness and to witness it in spite of the shadows that hinder him/her. With such an education, an authentic and true follower of Jesus can work as a catalyst that transforms the Church and the entire society. In this movement for achieving truth and justice, we have the biblical model of prophet Jeremiah, who committed himself for establishing truth, righteousness and justice and gave witness to the word of God irrespective of the different hostilities he had faced in proclaiming

⁴⁷Francis, "Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Faithful of God," 2. Please note that this is specifically addressing the sexual abuse of minors by the clergy. However, this statement is relevant for our discussion here as well.

⁴⁸Francis, "Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to Cardinal De Donatis for the Inauguration of the Academic Year of the Pontifical Lateran University," 2.

⁴⁹Francis, "Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Faithful of God," 2.

God's word to the society. He, as a bold herald of God, criticised the polluted and the corrupted political life and institutionalised life, condemned the exploitation of the rich and the affluence, challenged and questioned the religious leaders who were not having concern for the wounds of the people and spoke about the wrath of God and the awaiting tragedy. However, the prophecy of Jeremiah ends not with condemnation, wrath and destruction, rather since he was called 'to build and plant' (Jer 1:10), he ends his prophecy with the words of comfort, consolation and hope, with the inscription of a new covenant which is written in their heart (Jer 31: 31). Theological education should help one go beyond the external realms of the crisis and trauma of today and to see it as source of renewal and restoration, by which the people of God can lead a more authentic and genuine Christian life.