

FAITH AS DIALECTICAL INTERPLAY OF AFFECTION AND COGNITION IN NEWMAN AND "PANDAMA" (INTEGRATIVE SENSING) OF FILIPINO CHRISTIANS

Rebecca Cacho[♦]

St Scholastica's College, Manila

No theology may claim to "fall from heaven" so to speak. All theological reflections are rooted in a specific time, culture and history of people. They are not raw realities but are always interpreted experiences. Theologies that fail to have recognizable reference to people's contexts are futile because they would never touch their hearts. Newman recognized this when he said: "I say plainly I do not want to be converted by a smart syllogism; if I am asked to convert others by it. I say plainly I do not care to overcome their reason without touching their hearts."¹

After centuries of declaring the Philippines as a Christian nation, one may wonder why the seeds have not really grown and bore fruit in the lives of the people? Some would say we were colonized by the

[♦]**Dr Rebecca G. Cacho** is a full time theology professor at St Scholastica's College, Manila, Philippines. She holds an MA in Religious Studies (Mary Hill School of Theology) and a Doctorate in Religious and Values Education (De La Salle University, Manila). She teaches in different institutes and is part of the young theologians group of the World Council of Churches and writer of *New Life in the Spirit through the Sacraments*, *Our Church: A Journey of Faith*, and has co-written four theology books with Dr. Jose de Mesa entitled, *In Love with God: Doing Theology*, *Jesus, God's Way of Friendship*, *Becoming Church*, *Being Sacrament and When Beauty Beckons: Theological Ethics of Filipino Aesthetics*. She is an editor of a series of books in Christian Living for grade school and high school. Email: reb1968@gmail.com

¹Roderick Strange, *John Henry Newman: A Mind Alive*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, Ltd., 2008, 7.

missionaries from the West but were not really Christianized. Others claim that because of the Filipino culture of hospitality, people accepted the Christian faith by way of accommodation, thus the Christian faith was received like a guest but has not really found its home in our land.² Perhaps the Gospel may have taken root in our lives if the missionaries used our culture to make sense of faith. Today, we are reminded by the Second Vatican Council to use the cultures, experiences and contexts of people in order to make the faith intelligible and relevant to different nations (cf. GS, 58). There is a need to first clarify how a particular culture makes sense of and interpret their experiences in order to find ways to better re-appropriate and re-articulate God's offer of salvation.

Post Vatican II efforts of inculturating the faith especially in Asia and the Philippines in particular envision a church that considers culture as sacrament of God's ongoing revelation. It is not outside people's experiences or beyond the ordinary that God makes GodSelf felt. In fact, our humanity is made complete through our culture, "[Hu]man comes to a true and full humanity only through culture, that is through the cultivation of the goods and values of nature. Wherever human life is involved, therefore, nature and culture are quite intimately connected one with the other" (GS, 53).

We begin this reflection on faith by analyzing the culture which we would use as a starting point in our doing theology. In order to examine the potential of indigenous language to re-articulate the faith, thematic cultural exegesis would be employed. This is "a systematic process of bringing into explicit awareness and orderly categorization (i.e., to thematize) the implicit cultural meanings arising from a tradition of experiences which are embodied in specific cultural elements or aspects within the framework of culture as an integrated system for the purpose of proclaiming the Gospel."³ This is done in a particular perspective within the historical context with all the issues, concerns and questions of the time through an insider's point of view. Advocates of this method believe that language is a

²According to Melba Maggay, "The dynamic at work is the highly socialized instinct of a people whose passion for connectedness makes them willing to adapt but not really convert." Taken from her article, "Towards Contextualization from Within: Some Tools and Culture Themes," in *Doing Theology in the Philippines*, Quezon City: OMF Literature and Asian Theological Seminary, 2005, 37-50.

³Jose de Mesa, *Following the Way of the Disciples*, Quezon City: East Asian Pastoral Institute, 1996, 60.

rich resource in understanding culture from within. It is not merely a tool for communication but also an expression of the values, perspectives, and rules of cognition of a particular class or society. Language both shapes and reveals culture. When doing cultural analysis, we should pay special attention to the frequency or the lack of certain words. What is not contained in the language of a people is not part of their experience. Thus, our analysis proceed from within the meaning system of culture-bearers rather than from foreign meaning system.⁴

The Filipino "Pandama"⁵ as a Tool in Re-interpretation of the Faith

Filipinos make sense of the realities of life in general and their experiences in particular through *pandama*. "The interpretative element can be translated either as sensuous cognition or integrated sensing where feeling is part of thinking, and thinking part of feeling."⁶ This implies sensing realities by using both our feelings and thoughts together. One has to remember, however, that even when both the affective-intuitive and the rational-cognitive are combined, Filipinos show much premium towards the affective-intuitive impact of experience. Whatever appeals to the emotion is often regarded as positive experience such as a movie that made you cry, a song that spoke to your heart, an object that brings delight, or a relationship that makes you feel accepted and loved.

This inclination to emotion is not to be interpreted as irrational. Within the culture, one is often reminded of the need to use one's reasons and not be blinded by one's emotions. Being reasonable is

⁴Maggay explains this tool in cultural analysis as necessary and a prerequisite to authentic contextualization of the Gospel in her article "Towards Contextualization From Within...", 42-44. Likewise de Mesa reiterates that the insider's point of view is most reliable in overcoming misinterpretations about a culture and de-stigmatizing it due to colonization suffered by its people. For who would better analyze one's culture but the very people that live it? See Jose de Mesa, *Why Theology is never Far from Home*, Manila: De La Salle University Press, 2003.

⁵Filipino dictionaries define it as the capacity or ability to use all the senses in order to discern and understand what one perceives. See, Almario, Virgilio, ed., *UP Diksiyunaryong Filipino*. Manila: Anvil Publishing Inc., 2001; Leo English, *Tagalog-English Dictionary*. Paranaque: Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, 1986.

⁶The ideas on "*pandama*" which are discussed in the article are derived primarily from Jose de Mesa. *Why Theology is never Far From Home*, Manila: De La Salle University Press, 2003 and from his article "Buhay, Karanasan, aral at Turo: A Filipino Hermeneutics of Experience," in *East Asian Pastoral Review* 32, 3 & 4 (1995) 252-276.

part of the criteria used to be considered a mature person. Thus, “*pandama*” is not just emotions; it is affective cognition or cognitive affection with a propensity for the affective. It combines both the elements of the affective-intuitive (*damdamin*) and the rational-cognitive (*isip*). It is a unity of cognition and feeling, where to really know is to feel and to feel is to truly know. It is this way of feeling that provides Filipinos access to reality and experience it genuinely.

“*Pandama*” has many cognates like “*pagdama*” (capacity to feel) “*pagpapadama*” (actively making one feel), “*nadarama*” (being felt or experienced holistically), “*nadama*” (what is felt) “*damhin*” (to actively feel) “*damdamin*” (specific feeling), “*pakiramdam*” (one’s overall sense of a situation), and “*damay*” (to feel with someone in a given situation).⁷ According to the studies made by de Guia, *pandama* or *pakiramdam* “is an emotional *a priori* inherent in Filipino personhood, a motor that moves motivation... the feeling that initiates the deeds.”⁸ In a culture where much of human interaction is nonverbal, it is important to develop this “heightened awareness and sensitivity” to persons and events lest one would have difficulty in “blending with groups, sensing when and how to plea for favors, carefully feeling out others, or appropriately navigating unclear conditions.”⁹ This sensitivity includes both the internal (*loob*) and external (*labas*) dimensions of one’s person. Enriquez enunciated that “it is within one’s inner being (*loob*) that one feels.”¹⁰ Indications of the internal dimension of feelings that are invisible include, “heightened sensitivity, intuition, emotion, putting one’s heart into something, sentiment, and sensual impressions (feeling well or sick).”¹¹ On the other hand, the external dimensions of “*pandama*” may be felt through physical sensations, the overall body feeling, the sense of touch, the kinesthetic sense and others.

Besides being a standard in our discernment of persons, relationships, things and situations, “*pandama*” is also a relational concept. It implies how one feels about something or somebody. This

⁷Jose de Mesa, “Feeling as Solidarity in Filipino Popular Catholicism,” (unpublished material, 2008).

⁸Katrin de Guia, *Kapwa: the Self in the Other (Worldviews and Lifestyles of Filipino Culture-Bearers)*, Pasig: Anvil Publishing Inc., 2005, 29.

⁹Katrin de Guia, *Kapwa*, 29.

¹⁰Virgilio Enriquez, *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology*, Quezon City: U.P. Press, 1992, 62.

¹¹Virgilio Enriquez, *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology*, 62.

is important in the whole course of one's interaction and growth of relationships; it sizes up the capacity of people to forge and nurture life-giving relationships. This points to the belief that all human beings are connected to each other. To feel for the other is to be in solidarity with the person. There is an assumed "shared feelings" among Filipinos which require no explanation. It is simply to be recognized because the other is a "*kapwa*" (the self in the other) so what one feels should also be shared by the other. In the Filipino culture, it would be a great insult to be considered "*manhid*" (unfeeling or indifferent) towards another besides the fact that such a person would be ostracized. So important is this sense of "*pandama*" to Filipinos that to be bereft of it is to be considered inhuman.¹² Thus, even their way of relating to God finds expression in bodily language, gestures or signs. These are concrete expressions of affection towards the God whom they believe shares their feelings too.

We could say then, that our concept of experience is realistic. There is a need to go through it, to feel it and think about it so that one may conclude that indeed something or someone is authentic or true. "We 'listen' to reality so intently that there is no longer any need, as it were, for reality to assert itself."¹³ In other words, we could regard our "*damdamin*" (affective-intuitive) and "*isip*" (rational-logical) as a movement in the process of interpretation because what is implicit (appealed to one's feelings) is made explicit (becomes the reasons or motivations) in one's way of life (praxis). In the words of de Mesa, "*Damdamin* (feeling) provides affective strength. *Isip* (thought) makes possible intellectual clarity."¹⁴ The interplay of these two elements in making sense of a reality is characteristic of Filipino hermeneutics of experience. The cognate "*pakikiramdam*" (making sense of the world by suspending all prejudgments and looking at things at every possible angle first)¹⁵ clearly indicates a knowing-through-feeling way of Filipinos' "*pandama*" (integrative sensing).

The Filipinos' hermeneutics of experience differ from the highly rationalistic theology which the missionaries from the West introduced to our ancestors. The cultural difference between the two

¹²Jose de Mesa, "Feeling as Solidarity in Filipino Popular Catholicism."

¹³Jose de Mesa, "Buhay, Karanasan, aral at Turo: A Filipino Hermeneutics of Experience," in *East Asian Pastoral Review* 32, 3 & 4 (1995) 252-276, at 260.

¹⁴Jose de Mesa, "Buhay, Karanasan, aral at Turo...", 261.

¹⁵Katrin de Guia, *Kapwa*, vii.

may have been the primary reason for the lack of harmony in what Filipino Christians profess in words but not in their life. The ethical implications of the Christian doctrines taught to them lack real connection to their way of life (or culture). This highly rational form of Christianity may not have touched the hearts of Filipinos whose penchant for felt experience is emphasized in our above analysis of their "*pandama*." In order to respond to this concern, we now turn to our Faith tradition and rediscover another articulation of faith which have the potential to re-interpret the Christian faith in mutual dialogue with the Filipino "*pandama*."

Newman's Theology of Faith

One very striking difference in Newman's theology of faith and the Neo-scholastic theology is its proclivity towards "feelings" while the latter gives priority to the rational-logical perception of faith. For Newman, faith is "... not an acceptance of revealed doctrine, not an act of intellect, but a feeling, an emotion, an affection, an appetency."¹⁶ This view is in contrast to the Neo-scholastic theology's emphasis on "assent to truths" which was subscribed to and taught to all colonized countries, including the Philippines during the 16th century onwards. Here, he insists on the necessity of personally experiencing the Divine in the depths of our hearts where God's voice echoes (conscience)¹⁷ and offers us salvation. For him, theologies that are too intellectualistic are too cold and futile in preparing people towards conversion.¹⁸ Faith begins in a personal experience of God, "... an immediate, existential awareness – an instinct or intuition..."¹⁹ of the divine presence in our lives who touches our hearts and offers us a loving relationship such as that of a father to his son (or a mother to her child).

¹⁶John Henry Newman, *The Idea of a University*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1982, 21.

¹⁷Terrence Merrigan, "Revelation," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman*, ed., Ian Ker and Terrence Merrigan, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

¹⁸See Avery Dulles, *John Henry Newman: Newman's Pilgrimage of Faith*. London: Continuum, 2002; Roderick Strange, *John Henry Newman: A Mind Alive*, London: Darton, Longman and Todd, Ltd., 2008; Terrence Merrigan, "The Anthropology of Conversion: Newman and the Contemporary Theology of Religions," in Ian Ker, ed., *Newman and Conversion*. Scotland: T&T Clark Ltd., 1997.

¹⁹Terrence Merrigan, "Revelation," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman*. Ian Ker and Terrence Merrigan, ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 51.

No one could believe something that is not comprehensible. One has to experience the reality deeply in order to fully understand one's faith and make a real assent.²⁰ For Newman, real Christians are those who do not only profess in words what they believe in but realize it in the way they feel, think, speak, and act. Our faith is passive if we are "substituting a mere outward and nominal profession for real belief. For it is the indolent use of words without apprehending them..."²¹ that reveals our lack of genuine faith in God.

He made a distinction between primary object of faith, God, and the secondary object, the doctrines that articulate God's revelation.²² Real apprehension and assent plus notional apprehension and assent were introduced and explained thoroughly in order to establish a distinction between these two objects of faith. Real apprehension is understood as that which "occurs when religious doctrines are regarded as referring to some-thing which can be experienced. Real assent is the recognition that what the doctrine says is true, in the sense that it resonates with some aspect of our actual experience of life."²³

On the other hand, notional apprehension happens "when religious doctrines are thought of as referring to generalizations, to 'creations of the mind' while notional assent is the unconditional acceptance of the truth of such generalizations" because one firmly believes that the process of reasoning is sound.²⁴ Since they are a product of the mind, they are "never simply commensurate with the things themselves" and may in the process separate from the reality being expressed by the abstractions proposed about revelation. Although Newman admits that these two objects of faith complement each other towards mature faith, he reiterates the priority of "real apprehension and assent" towards God rather than to doctrines or dogmas articulated by the church.

Real experiences of the divine, than propositions (such as doctrines/dogmas) made by people about the faith would have greater influence on person's behaviour because real assent is,

²⁰Thomas J. Norris, "Faith," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman*, 73-97.

²¹John Henry Newman, *Sermons Preached on Various Occasions*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007, 61.

²²See John Connolly, *John Henry Newman: A View of Catholic Faith for Catholic Theology Today*, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2005.

²³Terrence Merrigan, "Newman on Faith in the Trinity," in *Newman and Faith*, Ian Ker and Terrence Merrigan, ed., Louvain: Peeters Press, 2004, 96.

²⁴Terrence Merrigan, "Newman on Faith in the Trinity."

concerned with things concrete, not abstract, which variously excite the mind from their moral and imaginative properties, has for its objects, not only directly what is true, but inclusively what is beautiful, useful, admirable, heroic; objects which kindle devotion, rouse the passions, and attach the affections; and thus it leads the way to actions of every kind, to the establishment of principles, and the formation of character, and is thus again intimately connected with what is individual and personal.²⁵

Faith, then, begins in the experience of God. Such experience so gripped us that we are awed by the graciousness of God and spontaneously accept God's offer of life and love. Faith in God, is knowledge generated in believers by the action of grace and the gift of the Holy Spirit... it is most certain, decided, positive, immovable in its assent; and it gives this assent not because it sees with eye, or sees with the reason, but it receives the tidings from the one who comes from God.²⁶

Genuine faith makes us devoted to God and confident in our beliefs. Newman claims that "a sudden gust of new doctrines, a sudden inroad of new perplexities, shall not unsettle us. We have believed, we have known; we cannot collect together all the evidence, but this is the abiding deep conviction of our minds."²⁷ Lack of explanations for what one firmly believes in does not make faith invalid, for there are certain convictions derived from our experiences which words could not fully express.

Revelation is presupposed when speaking of faith. It is through God's initiative that we have a glimpse (so to speak) of God. Thus, it is a gift and not a human effort that we come to believe. But how do we experience the immediacy of God? Newman speaks of God's voice which echoes in our heart and summons us to do this and not do that. It is the "channel by which every human being may be addressed by God."²⁸ Our way to faith is our conscience because it connects us to our Creator. This implies that God is within the depths of our person; communicating to us the divine presence in our very person and existence.

²⁵This is quoted from the electronic copy of the *Grammar of Assent* of John Henry Newman. Retrieved from <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/grammar/chapter4-2.html#section3> on May 3, 2013.

²⁶Thomas J. Norris, "Faith," 75.

²⁷Quoted from Newman's works found in the book, *The Heart of Newman*, a synthesis arranged by Erich Przywara, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997, 137.

²⁸John Macquarrie, *Invitation to Faith*, New York: Morehouse Publishing, 1995, 86.

This process of God's Self-communication is first of all *emotional* because it elicits either positive or negative feelings in the person who is being spoken to by God. Second, because the feelings evoked are so powerful, there is an *unavoidable quest* to seek for the source of these passions and one could not help but arrive at a realization that only an intelligent Being (God) may have caused them. Thus, as one searches for the cause of these strong emotions, *one discovers a loving God* who apprehends us to be the same. "Heeding God's voice may bring about value-convictions and truth perceptions."²⁹ The ethical implications demand from the believer a turning towards God; a re-orientation of one's life to God.

Faith transports us to a "world of overpowering interest, of the sublimest views, and the tenderist and purest feeling [to] a new life that fulfills the present life in superabundant fashion."³⁰ This is undeserved but given gratuitously by God to anyone who accepts it. Newman insists that "faith is the consequence of willing to believe; we may see what is right, whether in matters of faith or obedience... but we cannot will what is right without the grace of God."³¹ Faith is not simply a product of the mind, no matter how logical one's notional apprehensions or arguments are because as Newman claims, "in the presence of faith, reason bows and retires."³²

A child-like attitude is necessary to faith. This is a humble stance before God who speaks to us through our conscience. It implies putting our trust in God without making one's assent complicated due to skepticism. Simple but sincere faith in God is visible in children who are awed by their belief in God. There is a firm belief in the existence of the "Other" as one explicit to them but implicitly felt. They may not be able to present clear, total or logical evidences of their belief but their faith is unperturbed in spite of weak proofs. Like children, who are receptive of God's revelation because of their freedom to listen to the promptings of the Spirit, true faith requires an open heart and mind to God's revelations in the ordinariness of life.

Even when Newman insists on the primacy of faith over rational conclusions, this does not mean that faith is unreasonable. What he

²⁹Thomas J. Norris, "Faith," 79.

³⁰Thomas J. Norris, "Faith," 76.

³¹John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of Grammar of Assent*, 29.

³²John Macquarrie, *Invitation to Faith*, 82.

may have wished was “to represent the faith of simple believers as reasonable even if, owing to a lack of descriptive vocabulary, they are unable to articulate the steps that led to that faith.”³³ He believes that scholarly arguments and logical explanations of faith (even if they are beautifully articulated) do not necessarily lead to faith. He insisted that, “I may feel the force of the argument for the divine origin of the Church; I may see that I ought to believe; and yet I may not be able to believe.”³⁴

He did not deny the need to think about or understand our faith. Besides our “personal religious commitment,” we also need “intellectual acceptance of the dogmas of faith.”³⁵ The church is challenged to appropriate divine revelation by “the union of ‘clear heads’ and ‘holy hearts’, that is to say, the union of critical intellection and deeply held faith.”³⁶ Newman incorporates reason to faith like an organizing hinge, “the intellect assented to the dogmas which found their echo in his heart.”³⁷ While he puts premium on faith, he also maintains that it is natural to every human being to make sense of what one believes in and finds ways to describe it in spite of the limitation or lack of perfect expression of it. The illative sense which he refers to as the implicit rationalization of every person is a felt reasoning that leads to certitude. It is likened to a moral standard which is innate in every person. A wisdom contained in our inmost being gives us the capacity to judge what is virtuous or not in particular circumstances of life.³⁸

Although our faith is not easily explained logically according to the process of *ratio* understood by the philosophers and thinkers of his time, this does not mean that such way of thinking is wrong. He believes that every person begins real assent through illative sense and not through the doctrines or theological arguments presented to

³³Thomas Carr, *Newman and Gadamer: Toward a Hermeneutics of Religious Knowledge*, Atlanta Georgia: Scholars Press, 1996.

³⁴Erich Przywara, *The Heart of Newman*, 128.

³⁵John Connolly, *John Henry Newman*, 15.

³⁶Terrence Merrigan, “Newman on Faith in the Trinity,” 62.

³⁷As quoted by Richard Connolly, *John Henry Newman: A View of Catholic Faith for the New Millennium*, 2005, 15.

³⁸See *An Essay in Aid of Grammar of Assent*, chapter 9, section #2. Retrieved from <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/grammar/chapter9.html#section2>, May 14, 2013. Gerald Hughes also noted of the same meaning in his article “Newman and the Particularity of Conscience,” in *Newman and Faith*, Ian Ker and Terrence Merrigan, eds. Louvain: Peeters Press, 2004, 189-220.

people. Through the "logic of good sense" (or the illative sense) which is our inner critical capacity to make sense of our experiences, we are guided to make decisions and venture into what we cognitively felt is right. Proof of Christian revelation is more often than not determined by our illative sense and not by scientific scrutiny (empirical evidence) or the process of formal inference which are tedious and impractical in ordinary situations.³⁹

This kind of reasoning "does not supersede the logical form of inference, but is one and the same with it; only it is no longer an abstraction, but carried out into the realities of life, its premises being instinct with the substance and the momentum of that mass of probabilities, which, acting upon each other in correction and confirmation, carry it home definitely to the individual case, which is its original scope."⁴⁰ He was not trying to discount the value of formal reasoning but was reiterating that in faith, people makes sense of the divine through a different process of informal reasoning; something specific, concrete and practical which could be easily applied in the immediate circumstances that people encounter in life. This is the ordinary means by which we arrive at truths we believe in or is a kind of intuitive cognition which leads us to faith. Though the reasons for believing may not be easily explainable, this does not mean our faith is not reasonable. There are just some things that are true and real for people which words could not fully describe because most often than not, "faith is the simple lifting of the mind to the Unseen God, without conscious reasoning or formal argument"⁴¹ required of them.

Moreover, when Newman spoke of the illative sense, he may have been referring to what the Latin term, "*illatus*" implies, "to bring in; carry in; to import or to introduce."⁴² Our faith then, is introduced to us by our felt experience which we make sense of through our faculty of implicit, personal reasoning capacity, the illative sense. Through

³⁹Francis McGrath uses "logic of good sense" to describe what illative sense means for Newman in his book, *John Henry Newman: Universal Revelation*, Melbourne: John Garratt Publishing, 1997.

⁴⁰Newman, *In Aid of Grammar of Assent*, chapter 9, section 1

⁴¹David James Walsh, in "Newman on Faith and Reason," retrieved in <http://ipsumesse.wordpress.com/2007/09/09/newman-on-faith-and-reason/> on May 11, 2013.

⁴²Meanings taken from John C. Traupman, *The Bantam New College Latin and English Dictionary*, New York: Bantam Dell, 2007.

the many and varied probabilities, we come to a conclusion of a firm belief even when evidences seem lame or lacking in logic for others. This suggests that there is no clear cut explanations to all those which we believe in as true or good. Instead of adhering to the more popular "*ratio*" of his time, his arguments about why faith is not bereft of reason may be due to his reference to "*intellectus*" which the medieval thinkers describe as a faculty of "intellectual felt-ness" used spontaneously by individuals.⁴³ This is a kind of reasoning that is implicit in every person where one needs to put together the different strands of reality in order to make a real assent. This analogy may better explain it, "These converging and convincing probabilities are like a cable, each individual strand cannot stand on its own, but when all the strands of its thought are all considered together, it has formidable strength but also pliability."⁴⁴

For Newman, true faith is lived out in the daily complexities of human existence. It is a realization of the very attributes of God fully revealed in Christ into one's own person. Without the praxis of one's faith, it becomes clear that from the very start no real assent was made. In fact, the authenticity of faith is validated in life when people commit themselves to obey God.

According to Newman the encounter with the object of faith through real assent awakens the imperative to act. In the act of real assent the imagination presents the object of faith to the believer. As such, the concrete images experienced through real assent stimulate the affections and the passions and indirectly lead to action.⁴⁵

While such images do not necessarily lead to practical action in a believer, there is a greater chance that real assent leads to living out one's faith. Since faith is a gift and not a mere act of a person, it is arrogance to assume that living one's life according to the truths of revelation fully incarnated in Christ is simply an act of human will without giving due recognition to the divine initiative and gracious presence in our lives. Newman believes that, "faith is not a mere conviction in reason, it is a firm assent, it is a clear certainty greater

⁴³Taken from the description of Andrew Greenwell, "Converging and Convincing Proof of God: Cardinal Newman and the Illative Sense," Retrieved from <http://www.catholic.org/homily/yearoffaith/story.php?id=48296&page=1> May 12, 2013.

⁴⁴See Andrew Greenwell, "Converging and Convincing Proof of God," 2013.

⁴⁵See John R. Connolly, "Faith and Praxis in Newman's Catholic Notion of Faith." Retrieved from www.umass.edu/catholic/campus/conf/faithandpraxis.doc on May 11, 2013.

than any other certainty; and it is wrought in the mind by the grace of God, and by it alone."⁴⁶

This faith is total and oriented to praxis. "What Newman is saying here is that appropriate Christian action should flow from an adequate understanding of the faith. This is an application, of the dogmatic principle to the life of faith."⁴⁷ This does not mean that the praxis of faith is simply an application of knowledge. The two are so integrated for Newman that mutual interdependence is assumed. There is an interplay of reason and practical action. Faith proceeds to action because it is the very motivation of what we do. These are necessary elements towards a mature faith. Here it is enunciated that religion is a "profoundly ethical affair"⁴⁸ because our real assent to this God makes us obey (not blindly of course) the divine will to venture into a life of love. "The truths of faith are not fully understood if they are simply objects of notional assent. The believer does not fully understand them until one's affections and passions are aroused and one is brought to the imperative to act."⁴⁹

But what would be the gauge if such acts of faith are in tune with the divine will? Newman places "love" as the one that perfects faith. Ultimately, he believes that it is the love we have for God that leads us to real faith. Through it we are made new and given the power to endure sufferings, endeavour towards courageous witness of what we believe in and remain steadfast. He believes that "faith springs up out of the immortal seed of love... existing indeed in feelings but passing on into acts, into victories of whatever kind over self, being the power of the will over the whole soul for Christ's sake, constraining the reason to accept mysteries, the heart to acquiesce in suffering, the hand to work, the feet to run, the voice to bear witness..."⁵⁰

Love is the source of our holiness towards a faith that is mature and excellent. It does not alter our faith but enhances it so that we may overcome certain peculiarities that are contrary to who we really are – loving persons who come from God. He adds that while faith could make us heroes, it is love that transforms us into saints. *Fides*

⁴⁶Words of Newman quoted by Erich Przywara, *The Heart of Newman*, 129.

⁴⁷John R. Connolly, "Faith and Praxis...", 18.

⁴⁸A description taken from Terrence Merrigan, "Newman on Faith in the Trinity," 49.

⁴⁹Connolly, "Faith and Praxis...", 19.

⁵⁰As quoted by Erich Przywara, *The Heart of Newman*, 142.

formata charitate is how he explains our way to salvation because for him love is the reason why people devote themselves totally to Christ, thus, he argues that “we are Christ’s, not by faith merely, nor by works merely, but by love.”⁵¹ Such primacy of love over faith ensures that we are protected from certain temptations and even disciplined towards a holy life because for Newman, “love does regulate as well as animate Faith, guiding it in a clear and high path.”⁵² He used this phrase to show a clearer connection between the two, “the loving faith and the believing love.”⁵³ In other words, our means is faith, but our goal is love. Newman describes love as “the gentle, tranquil, satisfied acquiescence and adherence of the soul in the contemplation of God; not only a preference of God before all things, but a delight in Him because He is God.”⁵⁴ He also refers to love as the “right state of heart” which gives light, vitality, meaning, and beauty to our faith.

Newman’s Theology in Parallel with Filipino *Pandama* (Integrated Sensing of God’s Love)

This is an initial exposition of the findings made where the two traditions may mutually interact. It is limited to those themes resulting from the cultural exegesis of the Filipino “*pandama*.” Our starting point in this reflection would be from the main themes derived from the said indigenous term. Three major aspects may be compared from the two traditions, namely, faith as “felt” experience, faith as illumined by reason, and faith as praxis of love.

a. Faith as “Felt” Experience

Recall in our previous treatment of “*pandama*” the penchant to feelings (intuitive-affective) of Filipinos. If it did not touch their hearts or evoke feelings (whether positive or negative) from them, it is not given premium. Newman’s emphasis on faith as primarily a real assent made by a person based on concrete experiences which speak to their hearts clearly parallels with this theme in the Filipino experience. Both give value to the emotions which are stirred by an

⁵¹See *Sermon #21*. Retrieved at <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/parochial/volume4/sermon21.html>. May 15, 2013.

⁵²See *Sermon #12*, retrieved at <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/oxford/sermon12.html>. May 15, 2013.

⁵³*Sermon #12*

⁵⁴*Sermon #21*

"Intelligent Being"⁵⁵ who is present in the depths of our person. Filipinos believe that God speaks through their "*kalooban*" (literally the inner depths of being, or conscience in religious language). Thus, if one refuses to listen, feelings of guilt are experienced whereas when one follows this "voice in one's heart" true peace is possible (*napapayapa ang kalooban*). Newman reiterates this also in his writings when he spoke of conscience as God's voice who awakens in us feelings (both negative and positive), this voice informs an individual's moral decision making. Following the voice of the conscience is following God. He believes that "if...we feel responsibility, are ashamed, are frightened, at transgressing the voice of conscience, this implies that there is One to whom we are responsible, before whom we are ashamed, whose claims upon us we fear."⁵⁶

Not using one's "*pandama*" (integrative sensing) is contrary to one's nature. For Filipinos, one's indifference to what one feels or what others (*kapwa*) may feel is not just a denial of one's true nature (inhuman) but also is expressive of lack of recognition of one's sense of solidarity with others.⁵⁷ *Manhid* (being indifferent or unfeeling) is an insult which when hurled at you would be tantamount to being ostracized from the community.⁵⁸ To be sensitive then to the "feelings" evoked by our experiences or the realities revealed by God in the ordinary is not only encouraged but is endeavored by Filipinos. This is realized when they search their "*loob*" (literally one's most authentic inner relational self). This is regarded as the sacred place where one meets God. Their "*loob*" makes them able to sense God (*madama ang Diyos*), that is "feeling" God's immediacy to them. Newman's description of the experience of conscience as the "feeling of right and wrong under a special sanction" implies that "emotions are vital" to one's encounter with God.⁵⁹ As Merrigan points out, "for Newman, the emergence of the individual's image of God has its roots in our affective life, in our human experience."⁶⁰ Filipinos' orientation to felt experience resonates this perspective.

⁵⁵Newman's initial image of God who reveals Self to people.

⁵⁶Quoted from *Grammar of Assent*, chapter 5. Electronic copy, retrieved at <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/grammar/chapter5-1.html>. May 17, 2013.

⁵⁷Katrin de Guia, *Kapwa*, 28.

⁵⁸Jose de Mesa, "Feeling as Solidarity in Filipino Popular Catholicism."

⁵⁹Terrence Merrigan, *Clear Heads and Holy Hearts: The Religious and Theological Ideal of Henry Newman*, Louvain: Peeters Press, 1997, 128.

⁶⁰Terrence Merrigan, *Clear Heads and Holy Hearts...*

Moreover, Newman also emphasized that conscience is a gift of rule (a law written in our hearts so to speak) which has been planted in us by the Creator even when we have yet to know the "Lawgiver."⁶¹ It may be likened to a principle of being human which is innate in us; something inherent in every person but is never contrary to our will. He calls it "the Divine Law" or "the rule of ethical truth," which is "sovereign, irreversible, absolute authority."⁶² For us Filipinos, "*loob*"⁶³ (or conscience) is indeed God's gift (*kaloob ng Diyos*) which leads us to apprehend (*madama*) what is right and true so that we can be like God (*maging ka-loob tayo ng Diyos*), our Creator (*ang Maykapal*).⁶⁴

Since *loob* for Filipinos is the most authentic relational inner self, it is the source of all their feelings and thoughts (*damdamin at isip*). Within their person, they have a deep inclination towards what is true, good and beautiful. This means that there is a sense of rightness or wrongness which is felt deep within.⁶⁵ This is most likely what Newman implies about the inherent character of our conscience when he refers to it as primarily an emotional experience of God who reveals Self as Almighty when he said that, "in this special feeling, which follows on the commission of what we call right or wrong, lie the materials for the real apprehension of a Divine Sovereign and Judge."⁶⁶ This God is perceived as One who wills only what is good for us; communicating to us through our conscience a message of hope and courage amidst our failures or imperfect obedience.⁶⁷

⁶¹Retrieved from an article in <http://www.rsrevision.com/Alevel/ethics/a2conscience/> May 6,2013

⁶²See Letter to the Duke of Norfolk, section 5.

⁶³This indigenous term is being used here as the dynamic equivalent of conscience. Further cultural analysis of the term and its comparison to what conscience is in Judaeo-Christian tradition suggests that it is a more apt equivalent in the Filipino culture. See further discussions in Jose de Mesa and Rebecca Cacho, *Kagandahang Loob Book Series* (4 volumes). Manila: St Scholastica's College. A more detailed explanation of the Filipino "loob" may be gleaned from the works of Albert Alejo, *Tao Po!, Tuloy*. Quezon City: Ateneo De Manila University, 1990. V.G. Enriquez, *From Colonial to Liberation Psychology*, Quezon City: UP Press, 1992; L.N. Mercado, *Elements of Filipino Philosophy*, Tacloban City: Divine Word University Publication, 1976.

⁶⁴Jose de Mesa, "Buhay, Karanasan, aral at Turo..."

⁶⁵Jose de Mesa and Rebecca Cacho, *When Beauty Beckons: Theological Ethics of Filipino Aesthetics*. Manila: St Scholastica's College, 2012.

⁶⁶Newman, *Grammar*, chapter 5 section 1.

⁶⁷Terrence Merrigan, *Clear Heads and Holy Hearts...*

For Newman, people's emotions must be touched in order that they may venture into faith. He claimed that "no one can be religious without having his heart in his religion; his affections must be actively engaged in it; and it is the aim of all Christian instruction to promote this."⁶⁸ Sadly, this is one concern in the Philippine church which is hardly addressed because Christians are taught using the Neo-scholastic theology. Books on religion are simply replicates of the Catechism of the Catholic Church which was ecclesiastically imposed in all Catholic schools. Because of its highly intellectual approach to revelation-faith, Filipinos who make sense of realities through "*pandama*" (which is orientated to knowing-through feeling) have difficulty in understanding the catechesis taught to them, thus lack of real assent could be expected.

Initial studies done on the effectiveness of using people's experiences and cultures were found to lead students in Catholic schools in the Philippines to a better understanding of their faith.⁶⁹ Likewise, this goal of Newman was also evident in the pastoral thrust of Vatican II, when it "abandoned in *Dei Verbum* the rationalistic language of neo-scholasticism and adopted the thought categories of personalist philosophy which was deemed to be more biblically attuned and meaningful to the situation of people. Revelation and faith, rather than being presented as the revealing of and agreeing to truths, begun to be interpreted in terms of personal relationship with God."⁷⁰ Filipinos who give much value to personal relationships would find this more relevant.

But even before Newman enunciated his arguments on "feelings" as a starting point of one's experience of God (revelation), there were

⁶⁸Newman, *Parochial Sermon* #9.

⁶⁹See the studies of Eduardo Domingo, "The State of Catechesis in Four Catholic Schools" (doctoral dissertation, unpublished material), Manila: University of Santo Tomas, 1986; A. Gonzalez, FSC. *Towards an Adult Faith: Religious Themes in Contemporary Language*, Manila: De La Salle University Press, 2002; and Rebecca Cacho, "Bakas Ng Kagandahang-loob ng Diyos: A Proposed Inculturated Approach to Sacramental Theology and its Implications to Religious Education" (unpublished material, doctoral dissertation), Manila: De La Salle University, 2004. Findings made in these studies show a significant difference both in statistics (quantitative) and descriptive (qualitative) assessment of the students' understanding and praxis of their faith due to intervention of doing theology using their culture.

⁷⁰Jose de Mesa and Rebecca Cacho, *In Love with God: Doing Theology for College Students*, Manila: St Scholastica's College, 2012, 14.

already efforts in the early 19th century that showed a moving away from understanding faith as highly dependent on reason or an assent to truths proclaimed by the Church authorities.⁷¹ For example, according to Schleiermacher, religion is “feeling and intuition of the universe” and Christianity is the “feeling of dependence on God.” While many of his contemporaries who were influenced greatly by rationalistic philosophy focused on speculative theology that brought forth creeds and dogmas, he proposed the value of feeling (*gefühl*) as the primary component or starting point of faith. He said that religion “... is affection, a revelation of the Infinite in the finite, God being seen in it and it in God.”⁷²

This indicates that “feelings” which are experienced in one’s conscience would appeal more to people than starting with reasons which are derived from syllogisms. For Filipinos who rely mostly on non-verbal communications, sensitivity to what is felt within one’s inner self (*ramdam ng kalooban*) and one’s outer self, the body (*ramdam ng katawan*) would be a better key to establishing and sustaining relationships not just with fellow human beings but especially with God. One would notice, for example, that among Catholics, popular religiosity is often preferred to the traditional official liturgies. Perhaps this may be attributed to Filipinos’ inclination to “felt experiences,” a reality valued in folk religiosity and its multifaceted expressions. Sensual (or bodily) expressions give Filipinos the opportunity to express intimacy with God where the feeling of being close to the divine is manifested.⁷³ Albert Alejo’s study notes that,

much of our popular religious practices reflect a spirituality of the body. What does it mean? How do people experience their contact with the divine? It seems that the mediation we have in the contact with the Divine is not Dogma, it’s not doctrine, and it’s not true statements, but a kind of an experience that is bodily.⁷⁴

⁷¹These may be evident in the writings of Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, English translation of 2nd German edition, ed., H.R. Mackintosh and J.S. Stewart, New York: Harper and Row, 1963, as well as in Immanuel Kant’s preference to base faith on seeking the will and the claims of morality, by John Macquirre, 1997, 77.

⁷²Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*.

⁷³See the findings and discussions on popular religiosity in Jose de Mesa and Rebecca Cacho, *In Love with God: Introduction to Doing Theology*.

⁷⁴Albert Alejo, SJ “Popular Spirituality as Cultural Energy.” Retrieved at <http://www.isa.org.ph/pdf/alejo.pdf> on November 30, 2011. This paper was also delivered during the Spirituality Forum III on August 5, 2003 at University of Sto.

Newman observes that,

the mission of Jesus was not simply to communicate a set of beliefs but to change the hearts of his hearers, making them like his own. Jesus' evident holiness was what ignited the affection and loyalty of his intimate followers, who felt themselves individually addressed and invited by his example.⁷⁵

This highly personalized approach of Jesus in inviting people towards faith in God is what Newman believes would be the effective means to conversion. Christian faith is not replete with reasons but is not to be reduced to a body of doctrines or identified with a set of dogmas to be accommodated in spite of its lack of connection to people's present experiences. "Christianity begins with imagination (intuition) before becoming a system or creed."⁷⁶

Despite Newman's preference for felt experiences towards real assent, however, he also warned against the possible danger or limitations of emotions in certitude. He pointed out that they are simply the starting point of real assent but not its end, "all such emotion evidently is not the highest state of a Christian's mind; it is but the first stirring of grace in him."⁷⁷ Being the initial promptings of God, one needs to recognize the transcendent character of faith. Feelings evoked by our experiences may not always proceed to real commitment to Christ. "It is not enough to bid you to serve Christ in faith, fear, love, and gratitude; care must be taken that it is the faith, fear, love, and gratitude of a sound mind."⁷⁸ One needs to make sense of faith with the aid of reason. Understanding our feelings through reasons would facilitate a volition to act on what one believes in. Young Filipinos are often warned by their elders to temper their feelings with reasonable decisions. There is always a danger in an exaggerated premium placed on any aspect of our "*pandama*." For Newman, one must be critical of those who rely solely on feelings to sustain their faith, to the "neglect of humble practical efforts to serve God."⁷⁹ He pointed out that if we fail to convert our feelings to

Tomas CME Auditorium, Manila, Philippines. This article was previously published in Lecture Series 3 on Spirituality, 2004.

⁷⁵As quoted from Newman's Oxford University Sermons by Avery Dulles, *John Henry Newman*, London: Continuum, 2002, 59.

⁷⁶Terrence Merrigan, "Newman on Faith in the Trinity," 60.

⁷⁷*Parochial Sermon* #14.

⁷⁸*Parochial Sermon* #14.

⁷⁹*Parochial Sermon* #14.

practical actions, we would not mature in our faith, he claims that, “having neglected to turn their feelings into principles by acting upon them, they have no inward strength to overcome the temptation to live as the world, which continually assails them.”⁸⁰ While he believes that real assent (true faith) begins from feelings, it must grow towards a reasonable and lived principle so that one would remain steadfast amidst temptations and challenges in the world.

b. Faith as Illumined by Reason

Faith has its basis primarily on felt experiences but these are validated by reason because as Newman indicates “it is plainly impossible that Faith should be independent of Reason, ... a new mode of arriving at truth.”⁸¹ Our feeling, thinking and acting comprise the whole experience and its interpretation could not be done simply by separating one from the other elements. This is an integrated sensing of realities (*pandama*) which is natural to all human beings. Newman pointed this out when he explains that faith is not against reason. In fact, he believes that what made his critics suspicious of his theology of being irrational is a simple misunderstanding of the definition of reason from both sides.⁸² He does not believe that humans do not automatically think about what they feel. The capacity to reason, judge and make principles out of human experiences is a gift given to all. This is what he calls the illative sense, a decisive judge within every person which spontaneously discern immediate apprehensions derived from experiences.⁸³ This is similar to Filipinos’ way of knowing-through feeling. Through the emotions elicited by certain objects, they suspend all judgments and reflect on such experience. This is also how they learn lessons (*aral*) that serve as principles for life and of life.⁸⁴

The mind is a dynamic aspect of a person’s life because it appraises, understands and makes propositions to the heart that feels. In Newman’s *Grammar of Assent*, “the mind (or what he calls the illative sense) reaches certainty in all the important questions of life, including religion, by personally weighing up the various factors and

⁸⁰*Parochial Sermon #9.*

⁸¹*Parochial Sermon #10.*

⁸²*Parochial Sermon #10.*

⁸³J.H. Walgrave, “J.H. Newman: His Personality, His Principles, His Fundamental Doctrines” (Unpublished material, KU Leuven, Louvain), 1977, 89.

⁸⁴Jose de Mesa, “Buhay, Karanasan, aral at Turo...,” 261.

judging whether the balance of probabilities is sufficiently overwhelming in favor of a particular truth."⁸⁵ He may have distanced from the formal or deductive process of reasoning (*ratio*) of his time but this does not mean that faith for him is merely an emotional affair. We noted that he has considered the informal or inductive process of reasoning (*intellectus*) in arriving at conclusion or judgment (the illative sense). Filipinos make sense of life's experiences when they search within the depths of their being (*kalooban*) that which is not only felt but also that which is most reasonable from all probabilities that they could ponder on.

In the course of understanding our faith, one must be allowed to infer from one's own experiences and appropriate it to the realities of our time. All are gifted with this capacity of discerning from among the probabilities, which our illative sense prods us to pursue. For Newman, the illative sense is our inner gauge for the certainty of our assent because it is always reliable and authoritative. Since it is a sense of good which is part of our nature placed in our being by our Creator. Thus, we need to listen to it more attentively. Among us Filipinos, our unarticulated and implicit but normative standard is "*magandang pakiramdam*" (literally a sense of what is beautiful). As a norm, we assess anyone or anything, relationships and events through it. This is so spontaneous that it may appear very natural to use it as a way to figure out not only what is aesthetically captivating but also what is ethically sound.⁸⁶ Newman's illative sense and the Filipino's "*pandama*" engages not just the heart but also the mind to make sense of God's revelation. The "theology of religious imagination"⁸⁷ which Newman espouses is a reasonable faith, as it aims towards harmony of affection and cognition. This means that feelings are clarified in the mind and reasons speak to the hearts of the believers.

Newman articulates, "that Sight is our initial, and Reason is our ultimate informant concerning all knowledge; we are conscious that we see; we have an instinctive reliance on our Reason: how can the claims of a professed Revelation be brought home to us as Divine,

⁸⁵Ian Ker, *The Rational Faith of Newman*, 6.

⁸⁶More discussions on this indigenous sense of goodness in Jose de Mesa and Rebecca Cacho, *When Beauty Beckons*.

⁸⁷As quoted by Terrence Merrigan, "Newman on Faith in the Trinity," 62.

except through these?"⁸⁸ Thus, we need to be enlightened about what we believe in. Loving God, after all, includes loving this God also "with all [our] mind" (cf. Mt 22:37). For with the very act of believing (Latin, *fides qua creditur*) there is necessarily the content of what one believes (Latin, *fides quae creditur*).⁸⁹ For example, Newman reminds us that "the image of God, if duly cherished, may expand, deepen, and be completed, with the growth of [our] powers and in the course of life, under the varied lessons, within and without, which are brought home to [us] concerning that same God, One and Personal, by means of education, social intercourse, experience, and literature."⁹⁰

Growth in our understanding of who the God of love is (*Diyos ng kagandahang-loob*) as revealed by Jesus enables us to have "the same mind in [us] that was in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5). But our knowledge of God is not absolute or immutable. It changes as we encounter different situations in life. All our propositions about God are humble attempts at articulating what we apprehend from what God reveals to us. It can, therefore, be expected that the understanding of faith as relationship with God will change as new situations arise to confront believers. Sometimes even a paradigm shift is required. Newman speaks of the same when he said that, "if Christianity be an universal religion, suited not simply to one locality or period, but to all times and places, it cannot but vary in its relations and dealings towards the world around it, that is, it will develop."⁹¹

c. Faith as Praxis of Love

For Filipinos, people who do not act upon what they proclaim in words lack integrity. What one does is the source of evaluating the authenticity of one's intention or the sincerity of one's being in relation to others. Part of "*pandama*" is attentiveness to the bodily expressions or outward manifestations of the person's values. Important in our attempt to make sense of what is truly in the heart of the person is expressed in the word "*pinangatawanan*" (literally embodied beliefs). This is expressive of the value Filipinos give on the

⁸⁸Parochial Sermon #10.

⁸⁹Jose de Mesa and Rebecca Cacho, *In Love with God*, 2012.

⁹⁰John Henry Newman, *An Essay in Aid of Grammar of Assent*, (electronic copy). Retrieved from www.gutenberg.com. On May 18, 2013. p.50

⁹¹John Henry Newman, *An Essay on The Development of Christian Doctrine* (electronic copy). Retrieved from, www.newmanreader.org. on May 18,2013. Chapter 2.

ability of persons to show in their bodily acts the beliefs they profess with their lips. Its cognate, *pangangatawan* (the embodiment of the most authentic inner self) focuses on firm and committed incarnation of the faith relationship, made real in specific time and space. It articulates as well the freely undertaken responsibility to accomplish what the person has committed one's self to. Faith, as the letter of James points out, is "active... with works" and "completed by works" (cf. Jas 2: 22). Words are never enough to consider a fellow human being as truly good (*taong maganda ang kalooban*). For Newman, real assent is a total and personal response to God who kindles our hearts to live the Gospel. He stresses the need to bring to realization what our imagination moves us to do. "Doing is at a far greater distance from intending to do than you at first sight imagine. Join them together while you can; you will be depositing your good feelings into your heart itself by thus making them influence your conduct; and they will spring up into fruit."⁹²

"Praxis" as faith in action tended to be the main gauge for real assent to be validated in our claim of total and wilful commitment to God. Filipinos emphasize that to believe also implies to act according to God's gracious love (*kagandahang-loob*). Not to do so is to falsify such faith. Faith without corresponding action, according to the letter of James, is dead (cf. Jas 2:17). The concrete situation he was using as an illustration was the refusal of a believer to respond to a neighbour in need. For Newman our acts of obedience to God gives life to faith. Good feelings and thoughts are not enough to prove our real assent. He enunciates that "though a man spoke like an angel, I would not believe him, on the mere ground of his speaking. Nay, till he acts upon them, he has not even evidence to himself that he has true living faith."⁹³ Both traditions then, agree that faith is a holistic and a concrete way of perceiving the realization of something. When we believe, what happens is not merely we being passionate about the matter, nor merely being cognitively erudite regarding it, or exhaustingly busy for it. All the elements of what a true and living faith endeavours are set in order, namely, feelings are purified, thoughts are clarified, weighed and deepened, and the set of behaviours commensurate to what is felt and thought are determined according to the desired outcome.

⁹²Parochial Sermon, #9.

⁹³Parochial Sermon, #13.

But Paul is quick to remind us that faith and its good works or sacrifices are worthless if love is absent (cf. 1 Cor 13:1-12). Love is central to Christian life. Newman agrees with Paul's reference to love as the greatest of all virtues and the perfect origin of what we are doing. He wrote that "we can take no comfort to ourselves that we are God's own, merely on the ground of great deeds or great sufferings. The greatest sacrifices without love would be nothing worth, and that they are great does not necessarily prove they are done with love."⁹⁴ Besides showing our obedience to practical acts of kindness, righteousness or justice, Newman reminds us that good deeds are commendable only if they are acts of faith rooted in love.

He believes that as "love is the life of God in the solitary soul, faith is the guardian of love in our intercourse with men (and women); and, while faith ministers to love, love is that which imparts to faith its praise and excellence."⁹⁵ It is not simply by our good works that we are justified but it is through the love of God whom we serve in our neighbours. Our faith may become defective due to many causes that are both personal or communal in character but this is made mature by love. In fact, the reason for our believing is because we love. Faith remains "an initial principle of action but it becomes changed in its quality, as being made spiritual. It is as before a presumption, but the presumption of a serious, sober, thoughtful, pure, affectionate, and devout mind. It acts, because it is Faith; but the direction, firmness, consistency, and precision of its acts, it gains from Love."⁹⁶ Thus, "faith is the first element of *religion*, and love, of *holiness*; and as holiness and religion are distinct, yet united, so are love and faith."⁹⁷

For Filipinos, love is more properly rendered here as *kagandahang-loob* because "*pagmamahal*" or "*pag-ibig*" (literal translations of love) are terms identified with wanting to possess another whereas *kagandahang-loob* implies all that is good in someone and this is considered as the ideal for Filipinos. It emerges from the heart of a person and finds its expression in the totality of one's life of interrelationship. In other words, this is coming from the inner core of one's being and is shown through the way a person relates with

⁹⁴Parochial Sermon #23.

⁹⁵Parochial Sermon #21.

⁹⁶University Sermon, #12.

⁹⁷University Sermon, #12.

others in authentic goodness.⁹⁸ Such *kagandahang-loob* is done freely for the good of the beloved. It does not expect a return of favour but is happy with doing what would bring about the betterment of the other. Kind acts are not easily judged as good in themselves because the motivation for doing what one does is an important gauge if such acts are true (*kagandahang-loob*). Here, reference to the implicit reason of an explicit deed points to consistency and integrative character being considered highly in “*pagdama ng kagandahang-loob*” (integrative sensing of God’s love).

Presenting Jesus as the fullness of God’s *kagandahang-loob* (definitive fulfilment of God’s love) to Filipinos would help them understand better the ethical implications of discipleship in Christ. There is no need to explain lengthily or present logical discourses just so they would grasp what it means to be a Christian because we are using a concrete standard of living humanly in the Spirit of Jesus which is familiar to them. For Newman, Jesus is the incarnation of God’s love. He is our model and norm of real assent to God because his whole person and life is a reflection of God. Through his love highlighted on his sacrificial death, we are justified before the Lord. It is therefore our love for Christ that we came to believe and follow him like a sheep follows its shepherd.⁹⁹

Findings and Summary Conclusion

The Filipino “*pandama*” has found parallel elements in Newman’s theology of faith. These three elements, namely faith as felt experience, illumined by reason and as praxis of love, spell out the two traditions’ attempt at integrating all the aspects of our faith as humans. Both agree that faith is not assent to truths taught by authorities of the Church who considered the Neo-scholastic theology as immutable and absolute. Emphasis on faith as starting from a felt experience of God who reveals Self through the conscience of every person and the created world may be gleaned from the comparisons

⁹⁸A more in-depth explanation of *kagandahang-loob* may be gleaned from Jose de Mesa, *Kapag namayani ang kagandahang loob ng Diyos*, Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 1998; *In Solidarity with the Culture: Studies in Theological Re-rooting*, Quezon City: Mary Hill School of Theology, 1991; and in Rebecca Cacho, “Bakas ng Kagandahang-loob: A Proposed Inculturated Approach to Sacraments (unpublished material, doctoral dissertation) Manila: De La Salle University, 2004.

⁹⁹This is how Newman images Jesus in his relationship with Christians which he elaborated in his University Sermon #12.

done. It is clear that faith does not begin from abstractions (or highly philosophical propositions) but from concrete and practical realities people encounter in life. Preference to what touches the heart and resonates the experiences of people has also been highlighted in both perspectives. This premium placed on the phenomenological and empirical basis of believing is also evident in Vatican II's effort to re-appropriate the faith according to the particular contexts and concrete experiences of the modern period. Its thrust of *aggiornamento* evidently gives premium to the signs of the times in order to make the faith more relevant and intelligible to believers and unbelievers alike.

We observe that in spite of the efforts to move away from the very rationalistic way of theologizing, there was no attempt at romanticizing faith or reducing it to a mere emotional phenomenon. In fact, the illative sense of Newman and the knowing through feeling of Filipino "*pandama*" agree that all humans are by nature rational. Thus, people are not only feeling individuals but are also thinking beings who spontaneously use implicit reasoning, assessment and judgment upon the realities they experience. All such experiences are interpreted because there is a natural tendency to discern or reflect upon what one encounters. Though the process of reasoning may not be clearly enunciated by firm evidences, that does not imply that faith is irrational. There is really no conflict between our feeling and thinking. Both are integrated in one's valuation of things perceived because all experiences are interpreted spontaneously by people.

For Newman, real assent is manifested in one's way of life because faith leads us to act upon what we believe in. He insists that faith is a principle of action, what one feels (through one's conscience) and thinks about excite our imagination and move us to a personal commitment to the intelligent Being who invites us to a relationship of life and love, that is, to live and love as Christ lived and loved. To be a person of "*kagandahang-loob*" then, is to live our faith in the context of love. It calls our attention to the norm of true love, the incarnate Word of God (Logos), Christ our loving saviour. Acts of faith are truly virtuous and holy when they are deeds that reflect a good knowledge of one's beliefs perfected by a right state of the heart. Central to Newman's theology is the primacy of love over faith. This is what would perfect and safeguard it from immoral values that could easily separate us from our ultimate goal:

communion with God. Faith is important but it is love that brings it to excellence so that our efforts and struggles would truly reflect the character of the God of love (*ang Diyos ng kagandahang-loob*).

Moreover, Newman's theology responded to the questions and issues of his time, something we should take seriously now as we do our theologies and speak the Gospel to people placed under our care. Educators who facilitate the understanding of the Christian faith should consider the contexts and cultures of people. The Gospel remains but its expressions must change and the paradigms used must shift if we are aiming at more effective evangelization. Indeed, each new age poses a challenge we need to respond to in the light of God's revelation fully given in Jesus Christ. Like Newman, we need to explore the riches of the Gospel and the contexts of the present age. We cannot discount such wisdom which he has shown us in his writings.