



INNER DIMENSIONS OF TRUTH: PARADIGMS FOR THE FAITH AND MISSION OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

MOSES AARON ANGELES

VICE DEAN, COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

SAN BEDA UNIVERSITY, MANILA

mangeles@sanbeda.edu.ph

The paper examines the inner dimensions of truth by investigating Jewish-Christian Scriptures, Doctors of the Church (Augustine, Aquinas, and Bonaventure), and Pontiffs (John Paul II and Benedict XVI). Through phenomenological and dialogic thinking, the inner dimension of truth is surfaced as personal and interior enlightenment and divine revelation (Scriptures), as dialogical communications (Benedict XVI), as God's grace bestowing perpetual liberation (Augustine and John Paul II) as the realization that man is a manifestation of God (Aquinas), as action (Scriptures and Bonaventure) as reciprocal acts of love, justice, and the promotion of the common good (Scriptures and Benedict XVI). These inner dynamics serve as a framework of Catholic education, teaching the notion of truth according to its faith and mission, establishing a Divine – human relatedness and an initiation process. Truth is bestowed, and humans are encouraged to accept and present themselves to Truth.

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INTRODUCTION

The imperative duty of Catholic schools is to impart the Church's teaching of Truth in accordance with the Catholic faith and mission. According to the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, Catholic schools are an integral part of the Church's mission as they offer essential human formation. This formation serves as the foundation for the Church's educational engagement in "constantly upholding the fullness of divine truth, comprehending revelation, and fostering constructive dialogue with the world" (TCS, No. 10). Catholic schools make a significant contribution to the salvific mission of the Church by fostering the psychological and moral awareness required for the reception of Divine gifts of truth and grace (TCS, no. 2). Although Catholic schools aim to remain faithful to their vision and mission, it is evident that certain forces, particularly in contemporary or postmodern education, pose a threat to the dissemination of the truth upheld by the Catholic Faith. An illustrative example pertains to the concept of relativism.

According to Jaroslav Pelikan (2003), a theologian, relativism is a phenomenon that eradicates any form of objectivity in our comprehension of the world. Consequently, the existence of an absolute, objective, or historically accurate truth is deemed non-existent, and instead, what exists are the perspectives of distinct advocates. The incorporation of critical thinking is an essential component of analytic education. However, it is imperative that this skill is grounded in a historical tradition, which can serve as a guiding principle.

Benedict XVI (2005) made reference to the concept of the "Dictatorship of Relativism." The regime in question is characterized by authoritarian rule, whereby the pursuit of truth

is relegated to a state of uncertainty and doubt. According to the theory of relativism, the determination of a true statement is a challenging task, if not an unattainable one. In practical terms, it posits the notion that all assertions of truth hold equal weight. Furthermore, claims of unequivocal veracity tend to elicit significant debate, prompting individuals to embrace a relativistic outlook.

The insinuation that truth-telling is beyond the capacity of human beings remains implicit in the aforementioned assertions. The absence of truth raises concerns about our ability to uphold ethical principles, particularly in light of relativism's challenge to truth as the basis for establishing standards. It is imperative to acknowledge that relativism has permeated not solely the realm of human rights, but also the approach to educational praxis. The detachment of the notion of truth from a seemingly harmless catchphrase such as "my voice, my choice" can potentially introduce relativism and its correlated hazards.

The utilization of critical literacy within postmodernism serves as a gateway for relativism to infiltrate the realm of education. The objective is to equip learners with the necessary skills to analyze the structures and characteristics of written material. This is intended to counteract the notion that texts are inherently timeless, universal, or impartial. The aim is to foster an understanding of the imbalanced power dynamics that often underlie written works and to empower learners to advocate for social justice and reform. The intention behind this is to provide a sense of empowerment. The analysis of how post-modern relativism, as applied in educational settings, aims to transform learners into catalysts for societal transformation reveals that it involves the presentation of subjects such as family, sexuality, parenthood, culture, and



religion. These topics are widely regarded as dominant discourses that enforce and validate various forms of inequity and intolerance. The act of rejection can have a detrimental effect on the learners' perception of the existence of objective truth. Consequently, a proclivity exists for individuals to retract inwardly, causing learners to become entrenched in their own spheres, resulting in feelings of disengagement and inactivity rather than a sense of authority. Authentic empowerment is derived from the ability to distinguish the truth, a faculty that is exclusively attainable through the human connection with the divine.

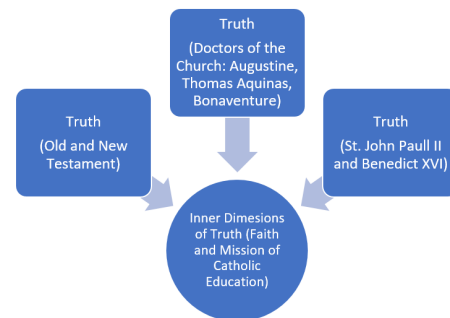
Despite the undeniable reality that assertions of truth have been extensively misused, resulting in acts of violence, prejudice, and devastation, the focus is primarily on the claims that have been put forth rather than the actual veracity of those claims. It is imperative to distinguish between the attribution of absolutism to veracity and the impetus underlying the apprehension of veracity.

The pursuit of veracity, specifically the truth revealed by God through Jesus Christ, is the fundamental objective of Catholic education. This objective transcends the fluctuating perceptions of societal and cultural norms. The objective of Catholic education is to establish a conducive atmosphere for students to initiate a connection with the divine being and further nurture that association over an extended period. The aforementioned endeavor entails the attainment of a connection with the divine and the provision of aid to our fellow human beings, the advancement and preservation of the inherent worth of every individual, and the betterment of society as a whole.

Studies on veracity have been categorized into either the objective or subjective spectrum. The present study centers on the concept of Truth

within the context of relational dynamics. In this process, the concept of truth is not solely a matter of cognitive content, but rather a form of encounter. This study delves into the inquiry of our connection to the concept of Truth. Paradigms are an effective means of capturing and describing the intent of a relation. The encounter itself constitutes truth, without being confined to either an object or a subject.

In order to investigate the internal aspects of truth pertaining to the faith and mission of Catholic education, it is necessary to examine the internal dimensions of Truth as disclosed by the paradigmatic approach, which includes Scriptures, Doctors of the Church, and Pontiffs, particularly Benedict XVI. By utilizing the phenomenological and dialogic approach, the inner dimension of truth is brought to light, which can be beneficial in the dissemination of truth within the context of the Catholic Church's faith and mission.



METHODOLOGY

The research is purely library, analytical, and creative (according to the higher order of thinking) work. The author grounds the research on Biblical Studies on Torah and Christian Scriptures; Doctors of the Church: Augustine, Thomas, Bonaventure; and the writings of St. John Paul II and Benedict XVI. The phenomenology



of Edmund Husserl and Emmanuel Levinas is employed in the paradigmatic approach. The research looked into the authoritative sources of the Catholic faith. First, it examines Truth in the Old and New Testament, paying attention to the dimension of relatedness concerning God and His people. The Hebrew word, *אמת* emet and the Greek word, *ἀλήθεια*, aletheia is given close consideration.

Then, it looks into the key authorities in the Tradition, namely, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and Bonaventure. Examining the Confessions, Prima Pars of the Summa Theologica, De Veritate, and The Triple Way or Love Enkindled, the relational dynamics in truth are paid attention to and surfaced. Lastly, it turns to the recent Pontiffs of the Catholic Church, John Paul II and Benedict XVI, having a close reading of Veritatis Splendor and Caritas in Veritate, respectively.

The study is primarily descriptive research using the method of phenomenology and dialogic thinking. By phenomenological, we follow Husserl's understanding of identifying an 'example' to move from perception (*nosse*) to understanding (*intelligere*). Through this cognitive process, we can have an insight into the basic structure of a given reality which, in our case, is truth. This cognitive process passes through three stages: (1) The first stage is choosing a specific real-world instance to use as an example. This then begins to influence how the mental processes operate, as an example. Every single tangible experience can act as a model and serve as the foundation for additional variation; (2) The following constitutes the second stage, known as variation: A wide range of variations start with the model and then pass our attentive spirit in a free imagination. One continuously tests and pushes the limits of the concept they have developed when one engages in variety.

Along the same lines, something could always be added to the picture. There must not impede the inquiry of the countless ways these two things are similar and unlike.

The essential quality of "the act of seeing ideas" is "the freedom of variation," which is a component of "the act of seeing ideas." The third step is to develop an intuitive grasp of the essence. The inquiring mind must focus on all the variants, both congruent and incongruent, non-order to get at the essential seeing of an example. Congruence occurs when overlapping variants cover one another, but incongruence occurs when they do not (i.e., when the variants are at odds with one another and lose their shared characteristics). The general appears as the main component during the transition between the overlapping variations of the underlying structure of things (*eidōs*). When the congruence is illuminated, a synthetic unity is seen, within which the variations are seen as variations of the primary. As an example of its sort, an object like this would not be conceivable without "the thing itself," an invariant that must be kept as the necessary generic form. It therefore becomes clear that a unity unites this variety of succeeding forms and that an invariant must be kept as the essential general form in such unrestrained changes of an original image, such as that of a thing. The "genre" that establishes the limitations of empirical particular situations is known as the essence, also known as the underlying structure or *eidōs*. It is an *a priori* that, in terms of its validity, comes before all factuality; it is a "pure possibility" and an "open infinity" for the purposes of how it presents itself. Concentrated attention must be given to the similarities that exist among the differences in order for this essential structure to be discernible. Up until this moment, the idea of an *eidōs*, or genre, is not "apprehended directly and in itself" (Husserl, 1973; 1967).





By dialogical thinking, we mean paying attention to the dynamics of relationships involved in their movements. The underlying desire that fosters relatedness is where the actions and moments in a spiritual connection start. The discussion continues, and such relatedness is a fortunate encounter. Presence emerges in the constant reciprocity as the realities engage in conversation. One's receptivity shapes a person through such reciprocity. Such openness is made possible by the inner life's passivity, which causes the person to become increasingly drawn to God. Beholding is crucial to being attracted to God because it results in a transformative union. We read the spiritual relationship's motions, moments, and layers using these paradigms and the phenomenological technique. fundamental connectedness, reciprocity, going forth, and beholding (Buber, 1996; Levinas, 1996). Through this, the inner dimensions of truth surface paradigmatically, contributing to the faith and mission of Catholic Education.

FINDINGS

TRUTH IN THE SCRIPTURES

In the King James English Version, truth occurs 235 times in 222 verses (Strong, H571). Of all the Hebrew terms related to truth, *emet* אמת is not only commonly used but has served as the based form of the morphology for other related terms. The etymology *emet* is traced back to the initial letter of the three expressions "bara Elohim la'asot," which can be interpreted as "God created to do." (Gen. 2:3, NABRE). The notion that reality was created by God with a purpose to be fulfilled by humans has been widely accepted. This implies that it is incumbent upon humanity, as one of God's creations, to complete the task that was initiated by God at the outset. From this perspective, the concept of truth

pertains to accomplishing a goal. It denotes a state of entirety and wholeness. This action is intrinsically linked to the understanding of trust and faithfulness, and can be interpreted as a rendering of the Hebrew term *emet*. This phenomenon is commonly observed among individuals with respect to their belief in God, as they are bound by a sense of duty to maintain fidelity in their covenantal relationship.

Conversely, it can be argued that the concept of ultimate truth and faithfulness in the cosmos stems from the divine entity of God. The Divine *emet*, denoting the steadfastness of God, is characterized by its unchanging, uninterrupted, and unwavering nature, thus rendering truth a perpetual and immutable entity. The present observation highlights the correlation existing between *emet* and God's *Hesed*, which denotes His unwavering devotion. This is a recurring dynamic in the Scripture, which roots in the experience of Abraham: "When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, "I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will establish my covenant with you, and I will multiply you greatly. Then Abram knelt down, and God said, "As for me, this is my promise with you: You shall be the progenitor of a multiplicity of countries. Your name will change from Abram to Abraham, for I have made you the father of many peoples. You will have many children, and from your offspring will arise nations and kings. I will be God to you and your descendants forever and make my covenant with you and your descendants from this day forward." (Gen. 17: 1-7, NABRE) The love of God is enduring, from generation to generation, as promised and fulfilled in Abraham, who in turn also reciprocated God's *hesed* with his *emunah*, an undivided and total trust to God.





On numerous occasions, Israel demonstrated infidelity, yet it is noteworthy that God's *emet* remains unwavering and perpetual. As per the summary of Israel's history presented in two Chronicles, there was a recurring pattern of infidelities. Nonetheless, despite their lack of fidelity, the *emet* of God serves as a source of resilience, motivation, and determination for them. The etymology of the term "*emet*" can also be traced back to the Hebrew verb "*aman*," which carries the connotation of providing support or establishing firmness. This evokes the mental picture of a caring father enveloping his vulnerable child with a shield of protection. The concept of truth serves as the fundamental basis upon which an individual's existence is constructed, and consequently, it maintains an interactive connection with the person who is responsible for comprehending it and bearing its weight.

The utilization of the Greek term "*aletheia*" is frequently observed in the New Testament to denote the concept of truth, which connotes the act of revealing a concealed actuality (Strong G225). Like *emet*, this term is a common occurrence in the texts of the New Testament. Truthful communication has the potential to provide structure to abstract elements of existence. Pilate inquired of Jesus by posing the question, "What is truth?" The essence of the matter pertains not to the concept or notion of veracity, but rather to the revelation of His identity - that of the Messiah, the offspring of the divine, and the awaited savior. The comprehension and examination of truth cannot be achieved through a detached approach, as it is a dynamic, personal, and interior understanding. As a consequence of this, it is not possible to acquire knowledge of the truth through remote means. The truth is presented to us in a direct and intimate manner. Viewed from this perspective, the truth may be comprehended as a

manner of living, a disposition towards being, and a fundamentally interdependent construct. God is not static, but rather dynamic and relational, as God is perceived as a dynamic entity (Waaajman, 2002).

TRUTH IN AUGUSTINE

Augustine posits a perpetual correlation between Truth, blessed existence, and God. Augustine states in his Confession that the state of happiness is derived from the experience of joy that is founded on truth. The aforementioned joy is derived from the divine presence of God, who embodies truth, and serves as my source of enlightenment, the savior of my countenance, and my personal deity (Confessions 10.23.33).

Augustine demonstrated a fervent and courageous pursuit of knowledge in his intellectual and spiritual endeavors as he sought to address challenging inquiries related to faith and existence. Augustine's Confessions depict his contemplation on the presence and identity of God within the tangible events of his life, particularly in his rebellious childhood.

Augustine's journey exemplifies the notion that truth is attained through the pious contemplation of the enigmas of our faith, taking into account the life circumstances we encounter. However, our faith seek evidence to support or challenge them. This is done through rootedness on the scriptural teachings concerning God. Also, tradition plays a role in situating oneself in the knowledge and teachings that the people of God and the Church have acquired throughout salvation history. Lastly, using scientific knowledge, both of the natural sciences and human sciences and incorporating personal experiences enhance our understanding of one's faith. These Augustine carried out in His quest for truth, leading him to God.





Augustine's quest for God can be comprehended as manifesting his affection for and pursuit of veracity. For Augustine, every Christian ought to make it their life's mission to grow in both their knowledge and love of God, and this should be their primary focus. However, the concept of God remains one of the most profound enigmas. Augustine's *Confessions* delineate his inner turmoil as he endeavors to ascertain God's veracity and essence in the context of his life's experiences.

The *Confessions* of Augustine commence with a series of inquiries. The aforementioned inquiries serve as the individual's means of exploration in order to attain the fundamental encounter that was ultimately reached through a multitude of meanderings, and which currently serves as the perspective conveyed in their confessions. Consequently, my being and existence would be null and void without God's presence within us. Could it be posited that my existence is contingent upon my connection to you, the entity through whom and in whom all things are sustained? Thus, it is so, my Lord. At this point, Augustine's searching heart finds rest: I have been created for God. "You have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you" (*Confessions* 1.1.1). Augustine's confession is aimed at showing how he found "rest in God." To find rest in God is to be in God. My being is to be in God. That is the import of Augustine's familiar statement: "You are more inward than my most inward part and higher than the highest element within me" (*Confessions*, 3.6.11). God's hand is beyond the clay he is shaping but in such a way that he is continually present and creating the reverse side of it.

The *Confessions* of Augustine pertains to the realization of God's formative and creative influence within oneself, wherein the individual acknowledges that their existence would be non-

existent without the presence of God within them. The *Confessions* of Augustine is about becoming conscious of God's creative formative power in me "Who would have no being at all unless You were within me" (*Confessions*, 1.2.2). This process of becoming conscious is complete when the realization arises of the dialogic antiphrasis (irony, euphemism, or litotes): "Or is it that I would have no being if I were not in You of whom, through whom, in whom all things exist? Even so, Lord, even so, it is" (*Confessions* 1.2.2).

The spiritual progression of Augustine serves as an exemplar of how an individual can attain truth through earnest contemplation of the enigmas inherent in their religious faith, within the framework of their personal encounters and challenges. In order to effectively ascertain veracity, it is imperative to engage in continual introspection of the past, present, and future. Memory, which is inextricably linked to the divine hand that shapes one's essence, plays a pivotal role in this process.

TRUTH IN THOMAS AQUINAS

Thomas Aquinas (S.Th. 1.16.5) speaks of truth as ascertained by the intellect when it perceives an object in its true form. Additionally, the truth can be found in objects that are in harmony with the intellect's understanding. This phenomenon is most prominently observed in the understanding of God. The conformity of His being to His intellect is not the only aspect, but rather, His intellect is the very essence of His being. Furthermore, His understanding serves as the standard and origin for all other beings and intellects. Additionally, He is self-existent, and His understanding is an inherent part of His being. Consequently, it can be inferred that truth is not only present within Him, but that





He embodies truth itself, serving as the supreme and primary embodiment of truth.

The pursuit of truth necessitates substantial exertion, thereby dissuading many individuals from engaging in it for the sake of knowledge. However, it is noteworthy that despite this, a natural inclination towards acquiring such knowledge has been instilled by God in the human psyche.

According to Thomas Aquinas, there exist two fundamental classifications of truth. There exists a dichotomy between the truth emanating from human beings and the truth originating from a divine source. The epistemological limitations of human knowledge render it inherently subjective, contingent, and subject to revision. Conversely, the truth ascribed to God is characterized by its infinite, objective, and unchanging nature. The two types of truth can be further subdivided into the truth inherent in objects, which constitutes the secondary form of truth, and the truth inherent in the intellect, which constitutes the primary form of truth.

The primary manifestation of truth is its existence within the realm of the intellect. This can be comprehended as a form of correspondence theory, albeit not in the contemporary sense. The premise posits that the veracity of a human-made entity, such as a house, is contingent upon its alignment with the architect's intended concept during the design process. This approach is deemed optimal for comprehending the mechanics of this process. According to Aquinas, the truth is situated within the intellect of the architect, provided that it is in accordance with the object that is being comprehended. For the object to be considered true, the truth must be transmitted from the intellect of the architect to the object, but solely in relation to the intellect. The truth contained within the

intellect of an architect is deemed valid to the extent that it conforms to the object that is being comprehended. A fundamental asymmetry exists whereby the veracity of objects is contingent upon the accuracy of the intellect, while the accuracy of the intellect is not contingent upon the veracity of objects. The veracity of matters is contingent upon the veracity of the intellect. The importance of these two interrelationships cannot be overemphasized.

The concept of correspondence, also known as *adequatio*, (S. Th. 1.16.1,3) pertains to the relationship between physical entities, such as a stone, and the mental representation of its shape within an individual's intellect. In the realm of natural phenomena, conformity is attributed to the intellect of a divine being. However, in the context of human creations, their veracity is contingent upon their adherence to the human intellect of creative production. The concept of subordinate truth in relation to ideal forms can be perceived as an extension of Platonic philosophy, wherein particulars were deemed to possess an ontological status that was derived (i.e., the being of appearances) from their respective Forms. A possible perspective on this matter is to view it as a development from the notion that individual entities possessed a mere derivative ontological condition (the existence of appearances) concerning their corresponding Forms. Regarding Aquinas, the Forms are transferred solely from the third realm of abstract entities to the intellect, whether it be that of man or God. Consequently, the investigation shifts from ontology to epistemology, focusing on the concept of truth.

Furthermore, as per Aquinas' perspective, there exist two distinct manners in which an object can be associated with an intellect. The two manners in which these ways are commonly denoted are the fundamental relationship and





the inadvertent relationship. The essence of the concept is intrinsically linked to an intellectual capacity that ascertains its feasibility. Although it may be tangentially associated with a cognitive faculty that comprehends it, it does not rely on that faculty in any manner. Hence, with regard to their essence, the veracities pertaining to all-natural entities are contingent upon the intellect of the divine. However, it should be noted that their relationship is only tangential. According to the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, the authenticity of all existing entities is derived from their reflection of a true idea in the mind of God, which serves as a blueprint for their creation.

Similar to how a human artifact embodies the concepts of its creator, God's creatures also embody their Creator's concepts, albeit flawlessly. Moreover, entities that have existence possess the ability to exhibit both active and passive characteristics concurrently. Over time, there is a tendency for entities to enhance their performance by comprehending and replicating their intended purpose more comprehensively. One of the principal attributes of the subject in question is this. According to the principle of reproduction, the outcome of any interaction involving two or more entities will be analogous to the initial cause. Stated differently, the acquisition of human knowledge is derived from pre-existing knowledge. The impact on an individual's psyche is analogous to that of the representation embodied by the symbol. Given that objects serve as both the subject and the object of human cognition, they must also possess ontological truth in the context of human intellect, which has the capacity to apprehend them.

TRUTH IN BONAVENTURE

According to Bonaventure's classification, philosophy is considered to be a rational "light" (lux) that is bestowed upon individuals as a divine gift from God, who is referred to as "the Father of Lights and the Giver of every good and perfect gift" (De reductione atrium, 1). The utilization of the philosophy would be of utmost importance in Bonaventure's ultimate objective of enhancing the understanding and adoration of God among his readers. Bonaventure's account suggests that philosophy involved a rational inquiry into the entirety of the created universe and its Creator without relying on any information from revelation.

Bonaventure's work is characterized by a meticulous causal analysis of the discipline (1 Sent. prol., q. 1-4). The focus of his inquiry is the comprehensive collection of entities, including God, the First Principle, who serves as the ultimate cause of all other phenomena, as well as the complete scope of God's creation, as revealed in the scriptures and the extensive array of councils, creeds, and commentaries that expound upon the doctrine contained therein. The objective of this pursuit is the attainment of a state of complete knowledge and adoration of the divine, culminating in a state of ecstatic communion with the divine being.

Bonaventure initiated the comprehensive exposition of his philosophical-theological ideas by commencing with a statement of faith, "in principio," which attests to the existence of the First Principle (Primum Principium) of Genesis, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, or more precisely, God the Father, the initial person of the Christian Trinity (Bonaventure, 1 Sent. d. 2, a. 1, q. 1; Breviloquium 1.1; and Itinerarium prol. 1). He emphasized that the aforementioned Principle serves as the underlying basis for all





phenomena in both the celestial and terrestrial realms. Through a logical analysis of each entity's efficient, formal, and final cause, the human intellect can ascertain this Principle without reliance on divine revelation. Bonaventure incorporated a significant portion of that legacy into his own interpretation of the presence and characteristics of the singular deity.

The present discourse concerns the concept of truth and its relation to the arguments for the first principle.

Bonaventure's arguments pertaining to the existence of the First Principle are noteworthy due to their extensive and profound nature. The arguments can be categorized as cosmological, epistemological, and ontological truth of the Divine Being. This was done through a type of correspondence theory of truth (1 Sent. d. 8, p. 1, a. 1, q. 1). The validity of cosmological truth is contingent upon the alignment between an entity and its form in the divine mind. In contrast, intelligible truth is predicated on the alignment between an entity and its intelligible form in the human mind. Lastly, ontological truth is based on the alignment between an entity and the form within it, which endows it with a specific nature. The initial principle, which serves as the fundamental source of all other entities, lacks the material potential principle. The notion of "pure" existence is a central theme that Bonaventure will expound upon in his arguments. The entity in question is the sole embodiment of its form, and as such, it is inherently and exclusively true

Further, Bonaventure discusses this ontological truth in the work *Commentary on the Sentences of Lombard*. According to him, God created all things, so the whole universe existentially depends on God. The Ontological truth is "the indivision of act and potency," taken in a hylomorphic context (Sent. 1.3.5; 4.9.2). Since

there is no perfect indivision of the potency and act in creatures, they present a combination of created truth and falsity. Because it has perfect unity, God presents no indivision and admixture, so he is the highest, uncreated truth.

The treatise *The Triple Way or Love Enkindled*, which Bonaventure wrote around 1260, is one of the most influential writings of the Middle Ages. The triple way has been called a *summa* of mystical theology. Bonaventure's fundamental conviction is that all creatures bear the imprint of God's trinity. It is the task of theology to discover the traces of this trinity everywhere; Bonaventure wove two triads together in his works.

In his prologue, Bonaventure says: "You must know that there are three approaches to the triple way [purgation, illumination, and union]: the approach of reading with meditation, of prayer, and of contemplation. The issue is a threefold way (which is also the title of this work). These three approaches must be practiced in the manner of the *lectio-divina* structure. Here we see the relation importance of "the threefold hierarchical action" of purgation, illumination, and perfection/union, but at the same time, the working of the triad "meditation-prayer-contemplation," which as it were propels and transforms the hierarchical triad.

There are three main themes in the third chapter on contemplation: the tranquility of peace, the splendor of truth, and the sweetness of love. The triple path states, "There are three steps leading up to these three ends. The purgative way consists in the eradication of sin; the illuminative way consists in the emulation of Christ; and the perfective way consists in union with the Spouse. Therefore, there are tiers along each path that we must ascend." This highlights the cyclical nature of the process once again;





similar to meditation and prayer, contemplation starts at the ground floor and ascends through the levels of perfection and oneness. The first of seven sequences leading to peace and quiet occur in fours. The first step looks like this: "Initially, one feels shame upon remembering the sin, and that in four ways: seriousness, magnitude, lowliness, and ungratefulness." The second set of seven installments also consists of four episodes. First, let us look at the first step: Believe with all your heart that Christ is actually the Son of God, the source of all beings, the Savior of all men, the One who will return each according to his merits; in this way, you will show your respect for the One who is suffering and show your submission to the One who deserves your worship. The final four seals are opened in a succession of seven, as described in Revelation 5:5. Two or three mystical phrases of Scripture (mostly from the Song of Songs and the Psalms) complete each stage of the third and final of a series of seven concerning unity that leads to the delights of love.

Accordingly, Bonaventure addresses the spiritual path's fundamental themes in his summary by arranging them in a hierarchical, mystical order of emanation. In this sense, they help humans gradually appropriate the divine order. The first is that of purgation, illumination, and union. By participating in God's purifying operation in its enlightenment and by its union with perfection, the soul attains truth and participates in love.

TRUTH IN JOHN PAUL II

The encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, authored by St. Pope John Paul II (1993), commences by asserting that the radiance of truth is evident in all of the Creator's creations, particularly in humanity, which was fashioned in the image and likeness of God" (Genesis 1:26). The revelation of

truth serves to enhance the cognitive faculties of individuals and shape their autonomy, ultimately resulting in their comprehension and veneration of the divine. Hence, the author of Psalm 4:6 petitions the divine, stating, "May the radiance of your countenance illuminate us, oh Lord." The veracity of a matter is not solely accessible to us, but it also radiates with luminosity. This statement posits that establishing a foundation for the ability to discern what is morally upright is essential in enabling individuals to exhibit affection toward both their fellow human beings and the divine. The proper sequencing of data holds significant importance. The veracity holds a fundamental position; it serves as the origin from which the concept of liberty derives its significance and sheds light on what is deemed desirable.

St. John Paul II expresses his unwavering faith in the human ability to comprehend the truth by stating that the radiance of God the Creator cannot be entirely extinguished by any obscurity caused by wrongdoing or fallacy. The individual harbors an innate desire for unadulterated veracity within the innermost recesses of their being, coupled with an imperative to attain comprehensive cognizance thereof. Commencing with the concept of freedom is an inauspicious beginning. The proliferation of doors has resulted in a state of indecision among individuals, as the sheer number of options available renders the selection process insurmountable. Unfettered liberty of this nature results in a lack of progress or advancement. In *Veritatis Splendor*, John Paul II posits that the human person can only attain their true good through the exercise of freedom that is subservient to the Truth. Adhering to the Truth and conducting oneself in accordance with it can prove advantageous to an individual.

According to Saint John Paul, the absence of a transcendent truth that guides an individual





toward achieving their complete identity results in the absence of a reliable principle that ensures equitable relationships among individuals. When preferences are allocated to multiple groups, their respective self-interests are bound to create a situation where they become antagonistic towards each other. This inevitability is inescapable. When the recognition of truth is absent, power assumes control, resulting in individuals utilizing all available resources to enforce their interests or viewpoints without considering the entitlements of others.

In the Splendor of Truth, the effulgence of veracity emanates from every entity fashioned by the divine, albeit it is particularly conspicuous in humanity, which was created in the image of God. The pursuit of truth is integral to the development of human intelligence and the cultivation of individual freedom. This process ultimately culminates in the attainment of knowledge and love for God. The truth is not only readily available but also manifests itself conspicuously. The establishment of a foundation for the ability to differentiate between virtuous and immoral actions enables individuals to express affection toward both their fellow human beings and the divine entity. The sequencing of values holds significant importance. The primacy of truth lies in its ability to provide significant liberty and enhance our comprehension of what is deemed desirable. The human capacity to comprehend truth is bolstered by an inherent inclination towards the attainment of absolute truth and a fervent desire to acquire comprehensive knowledge thereof, which is deeply ingrained within the human psyche. The attainment of the highest good for a human being is contingent upon the freedom of the individual to submit to the Truth.

TRUTH IN BENEDICT XVI

Benedict XVI's *Caritas in Veritate* (2009) posits that charity can be understood in its entirety through the multitude of values that it embodies in truth. It is feasible to convey truth and distribute it among individuals. The emblematic symbols that embody veracity serve as a catalyst for discourse, whereby dialogue engenders both communication and communion. The concept of charity embodies the principles of love and compassion, while the pursuit of truth serves to broaden our perspectives and foster unity among individuals. The concept of charity encompasses both the act of receiving and giving love. The term in question is commonly referred to as "grace." The source of its inception can be traced back to the Holy Spirit, which serves as the wellspring of the paternal affection that the Father harbors towards the Son. The passion for artistic manifestation is the fundamental source of our existence. As the recipients of divine affection, we are summoned to engage in benevolent endeavors and are presented with the task of serving as conduits of divine favor.

The concept of "Charity in truth" pertains to an unwavering commitment to the truth. According to Benedict XVI, the advancement of humanity is primarily propelled by this force. The assertion that one should choose to engage in acts of bravery and benevolence within the realm of justice and peace is indicative of a sentiment rooted in affection. The term "God's plan" denotes a concept that is widely regarded as representing the ultimate reality. It is believed that the divine entity intends for humankind to uncover veracity. The social philosophy of the Church is grounded on the principle of charity. It has been observed that the Church's social doctrine revolves around the principle of charity.





The concepts of justice and the common good hold a significant place in Catholic social teaching, serving as the basis for ethical decision-making in our contemporary world that is characterized by growing interconnectivity. The presence of justice is a necessary condition for genuine kindness to exist. In this context, Pope Benedict XVI reaffirms the conviction of Pope Paul VI that justice represents the fundamental threshold of love. As per Benedict XVI's assertion, the common good is most aptly characterized as a benefit that is intricately tied to communal living. The aforementioned action is advantageous for the entire group.

According to the speaker, the Church does not possess any technological remedies to provide, and it is not inclined to intervene in the political affairs of nations. Nevertheless, the Church possesses a calling to declare veracity, and its societal ideology constitutes a pivotal component of the aforementioned task. Relying solely on technology to oversee the entire development process can be a perilous course of action. It is believed by some that there exists a divine calling from a higher power to contribute to the progress of humanity.

According to Benedict XVI, the Church's social teaching is propelled by the proclamation of Christ's love in society and is founded on the mutual aspect of charity. The presence of a social conscience or responsibility is contingent upon the existence of truth, trust in said truth, and a genuine affection for it. The practical implementation of *Caritas in Veritate* can be observed through the prioritization of justice and the common good, given their relevance in a progressively globalized world.

CONCLUSION

Based on the preceding discourse, it is apparent that the interior dimension of truth is revealed through personal and interior enlightenment and divine revelation (Scriptures). The statement pertains to the personal domain as it involves the individual's inner life through dialogic communication, as posited (Benedict XVI). The concept of truth being attributed to God designates humans as the beneficiaries of God's grace, thereby encouraging them to seek a relationship with God and attain perpetual liberation through Him (Augustine and John Paul II). According to Thomas Aquinas, the process leads to the realization that man is a manifestation of God. Based on the Scriptures and Bonaventure, Truth is not merely a passive concept but rather an active one that involves taking action. Benedict XVI further explains that Truth is manifested through reciprocal acts of love, justice, and the promotion of the common good.

Catholic education upholds the principle that truth is a cooperative endeavor rather than an individual possession, thereby rejecting the notion of egalitarian fallacy. This principle serves as a fundamental guiding tenet of education. Contemporary education aims to provide prompt solutions to urgent issues, and a considerable segment of it incorporates diversity, equity, and inclusivity in its curriculum. However, this approach has been deemed detrimental to Catholics as it challenges the fundamental truth that is rooted in the concept of God, either directly or indirectly.

The initial stage of the educational process should involve aspiring to become cooperators of truth, as aptly encapsulated by Benedict XVI in his coat of arms. Attempting to address the issue of discrimination through further discriminatory





actions is an unproductive pursuit. The purpose of education ought not to be to acquiesce to societal maladies, but rather to serve as a remedy for them. The concept in question appears to be readily comprehensible. Conversely, the movement known as “cancel culture” does not prioritize concepts such as “truth.” On the contrary, it can be argued that the veracity of a statement is not primarily based on its aesthetic appeal but on its fundamental accuracy.

In the context of Catholic education, the concept of truth extends beyond the mere validity of assertions. It encompasses the notion of establishing a connection and undergoing a process of initiation. Truth is bestowed upon us, and humans are encouraged to accept and present themselves to Truth.

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