

## DEMOCRACY CAUGHT BETWEEN READINESS TO SERVE AND EAGERNESS TO DOMINATE

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### **Abstract**

Today's political structures arise from early tribal traditions that promoted an accountable and responsible leadership, which ruled by the norms of ordinary good sense, truthfulness and happy relationship. Unfortunately, an eagerness to dominate has often warped the natural instinct in the human being to commit one's energies for the common good. It can be held in check only by arousing a sense of responsibility in citizens and strengthening their sense of co-belonging. Today even existing democracies are in danger where global business magnates and the ruling cliques are in close alliance. Majoritarian democracies are becoming oppressive of the minorities. Institutions of democracy are being abused for the interests of the dominant groups. Truth is being marginalized. Restoration of truth and re-building of relationships based on 'good sense' will revive the values of responsibility and accountability. If there is the need of reform of laws and structures within democracy, there is equally need of renewal of values and healing of relationships. Awakening of the sense of co-belonging and of public responsibility is the most urgent need.

**Keywords:** Accountability; Co-belonging; Democracy; Majoritarianism; Public Responsibility

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## 1. Leadership Emerged Spontaneously in Society

The earliest human groups that we are aware of lived and moved in clusters of families, clans and tribes. To survive and prosper together as bands and communities, they needed some sort of guidance from competent individuals and acceptable personalities who could propose goals, create enthusiasm and rally energies towards specific achievements. What they exercised in community was 'authority' rather than 'power' as it is defined today. They had moral weight among their people, because it was evident to everyone that they were committed to the common good. They were on the one hand interpreters of their community's mind and inspirers of their colleagues. As they ensured the participation of all in their common planning, they stirred energy in the heart of every individual in a common endeavour. And they succeeded.

But success often leads the prime movers of daring ventures to an inflated concept of their importance. They seek to set themselves at another level in their self-ranking, claims and pretensions. Gideon was tempted, but he resisted (Jud 8:22-27). From their original commitment to serve their community, they move on to an eagerness to dominate. As long as they are able to ensure success to their followers, they receive wide acclaim, which, however, grows feebler as they begin taking more and more advantage of their people. Finally, there comes the moment of their rejection. Saul was rejected. The moral weight he had acquired among his people was damaged by his wanton *misuse of power*. Alexander died before the same could happen to him. Caesar ended badly. For, as Lord Acton said, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." When an eagerness to 'dominate' marginalizes a leader's readiness to 'serve' the interests of the community, there is a *rejection in people's mind* even before it is effected.

## 2. Community Leadership to Political Leadership

As we have seen, leadership and guidance were required in human society from the earliest stages of its existence, but *political power* developed in communities only gradually. It was primarily to ward off dangers, but also to achieve something new, like occupying wider spaces or moving on to distant lands. In cases of a great external threat, certain gifted individuals were given unlimited power for as long as the emergency lasted: Israelites had their judges, Greeks their tyrants.

Romans *elected dictators* when they were hard-pressed by enemies like Hannibal. But they were always afraid of the abuse of power; so much so that when they chose their consuls, they elected two, so that

one could control the other. Modern democracy would divide powers in the same manner, Legislative, Executive and Judiciary so that one instrument of power could moderate the excesses of the other. In ancient Rome, offices were time-bound. And yet, in later Roman history, leaders like Sulla, Pompey or Caesar over-stayed their term and abused power. An eagerness to dominate is manifest in every era.

Francis Fukuyama of Stanford University, in his *Origins of the Political Order*, quoting Tacitus, says that kings of the German tribes had no arbitrary powers, they led by example, fighting in the front line.<sup>1</sup> The leader gained moral ascendancy making evident his strength, intelligence and trustworthiness. Moreover, leadership moved from one person to another according to performance.<sup>2</sup> Caesar describes how the Gauls *elected a chief* to lead a confederation of tribes.<sup>3</sup> The Greeks did the same.

In certain contexts, ambitious tribesmen would choose an equally ambitious leader who had the ability to realize for them their passionate desire of expanding their territory. One could think of Genghis Khan the Mongol, or Attila the Hun. Whatever be the limitations of tribal structures, later political institutions were built on them. The leadership of Saul and David was built on tribal traditions. However, the Israelites *chose to have a king* to be like the other nations, who would lead them out “into war” and fight their battles (1 Sam 8:19).

### 3. Chiefdoms Turn into Kingdoms

In Rome, there was a gradual concentration of power in the hands of more assertive leaders until Augustus Caesar *took all power* into his hands in 27 BC. The republican structures continued to function but had no effective power. In China too, the Zhou kings exercised only limited power.<sup>4</sup> Then came the *Qins who unified China* and imposed a rigid administration. So it happened in China that a Strong State emerged before the Rule of Law, unlike in Europe, which greatly determined Chinese political order to our own days.<sup>5</sup>

A Buddhist source says that, as private property arose in society and people were divided into classes, there arose several evils like theft, murder, and adultery. People needed someone to keep order in society and ensure security of life and property. Thus, *there arose the*

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<sup>1</sup>Francis Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 2012, 76.

<sup>2</sup>Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, 54.

<sup>3</sup>Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, 72.

<sup>4</sup>Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, 107.

<sup>5</sup>Francis Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay*, London: Profile Books, 2015, 12.

ruler who could guarantee what the people wanted.<sup>6</sup> There were other theories too about the origin of the state. In modern times, Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and others proposed the *Social Contract theory*.

In any case, once the state came into existence, the responsibility for security moved from kin loyalty to the state, army and police, who in turn ensured property ownership to individuals. They were guided by *customary laws* which gradually *came to be written* (by Hammurabi in Babylon, Lycurgus in Sparta, Solon at Athens) and accepted as binding. Power thus came to be embedded in institutions.

#### **4. The Concept of Accountability, Invocation of the Common Law, Gradual Transition to Democracy**

When the barons confronted King John at Runnymede in 1215 and imposed the *Magna Carta* limiting his power, they claimed to act as the representatives of the community. However inadequate the provisions of the document, it *called for accountability* and has remained a foundational charter in English history and English claims to civil liberties. “No taxation without representation” would echo down the centuries.<sup>7</sup> Such claims were based on the ‘*Common Law*’ to which could trace back its precedents to ancient Anglo-Saxon legal traditions, which consequently enjoyed high respectability.<sup>8</sup>

However, accountability in the broader sense is much more than mere legal legitimacy or control over the finances; it means ensuring that decisions made and actions undertaken are for the *common good*. The area of public responsibility had to be all-embracing.

#### **5. The Centrality of the Rule of Law for the Freedom of Citizens and of Free Enterprise**

In Europe, during medieval times, kings enjoyed limited powers and the Catholic Church exercised a healthy influence on social thinking. She planted a *deep respect for the Rule of Law* into society’s self-consciousness,<sup>9</sup> which would remain as an asset even to the days of modern secularised democracies.

The Rule of Law referred primarily to security of persons, which allowed the trading classes, for example, to move around to do business. It offered protection to *all citizens in equal measure* and safeguarded their interests against abuse of state power and threat

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<sup>6</sup>Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, 158.

<sup>7</sup>Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, 332.

<sup>8</sup>Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, 322.

<sup>9</sup>Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, 256.

from others.<sup>10</sup> If the government interfered unpredictably in private financial transactions, no entrepreneur would take risk, no business could thrive.<sup>11</sup>

The development of capitalist economy, to some extent Modernity itself, was heavily dependent on the Rule of Law. The economies of many Third World Democracies are suffering due to weak Rule of Law, that is, poor security, high levels of crime, feeble judiciary, *insecure property rights*, meddling by the rich and the powerful, and interference from the government. When we speak of criminality in politics in India, it has reference to weak/biased Rule of Law.

## **6. Development of the Parliament, Call to Equality, Education to Moral Values**

The central mechanism of accountability, the parliament, evolved out of the feudal institutions of Cortes, Diet, sovereign court, zemskiy sobor, or Parliament, in early days mostly composed of nobility.<sup>12</sup> It would undergo several revolutions before it took the present form. Even so, it differs from country to country. But the ideas related to such an institution would guide the *evolution of democracy*.

The document drafted by Thomas Jefferson at the Declaration of Independence of America in 1776 stated: “*All men are created equal.*” That was a bold statement. It had its foundations in Christianity. Next step forward was taken in France with the Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen in 1789 which affirmed the universality of human rights based on the laws of nature.<sup>13</sup> Such concepts would be translated into law in the Civil Code that Napoleon adopted in 1804. Government decisions could no more be arbitrary, they had to be transparent.

Chinese society had been shaped by Confucius’ teaching on *moral values*. His idea that a ruler ought to rule in the interest of the people introduced a principle of accountability into his society, not by structure, but by the force of the emperor’s *moral sense*.<sup>14</sup> In India, Brahmins played a role similar to what Church leaders did in the West, acting as philosopher-guides.<sup>15</sup> Such precedents gave respectability to the concept of the Rule of Law in these regions. Indian kings were inspired by their sense of duty (Raj Dharma). Asoka’ Edict VI affirmed that his aim was to work for the *welfare of the whole world*. Edict VII urged a sense of *duty*.

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<sup>10</sup>Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, 250.

<sup>11</sup>Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, 248, 365.

<sup>12</sup>Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay*, 12.

<sup>13</sup>Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay*, 15.

<sup>14</sup>Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, 133.

<sup>15</sup>Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, 159.

## 7. Shaky Democracies Produce Undemocratic Leaders

After the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 there was a rush for democratic structures in most developing countries. But with the beginning of the new millennium a gradual change was noticeable. There was general *disappointment with democracy* in lands where it was failing to make an effective start: where, for example, the Rule of Law had not taken roots, or where tribal/community/family loyalties prevailed over democratic institutions, or where erstwhile Communist government had failed to plant a sense of civic responsibility in citizens.

But what shocked everyone were the new trends among huge sections of citizens both in EU and US after the Economic Crisis of 2008-9. There was intense questioning of the worth of democracy from the way it was functioning. Ordinary *citizens felt helpless* before the ruling elite who seemed to be in close alliance with cash-hungry Global Corporates and Bank Barons, who were totally unconcerned about the anxieties of the poor in their home countries, like their loss of job, insecurity of housing, stagnating wages, inability to influence decision-making.

The election of Donald Trump in 2016 was not so much an approval of his ways and ideas as a rejection of a political clique that dished out platitudes but were playing to the tune of global potentates. Elected members were no more the policy makers; the so-called “technical experts” made the real decisions. The ruling elite, including media men, had to accommodate to the *demands of corporate giants*, billionaire donors, lobbyists (e.g. that arms producers), and self-perpetuating experts...In India, to the High Command of the cultural nationalists, as a majoritarian regime held power here. Institutions in democracies were not functioning democratically.

No wonder that even long-established democracies have thrown up leaders whose “statements and actions are totally at odds with democratic ideals,” who degrade political discourse, threaten to lock up people, declare political critics as enemies of the society, and nurture “*paranoid bigotry*.”<sup>16</sup> The collective anger is against the politico-economic elite who want to concentrate the fortunes of the nation into their hands. If democracy cannot help them to change the situation, they are ready to surrender to an All Powerful Strong Man who will get it done. That is what has happened. Democracies have lost control over themselves.

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<sup>16</sup>Madeleine Albright, *Fascism: A Warning*, London: HarperCollins, 2018, 5.

## 8. Stumbling Democracies Kick up Autocrats who Learn from Each Other

It is good to look back. The history of the emergence of Fascism is chilling. Mussolini took advantage of a similar situation of discontentment “promising all things.” His initial priority was Good Government, like Modiji’s. He improved infrastructure, upgraded health benefits, organized children’s camps. But then, he went on to *organize fighting squads* to beat up and kill opponents.<sup>17</sup> Initially, the police with Fascist sympathies closed an eye, as the Indian police have often done during a cow-related mob-lynching, or communal riots. Finally, Mussolini came into his own: he hastily abolished all competing political parties, *eliminated freedom of the press*, neutered the labour movement, and directly appointed the municipal officials.<sup>18</sup> Do these measures sound familiar?

Asked about his next programme Mussolini roared, “It is to break the bones of the democrats...”<sup>19</sup> He wanted the mild Italians to “horrify the world by their aggressiveness.”<sup>20</sup> Vinayak Savarkar was a faithful follower of Mussolini: military uniforms, menacing pose, tempestuous tones. He manifested the same wrath: “*Militarize Hindudom!*” He knew that Indians were a mild-natured people. Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt say in their book *How Democracies Die*, “Demagogues attack their critics in harsh and provocative terms—as enemies, as subversives, and even as terrorists.”<sup>21</sup> Are similar tones noticeable in India today?

Hitler took his country one step ahead of Mussolini’s. His *Mein Kampf* is a best seller in India. Similar ideas are spreading worldwide. A recent study of the University of Gothenburg, Sweden calls the new trend the “*Third wave of autocratization*,” affecting Brazil, US, India, Hungary, Poland, Russia and others.<sup>22</sup> Sham elections merely serve as an eyewash. Democratic values and traditions are downgraded. The quality of parliamentary debate has plummeted. *Emotions decide issues*.

## 9. Total Collapse of Political Morality

An emotion-led situation throws up *unreliable “mavericks”* as leaders, who milk the system for narrow interests.<sup>23</sup> Their pampered

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<sup>17</sup>Albright, *Fascism: A Warning*, 20.

<sup>18</sup>Albright, *Fascism: A Warning*, 24.

<sup>19</sup>Albright, *Fascism: A Warning*, 21.

<sup>20</sup>Albright, *Fascism: A Warning*, 47.

<sup>21</sup>Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, New York: Crown (Penguin), 2018, 75.

<sup>22</sup>*Telegraph*, 26-5-20.

<sup>23</sup>McCall Rosenbluth and Ian Shapiro, *Responsible Parties: Saving Democracy from Itself*, New Haven: Yale University, 2018, 10.

supporters surrender to them unconditionally, expecting *no accountability*.<sup>24</sup> Look at Putin, Orban, Erdogan, or Duterte and their supporters. They rule the land by decrees (Hungary) and ordinances (India). The ritual of election continues to take place, but greatly manipulated. Spineless individuals who are gifted in flattering the leader, get selected as candidates. Such politicians, consequently, are clueless about national needs or social urgencies. They are on a “perpetual” election campaign, says Francis Lee, fund-raising on the one side, and favour-distributing on the other. There is no room left for nation-building policies.<sup>25</sup>

All that the ruling bunch tries to do is to ensure an “artificial boom” in the election year to win votes.<sup>26</sup> In India, parties that claim to be fighting corruption are found distributing bundles of cash and encouraging floor-crossing. *Criminal gangs* are used for terrorising opponents, capturing booths, ensuring victories. They remain on as the long arm of respective parties.

When money alone matters, a member’s role in the party is decided by his/her *fund-raising abilities*, not by his thinking power nor the quality of his social concern or national commitment. Consequently, the party’s ability to contribute to the social good declines, and soon enough short-term advantages to the party and its crafty leaders replace the long-term good of the nation.<sup>27</sup> Sensational programmes for immediate popularity win prominence. Myopic agendas develop. Weak opposition parties remain fragmented, fractious, partisan, ideology-less, and yet power-hungry.

According to Levitsky and Ziblatt, upstart dictators who seek to *terrorise their opponents*, systematically plan tax-raids against rival politicians, independent businesses, critical media outlets, and investigating NGOs. The police are given instructions to keep harassing all opponents.<sup>28</sup> Dissenting officials are replaced; pro-government thugs are promoted.<sup>29</sup> Libel or defamation suits are introduced against critics.<sup>30</sup> Media men are hunted down. The timid go for self-censorship.<sup>31</sup> Truth is silenced, propaganda takes over. Suddenly the world is awakened to the truth that Francisco de Goya’s masterpiece communicated: “Truth Has Died!”

<sup>24</sup>Rosenbluth and Shapiro, *Responsible Parties: Saving Democracy from Itself*, 20.

<sup>25</sup>Rosenbluth and Shapiro, *Responsible Parties: Saving Democracy from Itself*, 248.

<sup>26</sup>Yascha Mounk, *The People Vs. Democracy*, Harvard University Press, 2018, 60.

<sup>27</sup>Rosenbluth and Shapiro, *Responsible Parties: Saving Democracy from Itself*, 21.

<sup>28</sup>Levitsky and Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, 78.

<sup>29</sup>Levitsky and Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, 79.

<sup>30</sup>Levitsky and Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, 83.

<sup>31</sup>Levitsky and Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die*, 84.



## 10. “The Truth will Set You Free” (Jn 8:32)

It is in this context that we understand the power contained in Jesus’ words, “The Truth will set you free” (Jn 8:32). Pope John Paul II told Henry Kissinger, “The Church is in the business of truth.”<sup>32</sup> A right *understanding of the ‘true’ state of affairs* in a particular situation alone can enable a citizen to safeguard the interests of democracy and work for the common good. The agents of deceptive propaganda little realize that their efforts are self-defeating. Dostoevsky says, “People who lie to themselves and listen to their own lie come to such a pass that they cannot distinguish the truth within them, or around them, and so lose all respect for themselves and for others” (The Brothers Karamazov, II, 2). The truth within oneself determines everything. Jesus alone could say, “I am the truth” (Jn 14:6).

Unfortunately, a number of groups that set up social media networks to correct the public media began creating their own truths, spreading their own prejudices, stereotyping other communities, popularizing fake news, spreading anxiety, hatred, anger and frustration in society. *Truth alone will safeguard democracy.*

## 11. “What is Truth?” Asked Pilate (Jn 18:38), and Turned Away

What many people in leadership positions fear most of all today is the “truth.” To begin with, they lack personal authenticity. Next, more money is spent on ‘*nationalist propaganda*’ than education itself. Their handouts are full of sensational reports, unverified statistics, unsupported claims, unrealizable promises, unjustifiable allegations, unreliable accounts. They believe that power can create its own truth. What they want is not assent, but conformity. Those who question, are not sceptics, but enemies. Contention today, clearly, is between Truth and Power. Power unfortunately has come to mean untruth in contexts.

Hannah Arendt describes in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* the ideal subjects of totalitarianism: “People for whom the distinction between fact and fiction and the distinction between true and false no longer exist.”<sup>33</sup> Radical nationalism and the hatred of others are daily growing.<sup>34</sup> In multicultural societies it takes the form of the *tyranny of the dominant community*—majoritarian domination. Emmanuel Macron of France recently made a clear distinction between nationalism and patriotism, as Trump sat listening.

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<sup>32</sup>George Weigel, *The End and the Beginning—Pope John Paul II*, New York: Doubleday, 2010, 178.

<sup>33</sup>Michiko Kakutani, *The Death of Truth*, New York: Tim Duggan Books, 2018, 11.

<sup>34</sup>Kakutani, *The Death of Truth*, 12.

## 12. "I Was Born and Came into the World for This One Purpose: to Speak about the Truth" (Jn 18:37)

In Jesus' life, though love, justice, and concern for the poor need to be emphasized, his entire mission can be summed up as witnessing to the Truth, as he himself has done (Jn 18:37), Truth in all its fullness. Truth is not merely about precise doctrinal formulation, or in civil society, statistical or factual accuracy. It is also *authenticity, credibility, sincerity of purpose*.

So, we notice Jesus striving to expose the duplicity of the Scribes and Pharisees who frustrate the original purpose for which Sabbath was instituted (Mt 12:1-4), or the tradition of Corban developed (Mt 15:3-9). Warping the benign goals of institutions and social norms as originally conceived reveals a total absence of *sincerity of purpose* and of truthfulness. Jesus appeals to people's ordinary 'good sense' arguing for the legitimacy of David feeding himself with the Temple bread in dire need (Mt 12:3-4) and saving a sheep from a well on a Sabbath day (Mt 12:11-12). On another occasion he expressed his extreme displeasure that the Temple is turned into a commercial centre (Mt 21:12-13). Distortion of purposes perverts truth.

Taking the same message to the political scene today, there ought to be similar concern when the judiciary is reconstituted to serve a partisan purpose, when the Central Bureau of Enquiry is made subservient to the political elite, when universities are turned into propaganda instruments, when the army is made to shed its neutral identity, and when the freedom of the media is taken away. It clearly stands against '*Good Sense*': which means, political structures are re-fashioned against reason, decency, *dignity, rectitude, truth*.

## 13. Inauthenticity is Untruth

Authenticity is to be ensured most of all in one's identity. "To thy own self be true," prompts Shakespeare (Hamlet). Jesus ridicules the claim of some Jews to be children of Abraham when their lifestyles do not justify such pretensions (Mt 3:9). What is very central to his message is that *uprightness should be from within* (Mt 5:27-28: 12:33-35; Mt 23:25). He consistently stood against display of virtue, empty show, claims to shallow greatness (Mt 6:16-18; 7:5; 15:18-20: 23:13-28). Any distance between the reality and pretended claims was a horror to him. On the contrary, he respected every norm of the inherited code that was true to its original meaning. He submits to baptism (Mt 3:15), pays taxes (Mt 17:25-27), asks dues to be paid to the priests (Mt 8:3-4), to give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar (Mt 22:21). His mission was to call Israel's laws, institutions and

traditions to their original purpose. However, he did not want even the smallest detail among them to disappear until they had completely fulfilled their original intent (Mt 5:17–18).

Impliedly there is an invitation to meaningful reform. New wine must be poured into new fresh wineskins (Mk 2:21). Let us bring the message to the context of our discussions. Francis Fukuyama in his *Political Order and Political Decay* eloquently argues that several valuable institutions that served a beneficent purpose in earlier times, today stand in *need of reform* and correctives. He particularly draws our attention to the abuse of power by bank management, points to certain economists' intellectual rigidity, their lobbying clout in the political field and the authoritarian inclinations of many of the leaders.<sup>35</sup> Even beneficent political institutions can be used to block the common good, e.g. checks and balances can be used to block progressive action,<sup>36</sup> there can be cases of unmerited subsidies,<sup>37</sup> anti-corruption cells may turn venal. Institutions, laws, and processes need to be reformed and healed.

#### **14. A Sense of Responsibility must be Awakened**

Step by step, a sense of responsibility must be awakened in civil society, in diverse ways to attend to diverse needs. Left parties, for example, if they are responsible, will attend to business and consumer interests as well. And similarly, Rightists will ensure labour protection, health and social insurance.<sup>38</sup> In India, majority-dominated parties will attend to the anxieties of the minorities; and parties on which minorities have influence will be sensitive to the needs of the majority. Mutual accusations like 'minority-appeasing' from one side, and 'radical fundamentalism' on the other can be mellowed. Persons with long-term vision like Hans Küng thought that fundamentalism cannot be taken on frontally, but should be *handled with understanding* and empathy, removing conditions that had caused it to rise.<sup>39</sup>

Similarly, conscientious political parties must take responsibility for the consequences of what they do beyond the next election. Ultimately it is the nation that must win, not parties for their own benefit. Hence, parties should work together for society's long-term benefit.<sup>40</sup> If the Opposition Party has the same sense of responsibility,

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<sup>35</sup>Fukuyama, *Political Order and Political Decay*, 4–6.

<sup>36</sup>Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, 251.

<sup>37</sup>Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, 28.

<sup>38</sup>Rosenbluth and Shapiro, *Responsible Parties: Saving Democracy from Itself*, 32.

<sup>39</sup>Hans Küng, Hans, *A Global Ethic for Global Politics and Economics*, London: SCM Press Ltd, 1997, 147.

<sup>40</sup>Rosenbluth and Shapiro, *Responsible Parties: Saving Democracy from Itself*, 250.

they will offer *intelligent and well-studied criticism*, and not disrupt parliamentary proceedings nor have recourse to unruly behaviour to press their point. They remain *principled and dignified*.<sup>41</sup> They will never block a worthwhile proposal merely to gain political advantage.<sup>42</sup> No responsible party will make a secret deal with the business-community for mutual advantage and “externalize the costs onto others,” e.g. onto the consumers and the general public.<sup>43</sup> They will go by data that are objective, reliable and scientifically provable, not by obscurantist ideas or communal bias.

### **15. A Sense of Social Responsibility in the Gospel**

Pope Francis does not want his Church to be inward looking, but “going out” to where the social needs are the greatest, even unto the extreme periphery. He hails the dedication of nurses, teachers, doctors, and ‘politicians with a soul.’<sup>44</sup> The *Gospel must move to the middle of events and processes* and make institutions within democracies serve their original purposes. Jesus wanted his followers to be effective forces in society when he called them to become fishers of men (Mt 4:19). He desired that they be transforming agents in the social order, being the salt of the earth and light to the world, Mt 5:13–14. Wherever the Christian community confined its energy merely to its inner concerns, it failed to preserve an ongoing sense of mission to “all world” and “the whole of creation” (Mk 16:15), which means, to every dimension of human activity and cosmic processes.

On the contrary, what Jesus wanted from his disciples was to come into the wider world carefully studying the social forces at work, interpreting the signs of the times (Mt 16:2–3). He stood for *careful planning* so that what they do would have abiding consequence, house built on rock (Mt 7:24–27). He wanted them to give priority to the weaker members in society who were exploited (Mt 9:36–37). Their mission was to continue the work he had begun to bring justice where it was absent (Mt 12:20–21). In this case, they were to be ready to pay the last price, as he himself did, laying down his life (Mt 16:21).

### **16. “Go and Bear Much Fruit, Fruit that Endures” (Jn 15:16) for the Welfare of the World**

No wonder Jesus asked his disciples to be prepared to face forces much stronger than them, going as sheep among wolves (Mt 10:16–

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<sup>41</sup>Rosenbluth and Shapiro, *Responsible Parties: Saving Democracy from Itself*, 74.

<sup>42</sup>Rosenbluth and Shapiro, *Responsible Parties: Saving Democracy from Itself*, 37.

<sup>43</sup>Rosenbluth and Shapiro, *Responsible Parties: Saving Democracy from Itself*, 105.

<sup>44</sup>Austen Ivereigh, *The Great Reformer*, London: Allen & Unwin, 2014, 212.

18). Even family members may turn opponents (Mt 10:34–36). He asked them to develop their natural alertness, becoming *intelligent as serpents* (Mt 10:16–18). This is a quality so rarely emphasized in Christian strategic planning. Their defence will be their own uprightness, and fidelity to truth, meaning what they say, just yes and no (Mt 5:37), and their transparency like that of children (Mt 18:3–5). People in more advantaged position may make tempting offers, fake promises, holding out the wealth of the world before them (Mt 4:8–9). But people ultimately will judge them by the fruits they bear, as a good tree is judged (Mt 7:15–20).

In this context of aiming at fruitfulness in all that we do, Teilhard de Chardin's vision seems to be most relevant. He is convinced that human effort for betterment is part of the cosmic design. Every person is a co-creator. A human being's desire for progress is the dynamism propelling the world forward. One shapes the future, labouring hard and pressing ahead. Every person is a co-creator, architect of his own destiny.<sup>45</sup> To make one's talents *bear fruit, therefore, is a Christian duty*. The person who works hard is a great renouncer. He/she goes beyond himself leaving behind his achievements.<sup>46</sup>

Jesus set an example of respecting even his opponents, betrayer (Mt 26:25), denier (Lk 22:60–62). He asked his followers to learn even from those who did not belong to their community (the Good Samaritan, Lk 29–37; 17:16). He showed how even corrupt officials can change (Zacchaeus Lk 19:1–9). In the final analysis, all people of good will are to be treated as one's brothers and sisters (Mt 12:48–50). For, *we all belong to each other*.

## **17. The Heart of Democracy: A Sense of Co-belonging Which Prompts the Sense of Responsibility**

Daniel Goleman writing the biography of the Dalai Lama, quotes Martin Luther King, "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Democracy takes its origins in the recognition of co-belonging, in the primitive tribal units or in the globalized world. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."<sup>47</sup> That is why the Dalai Lama did not want his concept of compassion to be an idle ineffectual sentiment. It must become a dynamic force in a democratic society emerging as "Muscular compassion" transforming corruption and bias into cooperative

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<sup>45</sup>Paul Maroky, *Convergence*, Kottayam: St Thomas Apostolic Seminary, 1981, 50.

<sup>46</sup>Maroky, *Convergence*, 53.

<sup>47</sup>Daniel Goleman, *A Force for Good*, London: Bloomsbury, 2015, 5.

social construction. It gives a new orientation to economics, politics, and science; brings transparency, fairness, and accountability to stock markets, elections and media coverage. Compassionate economy is as eager to distribute as to produce, attending specially to the neediest and to their dignity, and to heal the planet; to resolve ethnic conflicts, and educate the heart.<sup>48</sup> Very Christian in content.

Pope Francis calls “Politics...a lofty vocation” (EG 205). If we cultivate a sense belonging, you will want to bring healing to the electoral system, e.g. right choice of candidates, violence-free approach to the booths, untampered counting processes. Our sense of responsibility will urge us demand decorum and purposefulness during assembly discussions from our representatives and polarisations resolved. Chiara Lubich says, “There is a true political vocation” which prompts one to make resources available to meet actual needs, to raise relevant questions and search for answers, to engage in constructive criticism, and respect one’s political opponents.<sup>49</sup> This precisely is democracy in real life. She wanted her movement to be a force for good, in the streets, homes, schools, workplace, offices, and front lines.<sup>50</sup>

Our very thoughts count. Pope John Paul II was “a man whose thought mattered, even to those who opposed it and opposed the Church he led.”<sup>51</sup> He understood that the mission of the Church was to foster a moral passion for what is right in the world’s diverse contexts. “He wanted the Church to be a voice for reason and dialogue in a season of irrationality and cacophony.”<sup>52</sup> The eagerness to dominate can be restrained and a readiness to serve can be revived. Yes, democracy can be made fully alive in our own days to serve the cause of humanity.

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<sup>48</sup>Goleman, *A Force for Good*, 19.

<sup>49</sup>Chiara Lubich, *Essential Writings*, London: New City Press, 2012, 254-256.

<sup>50</sup>Lubich, *Essential Writings*, 322.

<sup>51</sup>Weigel, *The End and the Beginning*, 3.

<sup>52</sup>Weigel, *The End and the Beginning*, 281.