

## **EVANGELIZATION, SPIRITUALITY AND GLOBALIZATION**

**Rose B. Calabretta<sup>♦</sup>**

### **Introduction**

Ferocious relativism has invaded discourse of all kinds, and we cannot ignore it. Indifference to its ominous shadow would do an injustice to all of us because in some way, even if minimally, we all hope to reach a glimpse at what really is.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>♦</sup>**Rose B. Calabretta**, born in New York, is an Idente Missionary. As member of the Idente School since 1976, she holds doctorates in sociology (1981, Fordham University, NY) and dogmatic theology (1998, Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome). She served as Central European Program Director (International Jacques Maritain Institute), faculty member (Pontifical Institute Regina Mundi, the International Institute Camillianum for Theology, Rielo Institute for Integral Development and St John's University). In Verapoly Archdiocese, Kerala, she taught at St. Paul's International School, St. Paul's and St Albert's Colleges, Jyotir Bhavan; and directed Abba Karun Nivas, Idente Formation House for young women. She currently teaches theology at the Institute for Consecrated Life in Asia, Philippines, while serving Novaliches Diocese in Campus and Youth Ministries. She has contributed articles to scholarly journals and edited works. Email: rosecal2004@hotmail.com

<sup>1</sup>The loss of objective reality in epistemological experience has dragged public dialogue into a realm of opinion-framing (*doxa*), subject to what could be termed an admittedly arbitrary option for the loudest, or the most repetitive, statement of any position, regardless of its possible fallacy. Truth-expectation or -capacity has slipped out of range for human research generally. If we were to be truly courageous, we could objectively trace this back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century thinker, Immanuel Kant. While it is true that he immersed Platonic and Aristotelian thought systems into his unique subjective synthesis, he also denied metaphysical knowledge to human intelligence in his mammoth propaedeutic. To his merit was his intention to refute the English empiricist, David Hume, by uncontestedly proving that what was beyond the range of human intelligence could not be validly declared nonexistent. Nowadays, such debates find little significance in academic circles, even though their influence may be traced through 19<sup>th</sup> century Heinrich Rickert's development of historical analysis of social action, and Max Weber's subsequent value-free methodology reaching

Evangelization has been framed within globalization from the very start. Before ascending into heaven, Christ Himself gave us His Apostolic Command as crystal clear and firm expression that all human beings are sons and daughters of the same Heavenly Father, therefore, we form one human family: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."<sup>2</sup>

Globalization implies all-inclusive outreach toward nations, cultures, creeds, indeed, toward all persons on the globe, regardless of their differences. Many times we speak of globalization as if it were a recent phenomenon, perhaps even very difficult to assess because of its multi-faceted socio-economic processes that seemingly intend to exclude the inviolable sacredness of each individual person as well as the respect due to all ethnicities and national pride.

Both evangelizers (with their vocation/capacity and mission/historical dynamics) and globalization (with its proposal to include all persons and all social projections), require a real and universal starting-point: a transcendent definition of the human person that anchors all analysis in the innate dignity of each and all human beings, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,<sup>3</sup> more precisely in the transcendent dignity expressed in the ancient Biblical affirmation of having been created in the image and likeness of God,<sup>4</sup> and the

---

positivistic analysis of meaningful social action, that is, relative to *Weltanschauungen* of personal choice. The fact is that what had been affirmed by Kant as categorical imperative was then reduced by Weber to personal imperative, and the human search for reality took its unfortunate turn into a dark alley that stifles the real human experience that aspires for more.

<sup>2</sup>Mt 28:19-20.

<sup>3</sup>"Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world, Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people, [...] Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations,..." [Preamble, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948]

<sup>4</sup>"Then God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground." God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them" [Gen1:26-27].

surprising dynamic in the words of Pope Benedict XVI,<sup>5</sup> from the very first moment of conception.

In short, our real starting-point is anthropology. And it must be *mystical* anthropology. Thus, being *capax Dei*, as finite beings, we are open to an infinite horizon,<sup>6</sup> and hopefully also a responsible forum. There is much to discuss about the potential and progressive development of each and all human beings. To understand the reality of evangelization and globalization, we must recognize that the human person is protagonist. Once we have understood the experiential reality of our nature, our capacity and dynamics, as finite beings open to the infinite<sup>7</sup> we will more deeply appreciate the impact of our exercise of free will on the integral development of our being and our knowledge. Then evangelizers would not only communicate “good news,”<sup>8</sup> but grace. This is the work of the Holy Spirit and the saints. It would thus provide space for real ecumenical dialogue about our experiences of God, no matter what religious creed one professes. It would also offer spiritual direction, thus beautifully promoting dynamic free choice toward mystical union with God, or holiness.<sup>9</sup> Then, we would find that the human dimension of globalization would expand into development for Social Justice.

## 1. Mystical Anthropology

The term “*mystical*” *anthropology*, especially in Asia, is rather welcomed, as it is intuited as truly “real,” because experientially verifiable. Fernando Rielo, a Spanish thinker at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, indeed, has much to offer the Asian forum with his development of mystical anthropology.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>“The relationship with God is constitutive of the human person, who was created and ordered towards God, who seeks truth, tends towards good, and is attracted by beauty.” Pope Benedict XVI, Lisbon, May 11, 2010.

<sup>6</sup>“Learn therefore to reflect, to read not superficially but in *profundity* your human experience: you will discover with surprise and joy, that your heart is a window open to the infinite!” Pope Benedict XVI, Malta, June 20, 2011.

<sup>7</sup>Msgr. Julio Terán Dutari, Introduction to *Mystical Anthropology*, Madrid: Fernando Rielo Foundation, forthcoming, 5.

<sup>8</sup>“Go into the whole world and proclaim the good news to every creature.” (Mk 16:15)

<sup>9</sup>St. John of the Cross, *The Living Flame of Love*, Stanza 1, nr.12. *The soul's center is God. When it has reached God with all the capacity of its being and the strength of its operation and inclination, it will have attained its final and deepest center in God, it will know, love, and enjoy God with all its might.*

<sup>10</sup>Fernando Rielo, *Mystical Anthropology* [MA], Madrid: Fernando Rielo Foundation (forthcoming).

Rielo's mystical anthropology begins with a transcendent definition of the human person articulating the state of being human, and including both description and explanation of the inner potential for personal development in truth, goodness and beauty. This is called "*Mistica essendi*." It goes on to describe and explain the various stages of development that can occur and mutations caused by the operations of grace in answer to the free choices taken by the individual person because of love for God. This is called "*Mistica operandi*."

It is possible to speak of the merits of mystical anthropology and its relationship to all the multi-faceted anthropologies which enter into the contemporary academic scene. But I prefer to open the door to the "vivial" (living, experiential) expression of Rielo's mystical conception of anthropology, which derives from the new metaphysical system that he discovered.<sup>11</sup> Those who wish to enter will discover for themselves a cogent and verifiable expression of divinely human reality.

Our first step in this simple statement recognizes the tripartite definition of the human person: psycho-somatized spirit, indwelt by the Divine Constitutive Presence of the Absolute. Entrance into this reality brings us to understand that the human being is comprised of both created elements and an uncreated element, that is, defined formally and transcendentally. Formally, "The human person participates: with his/her soma or body, in cosmic matter and somatic or vegetative life; with his/her psyche or soul, in the psychological or animate life; with his/her spirit or conscience, in the spiritual or "consciential" life. We do not possess three lives, but rather one spiritual life that assumes the psychic functions of the soul and the somatic functions of the body; this is how human nature, integrally, is a psycho-somatized spirit."<sup>12</sup>

Human beings, by virtue of their "consciential" life are the ones who make religion and create art, culture, science, society, history. Then, what is it that transcendentally defines human beings so that they be like this?<sup>13</sup>

Transcendentally, in the moment of conception of the soul-and-body through natural generation, our Divine Father creates the unique spirit of each one of us, infuses it with His presence, Divine

---

<sup>11</sup>Marie-Lise Gazarian, *Fernando Rielo: Dialogue in Three Voices*, Madrid: Fernando Rielo Foundation, 2001, 127ff.

<sup>12</sup>MA, 28.

<sup>13</sup>MA, 36.

Constitutive Presence, and this indwelled created spirit is instantaneously infused into the human zygote to assume the functions of the human nature. Human persons are spiritual beings, open to relationship with God from the very moment of conception.<sup>14</sup> “The life of the spirit is infused by the Divine Constitutive Presence of the Absolute Life; thus, the life of the created spirit is ontological or mystical life in the image and likeness of the Absolute or Divine Life.”<sup>15</sup> The intrinsic presence of God defines the human person, and this is the ecumenical or *deificans* reality of our being human.

We are created in the image and likeness of God. The uncreated indwelling of the Divine Constitutive Presence makes us human persons, that is, MORE (+) than just naturally generated beings. Within our human experience, is it not true that we recognize the tendency to be-more? This includes the inclination to search for truth, to desire what is good, and to express and enjoy beauty. We also experience the need to go out of ourselves, beyond our limits, to find a “complete” fulfilment.<sup>16</sup>

“Mysticism”, then, is the science that explains the action of the Divine Constitutive Presence of the Absolute in the human spirit with the human spirit.<sup>17</sup>

The complexity of our psycho-somatized spirit+ is found to reside more in our psycho-soma, which generally is our normal habitat, and is described in detail by Riello briefly in the presentation of Mystical Anthropology.<sup>18</sup> It is sufficient for our purposes here to state that this universal or ecumenical level of analysis provides us with such an extensive parameter of subjective and objective experience that we find “understanding” challenged to enter into “vision”, “seeking” so fascinated as to proceed into “finding”. Till now, “*Mistica essendi*.”

The maximum aspiration of human beings is easily identifiable as Love: to be able to love truly and to be truly loved. And within the deepest experience of our self, we understand that we could not be satisfied with a haphazard approximation of love. We have an intuition of the greatest Love, and our searching self-sacrifice begins to be recognizable as ascetical effort in relation to Absolute Love.

---

<sup>14</sup>MA, 12-13.

<sup>15</sup>MA, 37.

<sup>16</sup>Riello explains all these anthropological structures, functions, laws and relations in his various treatises and publications, e.g., Fernando Riello, *The Genetic Model in my Thought*, Madrid: Fernando Riello Foundation, 2004; Fernando Riello, *Leyendas*, Bologna: Lombar Key, 2009, LXV, 152-156.

<sup>17</sup>MA, 37.

<sup>18</sup>MA, 24-26.

Thus begins a freely chosen dynamic “ascending” toward a greater sensitivity to the Divine Presence within, and toward a transparent improvement of charitable relationship with our fellows.<sup>19</sup>

There is a dialogue with the Divine Persons who created us, though perhaps not so clearly identifiable, and there begins an experience of greater capacity for Love, as also the processes of transformation. These require purification as the result of an increased presence of the living flame of Love, and the exercise of our free will in higher choosing of virtuous forms of behaviour, attitudes and intentions. The natural imbalance or disorder which we experience, due to self-centeredness or egotism, brings us to odds with our ordinary form of acting in contrast with our aspirations.<sup>20</sup>

Mystical Anthropology has the empirical characteristic of being dialogical, inclusive and empowering. Its realism brings us to face a potential fullness of our personality which is enormously attractive, in fact, could be attributed only to God as He really is, who brings us to a living dynamic as we really are.

## 2. Evangelization

Fernando Riello reminds us that religion can only be understood from mystical experience, and brings us to a profound awareness of the need for a transparent lifestyle of virtues and worship.

“How many Muslims, Hindus, Jews, Buddhists and even atheists or agnostics, surpass in living virtues many who call themselves Christians or Catholics! What is it in human beings that always incline them, and connaturally, to appreciate and to live values? If the sacred texts of the religions are not lived in their purest essence – which is love, the form and synthesis of all values and virtues-, what moral authority could believers have in the presence of non-believers? No. There is no longer any place for empty, pharisaical, interested words. The Upanishads, the Tao Te Ching, the Koran, the Tanaj, the Talmud, the Old and New Testaments and the rich

---

<sup>19</sup>St. Theresa of Avila’s *Way of Perfection* and *Interior Castle*, and St. John of the Cross’ *Ascent of Mt. Carmel*, *Dark Night*, *Living Flame of Love* become realistically understandable, as for example, the latter’s “substantial transformation” no longer hazardously straddles the border of pantheism, and the former’s “transverberation” is rescued as mysticism is raised to a science, empirical and verifiable. Cfr.: Fernando Riello, *Leyendas*, Bologna: Lombar Key, 2009, LXII, 146-147.

<sup>20</sup>Its complexity which is not circumscribed in morality, but rather recognizes the psychological tendencies and energies which are different in each person, is extensively explained by Riello in MA. You will find it fascinating not only for theoretical research, but also for more transparent living experience, cfr.: MA, 32ff.

traditions we have historically received from the best men and women – heroes and saints-, cannot be some books or abstract texts, read in any haphazard way, in the image and likeness of our passions and egoisms.

What is fundamental, as Riello attests, is to interpret it and experience all of it, not from just any kind of love, but rather from Absolute Love, and not as we want it, but rather as the Absolute wants it. The living and the witness make everything take on life, begin to flourish with vitality and serve as efficient corroboration. We must not forget that authentic living includes the objectivity that comes from the interrelation of the text with Tradition and with the Magisterium."<sup>21</sup>

And Riello's explication that the Divine Constitutive Presence makes us persons on *deificans* level brings us to recognize that we are all children of the same Heavenly Father, and as such we should grow to love Him and please Him with all our mind, all our will, and all our strength; and we should love each other as we love our self. This ecumenical sharing of our experience of God's Love enriches our love in daily life with greater meaning and direction toward union with Him (and therefore, ascetical and mystical processes of purification and transformation). The empowering by Baptism raises it to Divine Sanctifying Presence or the Christological, *transverberans* level of sanctifying grace. Regarding the potential capacity of entering into the depths of one's own spirit, to reach the greatest dialogue in this earthly existence (as much as is possible for us), this gift of sanctifying grace elevates us to a maximal potential of intimate relationship with the three Divine Persons, that is, to enter into a "family relationship" with the Holy Trinity, the only Absolute.

Of course, our responsibility before Christ crucified is greater, as He calls us to "be where he is" (Jn 12:26), and to love with His Love (Jn 15:12-13). His call to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect (Mt 5:48) requires that we follow Him with growing, undivided Love (Mt 6:24). Also our knowledge and experience of the ascetical life and the mystical life are expected to be authentic and thorough, so as to be able to share our experiences with our brothers and sisters of other religious creeds. This is the dignity of ecumenism, with solemn respect for the sacredness of each and all persons who wish to love and worship God above all things, following their sacred scriptures and traditions with fervour and tenacity. The *deificans* levels of purification and transfigurative union are empirically recognizable, needful of wise counsel and spiritual direction for faithful listening to

---

<sup>21</sup>MA, 12-13.

the Voice of God and whatever He wishes to share or indicate to each one.

We can never forget that the gift of faith is gratuitous and cannot be the result of human discourse. If Christ wants to reveal Himself as only-begotten Son of the Father and Saviour of Humanity, He will when He wants and to whom He wants. At such time, the ecumenical mystic would ask for the grace of Baptism, if such responds to his/her mission in this world. In the meantime, we can share together our experiences of recollection and quietude, of purification, and transfiguration of our soul. And those of other creeds can share with us their experiences, to the joy and life-giving of all.

What remains clear is that sanctifying grace brings us potentially to the transverberative level of dialogue" with the three Divine Persons and their anointings ("unctials" or impressions of the Divine Persons)<sup>22</sup> by which our relation with them is sealed, as son/daughter of our Heavenly Father, brother/sister of our Divine Brother, and friend of the Holy Spirit. St John of the Cross addresses the fact why so few reach this level of mystical union with the Holy Trinity. God wills that all human beings enter into this intimate union with Him as He is, but very few tenaciously live the determined ascetical choices for God over "what-is-not-God"<sup>23</sup> and the inner purification (purgatory) which is required for it.<sup>24</sup>

It seems so clear that the good news that Christ came to bring us is that God *is* our Heavenly Father who created us for His Love, to live as His created children and to share in His holiness. If those of us baptized reached the highest levels of holiness, or mystical union, so as to allow Christ to act with us and in us, we would be able to begin to fulfil His only Commandment: to love one another as He has loved us.<sup>25</sup> This would make a great difference in how we live our lives in this world.

---

<sup>22</sup>St. John of the Cross, *Living Flame of Love*, Stanza 2, nr. 21: "Although that which the soul tastes in this touch of God is not perfect, it does in fact have a certain savor of eternal life, as was mentioned. And this is not incredible if we believe, as we should, that this is a touch of substances, that is, of the substance of God in the substance of the soul. Many saints have attained to this substantial touch during their lives on earth."

<sup>23</sup>Fernando Rielo, *The Genetic Model in My Thought*, Madrid: Fernando Rielo Foundation, 2004.

<sup>24</sup>St. John of the Cross, *Living Flame of Love*, Stanza 1, nr.25; Stanza 2, nr.1ff, nrs. 27-28; St. Catherine of Genoa, as explained by Pope Benedict XVI, cfr. [http://www.vatican.va/holy\\_father/benedict\\_xvi/audiences/2011/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_aud\\_20110112\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/benedict_xvi/audiences/2011/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20110112_en.html)

<sup>25</sup>MA, 85ff.



### 3. Globalization

Globalization in the hands of the saints<sup>26</sup> - changes into “communion”<sup>27</sup> or global development for social justice. This interpersonal action is already prefigured in the term “Mystical Body of Christ.” We need one another, and we are all different (1Cor 12:12ff). The complementarity of at least two different persons has been clearly expounded by Fernando Rielo in his metaphysical treatises,<sup>28</sup> and is the basis of all human capacity for relationships. Worthy of note is Pope Benedict XVI’s encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, where he introduces the “metaphysics of pure relationality” into the scientific enterprise, and propels global developers into today’s challenge for social justice.

In this encyclical, we perceive “Catholic Social Teaching” as emerging from the living Person of Christ and His Redemptive Love. He is the unchanging light that illuminates the new problems that constantly emerge in the world.<sup>29</sup> Our constitutive orientation towards being more<sup>30</sup> defines the dynamic of human action, requiring a new trajectory of thinking in order to arrive at a better understanding of the implications of our being one family; interaction among the peoples of the world calls us to embark upon this new trajectory, so that integration can signify solidarity rather than marginalization. Thinking of this kind requires a *deeper critical evaluation of the category of relation*. This is a task that cannot be undertaken by the social sciences alone, insofar as the contribution of disciplines such as metaphysics and theology is needed if man’s transcendent dignity is to be properly understood.”<sup>31</sup>

It follows, then, that the *origin* and *end* of each and all human beings is Charity in Truth, and our task in this world is to build up the *polis* of Love.

Charity is love received and given. It is “grace” (*cháris*). Its source is the wellspring of the Father’s love for the Son, in the Holy Spirit. Love comes down to us from the Son....As the objects of God’s love, men and women become subjects of charity, they are called to make

---

<sup>26</sup>The term “saints” refers to those who are striving with all their strength to fulfill our Heavenly Father’s will, 24 hours a day, 7 day a week.

<sup>27</sup>My gratitude to Dr. Juana Sanchez-Gey Venegas, professor of philosophy at the Universidad Autonoma de Madrid and expert in Fernando Rielo’s thought, for suggesting this term as cogent replacement for the abstraction “globalization”.

<sup>28</sup>MA, 65ff.

<sup>29</sup>CV, 12.

<sup>30</sup>CV, 14.

<sup>31</sup>CV, 53.

themselves instruments of grace, so as to pour forth God's charity and to weave networks of charity.<sup>32</sup>

Integral human development – as the Vicar of Christ says – requires a transcendent vision of the person, i.e., it needs God.<sup>33</sup> This need of the Absolute, this state of being +, is the *Imago Dei*, that makes us open to the Absolute, a state of “restlessness” that the Pope calls “the vocation to progress” that drives us “to do more, know more, and have more in order to be more.”<sup>34</sup> This divine imprint –what Fernando Rielo calls the “Divine Constitutive Presence” that is evidently more than our self, but at the same time defines us: “You are yourself and something more than yourself,” he says– unites our living and knowing as always related in our being+.

Benedict XVI speaks quite frankly about the need to be honest, transparent and responsible regarding human rights and duties in global development. They do not derive from human convention, but rather surge forth from our inherent constitution as human persons. He sees the need “to protect mankind from self-destruction,”<sup>35</sup> but he shifts the weight from guilt of sin to health of self, society and the environment.<sup>36</sup> Knowledge of the laws which guide nature must be communicated: our action in all sectors of life–environment, sexuality, marriage, family, social relations (including economics, civics, law, healthcare, education, technology, politics on all levels, etc.) require coherence for individual and social health. The Pope recognizes spiritual life at the height of integral human development:

Only through an encounter with God are we able to...recognize the divine image in the other, thus truly coming to discover him or her and to mature in a love that “becomes concern and care for the other.”<sup>37</sup>

Such are the networks of charity in truth: *Imago Dei* prioritizes the principles and areas listed in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. First, there is *Subsidiarity* which is our singular relation in our occupations, with God, with Society, and with Nature. No longer subject to formalism, our perspective on our experience becomes clearly relational with personal beings, impersonal beings, and things, which believers and non-believers alike can agree upon. An

---

<sup>32</sup>CV, 5.

<sup>33</sup>CV, 11.

<sup>34</sup>CV, 18.

<sup>35</sup>CV, 52.

<sup>36</sup>CV, 51.

<sup>37</sup>CV, 11,76.

important goal for development projects is the participation of all members in their micro-societies for the *Common Good*, necessarily united in *Solidarity*, for the integral good of each and the whole man, and all members of humanity.

We can easily perceive that the model for the various sectors of human activity is no longer linear, but rather intensely relational, like members of the organic body, all necessary, micro and macro; all in a dynamic attitude and projected social action for the good, healthy development of each member and the whole of humanity.

The individual exercise of responsible freedom on both *deificans* and *transverberans* levels of ascetical-mystical life is what determines a greater or lesser dynamic of participation in the Civilization of Love. Christ announced the ultimate goal for global development (Jn 17:20-23). Our integral experience in living and knowing goes hand-in-hand with the ethical interaction of consciences and minds for truly human development,<sup>38</sup> and the attainment of the “full stature of Christ.”<sup>39</sup>

### Conclusion

My initial intention was to leap realistically into “mystical anthropology” and its mystical definition of the human person. Interpersonal relationships based on the experientially verifiable reality of who we are, as we are and as we could be, allow us to discover ourselves in authentic daily encounters with our Heavenly Father and with each other. As evangelizers, to grow progressively in and with Christ, committed to listening to His likings and dislikings, brings us to an inner sensitivity toward living charity in attitude and behaviour, each day more. In our daily commitments, whether profession, family, neighbourhood, or more, to perceive the unfolding of Christ’s plan of salvation and discern His workings in and with us, so that we may arrive at His promised empowerment of prayer to our Heavenly Father (Jn 15:16). The timely works of Fernando Rielo will bear fruit for deepening “communion” in advancing evangelization in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, first of the Third Millennium.

---

<sup>38</sup>CV, 9.

<sup>39</sup>[...] life in Christ is the first and principal factor of development and he entrusted us with the task of traveling the path of development with all our heart and all our intelligence, that is to say with the ardour of charity and the wisdom of truth. CV, 8.