

LAITY'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE CHURCH: AN ANALYSIS THROUGH KAROL JÓZEF WOJTYŁA'S THEOLOGY AND GABRIEL MARCEL'S PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract: *This study sought to analyze laity's involvement in the Church through Karol Wojtyla's theology and Gabriel Marcel's philosophy. To facilitate the content of the paper, this work asked these questions: 1.) What is Gabriel Marcel's philosophy of communion in relation to the laity's involvement in the Church? 2.) What is Karol Wojtyla's notion of participation in relation to the laity's involvement in the Church? 3.) What are the implications of the analysis of the Laity's involvement in the Church, by the use of Wojtyla's notion of participation and Marcel's philosophy of communion?*

In the course of the presentation, the deep discussion of Karol Wojtyla's theory of participation and its relation to the laity's involvement in the Church was discussed where his definition of what is a laity and his idea about the duties of the lay faithful in the Church were presented. Accordingly, kingly, priestly and prophetic mission encompasses the duties of the laity. It also presented the discussion on Gabriel Marcel's philosophy of communion in relation to the laity's involvement in the Church. It further exposed Marcel's concept of communion and how it is achieved. Encounter, availability, presence, and engagement towards other human beings were pointed out as the ways for achievement.

The relationships found in the view of Wojtyla and Marcel's laity's participation in the Church were presented. Along with the presentation, it was found out that both philosophies delved on the understanding of human person as it existentially relates with the other people. Thus, this led to the presentation of the analysis and the implications on Wojtyla and Marcel's view on lay's participation in the Church. It further displayed how both philosophers successfully presented their thoughts on the said matter. It was discovered that Wojtyla is not forgetful in his devotion to the Divine given the fact that the end purpose of his notion of laity's Participation credits the thought that it is God whom man is relating to.

Moreover, Wojtyla's notion of participation further implied that such relating with others would lead one to the fulfillment and satisfaction of his quest for a life with an intervention of God. Marcel on the other hand with his philosophy of communion among laity, implied the thought that every man is a man of encounter. With much consideration

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of Marcel's thought on this matter, he emphasized that every man is born for others. Man does not live by just simply relating with the other but by making it true that such existence matters.

Field of Research: *Laity, Theory of Participation, Lay Faithful, kingly mission, priestly mission, prophetic mission.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The term "lay" comes from the Greek word *laikos*, which means, "people" or "being to the people". But the term "lay" later on, underwent some changes in meaning because it came to be used in the political and secular spheres. The said changes on the term is greatly given a strong statement in an article published in *Los Angeles Times*, May 10, 1986 entitled *Time for Laity to Be in Political Forefront: Filipino Prelate Curbs Church's Activism* where Cardinal Sin strongly emphasized that in the Philippines, "clergy in the past had been forced to enter spheres strictly belonging to the laity because of the repressive policies of the old order."

In order to establish the identity of the lay faithful in the Church, there is a need to examine how the Church defines a lay person. According to Aviyor (2009), the Church defines "lay faithful as persons who are baptized into the Church who have a secular quality and whose functions in the Church differ from those who are ordained."

Furthermore, the Church has a long history with regard to the participation of the "lay faithful"; "from the very beginning of the Church, lay faithful participated in ecclesial life and contributed immensely to the mission of the Church" (Aviyor, 2009). Since the earliest Church records there were already active people in the Church who had been participating in its activities but had not been named. Nowadays however, those who are baptized into the Church are considered de-facto lay faithful. With this thought, Boseto (1987) explained the sure difference of ordained and non-ordained laity. He said that there are many ministries for all people of God, but ordained ministers are ordained for the ministry of administering sacraments and preaching the pure words of God. Therefore, the ordained minister, by virtue of his training and experience, does have a particular expertise. But there are other areas where the expertise rests with the laity, and where the ordained minister is a lay person.

The term lay faithful is understood to mean all the faithful except those in Holy Orders and those who belong to a religious state sanctioned by the Church. They are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ. They carry out their own part in the mission of the whole Christian people with the respect to the Church and the world (John Paul II, 2014). Pius XII once stated: "The Faithful, more precisely the lay faithful, find themselves on the front

lines of the Church's life; for them the Church is the animating principle for human society. Therefore, they in particular, ought to have an ever-clearer consciousness not only of belonging to the Church, but of being the Church, that is to say, the community of the faithful on earth under the leadership of the Pope, the head of all, and of the Bishops in communion with him. These are the Church" (Pius XII, 1946).

According to Rev. Fr. Roy Cimagala in his article published on February 10, 2014, this year is the year of the Laity in the Catholic Church declared by our bishops. In the pastoral letter of exhortation, they appealed to the laity to be more aware of their duty and responsibility in the Church and in our country and not to feel that they are like secondary citizens in the Church. The thought of having the laity as secondary citizens made them ask themselves why do they need to participate. Thus, it has become a real issue and the reason why other lay faithful slowly become inactive, and later on fall into their inconsistencies in their service.

In evaluating issues of the participation of the laity in the Church, philosophers who had given time and consideration to the said matter will be included in the discussion. The main philosophers who are greatly important to this study are Karol Wojtyła and Gabriel Marcel.

Thus, this study will provide answers to questions more specifically on the matter of the full participation of the Laity in the context of Wojtyła's notion of participation and Marcel's philosophy of communion.

This research seeks to analyze laity's involvement in the Church through Karol Wojtyła's theology and Gabriel Marcel's philosophy. This study seeks to answer the following questions: What is Karol Wojtyła's notion of participation in relation to the laity's involvement in the Church? What is Gabriel Marcel's philosophy of communion in relation to the laity's involvement in the Church? What are the implications and the analysis of the Laity's involvement in the Church, by the use of Wojtyła's notion of participation and Marcel's philosophy of communion?

2. METHODS

This study, qualitative in nature used the document and discourse analysis method. Document analysis is a social research method which is used as a tool for obtaining relevant documentary evidence to support and validate facts stated in a research, especially during the chapter of literature review (Howie, 2013). This method includes analytic reading and review of many written materials. It is helpful to the researcher in extracting the relevant portions that can be deemed as statements of facts to validate individual research objectives.

On the other hand, the researcher also used the discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is the analysis of spoken and written language as it is used to enact social and cultural perspectives and identities (Gee, 1999). Basically discourse analysis is concerned with the production of meaning through talk and texts (Gibbs, 2002).

In gathering the data using the document and discourse analysis, the researcher exposed first the document regarding the Laity's involvement in the Church and showed the two ideas of the philosophers, namely Karol Wojtyla and Gabriel Marcel, which support the idea of the involvement of the laity in the Church. On the second part the researcher analyzed their notions and their interpretation on the laity's involvement in the Church. However the researcher only included and selected the ideas of the two philosophers from respective texts that are relevant to the study so as to support and validate facts stated in the research. These texts were respectfully found from books, journals, electronic sources and some were referred to encyclicals, which were written by the philosophers or by other authors if other wise indicated. For instance, in the notion of participation as per Karol Wojtyla, the focus was on how Wojtyla's idea views the involvement of the laity in the Church. On the other hand, Gabriel Marcel's philosophy of communion focuses on appropriate texts that help to present Marcel's view of involvement of the laity in the Church.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Wojtyla's Notion of Participation in Relation to the Laity's Involvement in the Church

This part contains the vital points in Wojtyla's philosophy as a means in analyzing the involvement of the laity in the Church. The following discussion clearly looks into the person's attitude leading towards participation with others that is, participation as viewed in person-to-person relationship. This notion constitutes the idea of Wojtyla as his philosophy on this matter is the center of this inquiry.

Man as a social being, as being with others, is the basic element of Wojtyla's notion of participation. Francisco (1995) stated that participation, in a general concept of Wojtyla, is to take part of something; he clearly emphasized that taking part means being involved with others. This particular idea vividly anchors his thought on what he rightfully calls participation, which has something to do with the role of the laity in the Church, as Wojtyla puts it in his book *ChistifidelesLaici* (2014); laity or lay faithful should actively participate in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission of Christ that is through the collaboration among priests and religious men and women by proclaiming the Word of God, actively participating in the Liturgy and in catechesis. The idea of Wojtyla that man as a social being and

a being 'with' others is supported by Potocki and Tymienieka (1979) who stressed that it is a primary thing to conceive that man lives together with other man and indeed he exists together with other men. It is in the reality and indeed a property of a human being to exist, live, and act with others. The reality that is being meant in here is the society or the community where the others also are present.

Francisco (1995) pointed out that Wojtyła's notion of participation as a property of man means that man tends to participate in the community and that participation signifies two things—participation enables the realization of the community, and the person realizes the personal value of his own act. For this very reason, man practically acts accordingly as it is his property. The idea of a property points out the very fact that such actuation of every man is never dictated in any way as other things do. The more man is exposed the more man does not need to certainly uphold himself as he is directed to do so but rather it is instinctual that man does as the time calls for it. Man recognizes himself in the community and at the same time the community realizes itself through human participation. The value of man's relating with each other forms the significant value of participation and the other values that are formed in it. Wojtyła is very clear and would like to convince everyone that when man does this participation, then it is a sure that man values and learns to value all the more. Wojtyła simply clarifies things over the mere participation because it requires full acknowledgment of the other person as every man comes to relate with each other. Therefore, there can never be an authentic and full participation when there is no full acknowledgment of the other person as it is one of the requirements and considerations of a conscious and full participation.

Thus, participation represents a feature of the person himself, meaning its innermost and homogeneous feature determines that the person existing and acting together with others does so as a person (Potocki & Tymienieka, 1979). Wojtyła emphasizes this point; the property that could not be denied of man. He means the existence of one needs the other one existing so to complete the notion of participation. Wojtyła clearly and strongly proposes the acknowledgment of the other person. This view further points out that it is not what is simply displayed by an individual that his participation is accounted for, but his utmost consideration of the values formed and practically learned and lived out in one's life.

Wojtyła is therefore very right if we consider his thought especially today with our youth. Every youth needs listener to hear their hurt aches, aspiration, dreams or even failures. Without a listener, the youth may be at a loss in life.

Wojtyła asserts that full participation happens when one starts to look into oneself and tries to evaluate the reason of his existence.

Gabriel Marcel's Philosophy of Communion in Relation to the Laity's Involvement in the Church

Esse est co-esse (to exist is to co-exist) summarizes the central scheme of Marcel's communion as pointed out by Miceli (1965). Thus, man's ultimate activity for him to be relevant on earth is to engage one's self to the rest of the being. This leads to Patka's idea (1962) on ontological theme that touches the lived experiences of man. This further supports again on what Marcel stated as man is not a machine and it is pitiless sacrilege to treat *Imago Dei* merely as *factum*. What exactly does it mean for man to be like God? Three qualifications must be made before examining this question further. First, Scripture contains an implicit rather than explicit explanation of the image of God. A definition for *imago Dei* must come from drawing proper inferences from the biblical text, buttressed by careful reflection about the state of the human condition.

Second, a complete understanding of the *imago Dei*'s meaning simply isn't possible because it would require an exhaustive understanding of God's nature (in addition to that of man). Finite creatures by definition cannot comprehend or fully fathom the infinite nature of God; therefore, by necessity people are faced with mystery and limited knowledge.

Third, throughout church history different theological traditions have taken a variety of positions on the exact meaning of the divine image. For example, the three branches of Christendom (Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant) have each emphasized different aspects of the image. All three views have their biblical strengths and weaknesses. However, rightly formulated and integrated, all three positions could reflect the different ways that human beings reflect the image of their Creator (Samples, 2011).

With the given premise, it is therefore but right to certainly look into the consideration that a person's purpose is not to isolate himself but to participate in an intersubjective communion. Gallhafer (1962) points out a certain idea that leads to Marcel's view of intersubjective communion which is when a man is born a person, he shall not remain as is or be in a fetal stage of person because it has ontological bases on the very experience of man leading to a genuine communion. However, to be 'with' is an exalted dimension of being bound up with the dynamic drive for one's existence. Practically speaking, existence in this sense is not a withdrawal or isolating one's self. This is what Micele (1965) strongly believes in the course of understanding intersubjective communion. Therefore, in an intersubjective communion, an individual should show himself to others and give himself to others.

The Analysis and Implications of the Laity's Involvement in the Church, by the Use of Wojtyła's Notion of Participation and Marcel's Philosophy of Communion

Analysis

Wojtyła, in his stand on the Lay Participation in the church clearly manifests a great instance and opportunity of every individual to exercise his relationship with other people. Wojtyła has importantly emphasized the said relationship when he asserts on the very role and purpose of every individual on earth, which is to establish the relationship with others. The establishment is not easy. That is why he reiterated the concept of the "other" in each individual. The possibility of interaction with other human beings concerns a lot in the fulfillment of one's duty. First, such individual according to Wojtyła should be mindful that every individual is endowed with the capacity to relate, but the problem is, not in the full awareness does everyone know and exercise it. Second, Wojtyła believes that such encounter with the "other" expresses the meaning of an individual as a social being. This instance clearly means that a man needs to be with others simply because everyone needs others. The expression of needing others is the center of Wojtyła's view on the Lay Participation. Thus, in relating with others, it is a primary importance that one should acknowledge the "Other" in the other persons so upon doing it, it is not just a mere relating with others but with the "Other" who is God, the end purpose of Wojtyła's notion of Lay Participation. Although many may not be able to recognize it, but the perfect time and the perfect example in the philosophy of Wojtyła should drive an individual to certainly follow his/her role in today's time.

On the other hand, Marcel practically pointed out that for a man to be fully participating with the others, considering the activities he has everyday, is to fall ultimately in engaging himself with the rest of the other beings. Engaging oneself may not be the only thing for a man to do everyday but Marcel strongly pointed out that this is the perfection of his existence on earth. Having related himself or having engaging himself with the rest of the other human beings fulfills what Marcel has been pointing out all throughout in his philosophy, in his notion on the Lay Participation. The word engaging may not be much familiar with the rest of the people. This is the reason why people who may not find themselves relating with others may not become engaging. Therefore, Marcel is pointing out that for man to be ultimately great in existence on earth, he is required to engage himself. The requirement falls into forcing oneself to see and meet other people as Marcel tries to say that the other people is the *imago dei* which means the image of God is there, which practically is the purpose why we are on earth relating, but relating is proper for Wojtyła and engaging is that of Marcel.

Implications

Wojtyla is greatly remembered in his notion of Lay Participation that tells man should relate with the others thus eventually relating with the "Other". This goes that Wojtyla is not forgetful in his devotion to the divine given the fact that the end purpose of his notion of Lay Participation credits the thought that it is God whom man is relating to. Man in his pursuit of the manifestation of the divine intervention, greatly lead himself to churches and religious gathering. However, Wojtyla strongly propose that the great manifestation about it is found in relating with other people in every way possible. The notion of Wojtyla further implies that relating with others leads to the fulfillment of man's quest for divine intervention. It is important to take note that he clearly emphasized the truth behind in relating with the "Other". The truth that is being referred to here demands one's understanding that when one relates with others, one relates with God.

Lastly, the implication of his notion leads one to the fulfillment and satisfaction of his quest for a life with Divine Intervention. It sounds much religious and theological, however, it only manifests that such notion guides the individual to conform his life with the divine.

Marcel on the other hand with his notion of participation among faithful lay, carefully stresses the thought that every man is a man of encounter. This means to say further that Marcel viewed man as a relational being. A being who is prepared to meet the others. The implication on being relational leads one to think that the requirement therefore to make one's life meaningful is when we let other people feel our presence and in return we feel the other's presence too in any way possible. It is a common understanding perhaps by now that every man is born to live in this world, to fill this world as the famous bible verse "go to the world and multiply" suggests. Many times one can hear this adage, however the thought of it remains alone in one's mind as a constant reminder that we are born for such reason, needless to say that the purpose of man's existence is to live.

With much consideration of Marcel's thought on this matter, he emphasized that every man is born for others. Man does not live by just simply relating with the other but by making it true that such existence matters. The co-presence of each one with each other according to Marcel fuels man's existence and therefore gives color and vibrancy in the everyday life of man. Pointing out this fact also leads to another implication that as one lives, one should not forget the outward disposition of one's self to others. This simply means every man cannot live alone with himself. He needs others to feel complete. The completeness comes along with the careful consideration that everyone is created for that purpose. In the perspective of participation, Marcel then emphasized the fulfillment of one's task on earth is done through collaboration with others because man is created

for others. Only then that participations takes place when one considers the co-presence with the other person.

4. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter summarizes and concludes the entire intellectual journey to dispose discourses related to notions of participation among lay faithful according to Wojtyla and Marcel. Towards the end of this chapter the researcher gives some recommendations for future researchers to uncover other facts, which are not rightfully included in this study.

SUMMARY

The endeavor of this study is to bring out laity's involvement in the church considering the notion on participation of Wojtyla and Marcel. It was discovered in this study that Wojtyla believed that man is indeed a relational being by nature and Marcel pointed out that fidelity, hope and love complete the authenticity of a relationship which means being there or the presence of the person is the response to communion as the person participate with his fellow men. Definitely, the terms, communion and participation from that of Wojtyla and Marcel, are interrelated terms, which signify the act of being with the other individual. Mainly, both philosophies, Wojtyla's notion of participation and Marcel's philosophy of communion are grounded on the experience of man who is the I and with his fellow beings who are termed as the Other and Thou, and also, both philosophies are founded on the notion that when a man participates or communes with the other beings, fulfillment is brought in the self and in the part of the other person. It therefore creates a bulk of human fulfillment which results into an authentic kind of relationship. Lastly, the two philosophies are actions which are not only limited to the relationship with the other individuals but also towards communion on the "Absolute Thou" for Marcel and "God" who is the "Other" for Wojtyla.

CONCLUSION

Studying both philosophies that of Karol Wojtyla and Gabriel Marcel, showed big similarities in terms of analyzing the Laity's involvement in the Church which were presented above. Both philosophies are ideal in an interpersonal relationship. They have the concepts that can help individuals understand the necessity of communion in the means of participation with other fellow individuals most especially in the involvement of the laity in the Church; and also to know the actions that are appropriate in order to attain an authentic and genuine kind of relationship. Their idea of relationship is not limited to the visible beings but it

also expands to the Divine. Both philosophies concretely approve that the perfect kind of relationship is the relationship of the person towards the “Absolute Thou” or the Divine. Thus, the idea of intersubjectivity is present in both philosophies, which is not just limited to the idea of the relationship to the physical beings but it is extended toward the relationship of the Divine. It is the most significant claim where the two philosophies blend.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After analyzing the laity’s involvement in the Church, using the two philosophies, namely; notion of participation by Wojtyla and philosophy of communion by Marcel, the researcher recommends that the laity should consider this study as a tool to help them increase their awareness as they continue to actively participate in the Church. This study on Wojtyla’s notion of participation with the aid of Marcel’s philosophy of communion, really posits that the laity should actively participate in the Church for they are individuals who are bound to commune with other beings which will lead to the communion with the Divine.

However the researcher has not yet delved thoroughly into the philosophies of the two philosophers, for both of them have a wide range of brilliant ideas. Basically, their philosophies are more focused on the self and with other human person. Since the two are considered as existential philosophers.

Moreover, the researcher recommends some points regarding their philosophies, which are enumerated below.

To conduct a study both on Marcel and Wojtyla’s philosophy and its relevance to marriage, to conduct a comparative study on Karol Wojtyla’s philosophy of communion and Martin Buber’s I and Thou, to conduct a study on Wojtyla’s philosophy of participation in view of living a life of community, to conduct a study both on the philosophy of Marcel and Wojtyla in the Filipino value of *Bayanihan* and Man’s Existence: Karol Wojtyla philosophy of participation and Martin Buber’s I – Thou relationship.

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