



CROSS COMMUNION PARADIGM: A LIBERATION THEOLOGY FRAMEWORK OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH APPROPRIATING "SEE, JUDGE, ACT" METHODOLOGY

CHRISTOPHER ESPARAGOZA

UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS

ceeparagoza@ust.edu.ph

*Liberation theology is considered a significant theological movement emanating from Vatican II. However, there are diverse evaluations of the theology, particularly those that have been critiqued and rejected in general by ecclesial authorities. Nevertheless, a Church-aligned liberation theology is often overlooked, and this paper will present an approach patterned to the Church's framework utilizing the Cross Communion Paradigm. The method will be derived from the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the Cross: the vertical aspect pertains to communion with God and its spiritual, magisterial, and transcendental dimensions, and the horizontal aspect to communion with society and its sociological, temporal, and historical dimensions. This will be linked to the "see, judge, act" approach following a theological development of the framework based on Scriptures, St. Thomas Aquinas, Joseph Cardijn, and in *Mater et Magistra*, then its aspects to the Cross Communion Paradigm form of liberation theology. The elaboration will also relate to existing concepts, pastoral messages, and activities being done by the Church in the Philippines, providing concrete examples as an application of the paradigm of liberation theology. Integrally, the framework can be applied not only to addressing preferential love for the poor but also in reference to the role of the Church in politics, social media, and Catholic education.*

Keywords: Cross Communion, liberation theology, dualistic dilemma, verticalism, horizontalism

Dates:

Received: February 8, 2025

Revised: July 15, 2025

Accepted: August 8, 2025

Published(Online): Sept 30, 2025

How to cite this article:

Esparagoza, C. (2025). Cross Communion Paradigm: A Liberation Theology Framework of the Catholic Church Appropriating "See, Judge, Act" Methodology. *Scientia - The International Journal on the Liberal Arts*, 14(2), 108–129. <https://doi.org/10.57106/scientia.v14i2.208>

Copyright:

Online: Asean Citation Index, DOAJ.

This work is licensed under the Creative Common Attribution License © 2025.

Print: Philippine Copyright © September 2025 San Beda University

Read online



Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online





I. INTRODUCTION

The Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) has brought changes and direction to the contemporary Church in reaching out to the contemporary world for her evangelization and mission. Essential aspects such as divine revelation, dialogue, human dignity, liturgy, ecclesiology, and ecumenism were given new emphasis to make the Church more relevant and revitalize itself in the modern world. For Cardinal Müller, liberation theology is “one of the most significant currents of Catholic theology in the twentieth century”¹ following the reforms of Vatican II. Additionally, St. Pope John Paul II resolved that “theology of liberation is not only timely but useful and necessary.”² With these transformations proceeding in the Church trying to respond to certain challenges, especially in countries such as Latin America and the Philippines, issues on politics leaning to authoritarianism and economics that are leading to poverty have generated interest in certain ideologies such as Marxist communism became an alternative solution in resolving humanitarian problems.

Since the call of Vatican II was to make the Church actively respond and be relevant to different situations while upholding the faith and promoting human dignity accorded by her social teachings, new theologies emerged in interpreting the “signs of the times.” Economic challenges, for example, led many to live in poverty, and communist ideals became an encouraging framework for countering violence instigated by their governments together with abusive capitalists. Unfortunately, some theologians adapted Marxist ideals that were

popularly identified with liberation theology movements. But these liberation theologies came along with various forms and approaches that were initially rejected in general by the Church’s hierarchy, for it was perceived not only as a deviation from standard theology but could lead to more oppressive situations encouraging violence as a means of countering another form of violence. Armed resistance groups became an option, and some priests, religious, and laity embraced the ideologies and turned to armed struggle while the rest were still in the confines of Catholic orthodoxy. These groups, regardless of theological and ideological orientations, were responding to various atrocities, in the case of the Philippines, for example, against Marcos’ Martial Law.

Seeing the dangers of utilizing religion in justification of means contrary to intended objectives and by way of uncritical use of philosophies such as certain elements of communism, the Church provided instructions on liberation theology such as *Libertatis Nuntius* (LN) and *Libertatis Conscientia* (LC) which conform to authentic faith and “to the correct and necessary theology of liberation, in a homogenous way to the full fidelity to Church doctrine attentive to a preferential love for the poor.”³ Given the context, there is a need to revisit and revitalize liberation theology, especially in contemporary Philippine situations, that proper preference for the poor is not just mending the wounds caused by oppression and journeying in their struggles but essentially addressing the structures of sins that have caused it. In fact, Archbishop Legaspi, in his homily during the Opening of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II) held at the Manila Cathedral, urged Filipino Catholics to the

¹ Gustavo Gutiérrez and Gerhard Ludwig Cardinal Müller, *On the Side of the Poor: The Theology of Liberation* (New York: Orbis Books, 2015), 11

² John Paul II, “Letter to the Brazilian Episcopal Conference (April 9, 1986)” in *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*. ed. Alfred T. Hennelly (Maryknoll N.Y: Orbis Books, 1990), 503.

³ John Paul II, *Letter to the Brazilian Episcopal Conference*, 504





necessity of indigenous theology of liberation.⁴ Later, this propounding of theology would find its place in the PCP II document as an example guide for utilizing faith in striving for human development.⁵

II. OVERVIEW OF LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Liberation theology was popularly known to have originated from the theological experiences of the people of Latin America.⁶ It was a struggle for recognition and liberation of a significant number of the population of the continent at that time when people were suffering from various abuses of human rights and experienced extreme poverty caused by nationalist military dictatorships and political totalitarianism.⁷ Reactionary movements with the goal of liberating the plight of people experiencing poverty led to the formation of armed resistance, such as revolutions, civil wars, and terrorism, which took a toll on these countries. Yet, the root cause of these problems that brought about the dismal socioeconomic condition of the majority has not been addressed.⁸ These struggles of the poor and oppressed encountered by the people of the faith led to a rethinking of their experience of God's relevance to their situations. Amid the poverty that has stricken the great majority of the population, the theme of the Gospel has been the central theological analysis and its connection to their experiences. If faith is received and practiced by the people, how does theology become a tool of reflection, interpreting the revealed message in the context of various encounters, particularly

that of Latin America? The fruits of this analysis emerged a theology that has contributed to the grounding of liberation theology, a seedbed provided by Vatican II. Eventually, it led to a Catholic-Protestant dialogue of theologians seeking the relationship between faith and poverty, the gospel, and social justice. Central to this reflection is a question grounded on various inhuman conditions using the lens of faith rather than being a bystander gazing at the plight of the poor. Furthermore, Müller highlighted that liberation theology's focus should be more than what they can say about injustices encountered by the poor, but how they can speak of God, the Church, and salvation in the light of these oppressions.⁹

Various Latin American liberation theologians emerged and developed this new process of theological thinking pioneered by Gustavo Gutiérrez then followed by theologians such as Juan Luis Segundo, the Boff brothers (Leonardo and Clodovis), Jon Sobrino, Enrique Dussel, Segundo Galilea, Ellacuría,¹⁰ whose ideas resonated with countries in the Third World including the Philippines facing similar situations to that of Latin America. Hence, from the words of Cardinal Müller, the former Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, liberation theology is one of the most essential theological expressions after Vatican II.¹¹ But this direction would have a formidable challenge since the impressions of the Church from time immemorial have been chiefly associated with the rich and powerful but seldom in solicitude with marginalized sectors of society. This is because the concept of poverty that was being preached was inclined to be more spiritual, of things not of this world, and did not address

⁴ Leonardo Legaspi, "Homilies Delivered during the Liturgical Rites for the Opening and Closing of the Council," in CBCP, *Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines*, LXX.

⁵ "Announcing a Message of Liberation," in CBCP, *Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines*, 86-126.

⁶ Enrique Dussel, Irene Hodgson and José Pedrozo, "Liberation Theology and Marxism," *Rethinking Marxism* 5 no. 3 (1992): 74.

⁷ Michael Kirwan, "Liberation Theology and Catholic Social Teaching," *New Blackfriars*, vol. 93, no. 1044, (2012): 246-58.

⁸ Gerhard Ludwig Cardinal Müller, *Poor for the Poor: The Mission of the Church* (Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2016), vii.

⁹ Gutiérrez and Müller, *On the Side of the Poor*, 58-59.

¹⁰ Deane William Ferm, *Third World Liberation Theologies: An Introductory Survey*. (Maryknoll N.Y: Orbis Books, 1986), 16-46.

¹¹ Gutiérrez and Müller, *On the Side of the Poor*, 11.





causes of an earthly form of poverty.¹² Others accused the practice of the religion of being an escapist theology, which tolerated and was silent on injustices and oppressions.¹³ This passive approach to faith was amplified by locating the intellectuals and the privileged over the poor on matters of God's salvific mission.¹⁴

III. CROSS COMMUNION PARADIGM

The Cross Communion paradigm can be a reference to liberation theology from a Catholic perspective based on Church documents and its teachings. According to Cardinal Müller, who previously led the Vatican's administrative body that promotes and safeguards the integrity and unity of Catholic teaching on faith and morals, stresses that one of the key determinations of liberation theology is to respond to the tendency to dichotomize faith and salvation, of this world and the other world, between earthly well-being and heavenly redemption.¹⁵ Drawing from his inspiration with his close friend Fr. Gustavo Gutierrez, who is credited to be the father of liberation theology and authored a book with him also in liberation theology, he figures out a dualistic dilemma, wherein faith has the inclination to become monistic. On one hand, is verticalism, which views the practice of faith as solely spiritual, and acts of worship have no relevance to ordinary life activities as if liberation is only achieved in the afterlife and not in this world.¹⁶ This reception tends to understand faith relegating God only to the hereafter, reduced to purely mystical experience. Another

form is horizontalism, whose disposition toward salvation is entirely of worldly liberation manifested in economics, politics, and human rights. The transcendence of God is not important, but His relevance matters solely in human affairs. This aspect tends to lean toward a form of Marxist-inspired theology losing whatever spiritual significance. The dichotomy of these dimensions can also be a manifestation related to split-level Christianity.¹⁷

Cardinal Müller suggests a form of liberation theology whose approach is unitive in order to counter dualistic dilemma. Cross Communion paradigm follows this approach wherein a cross-model figure unites the vertical and horizontal planes, establishing a dualistic understanding of the faith that is salvation both "of this world" or "beyond this world." The scheme highlights unity in the duality and not the one-dimensional view of faith. For salvation being taught by the Church must be a realization of both the "liberation of human beings by God and the collaboration of human beings in the liberating and salvific action of God."¹⁸ Magisterial pronouncements such as *Evangeli Nuntiandi*, *Libertatis Nuntius*, and *Libertatis Conscientia*; the Philippine church's promotion of liberation can be understood in this pattern (for example, efforts of the Church during the time of Martial Law and teachings of PCP II). This mission of liberation also predated modern Latin American experience, such as in the context of situations during the time of Fr. Las Casas, Fr. Vittoria, and Bishop Salazar of the Philippines.

Another way of understanding the Cross Communion Paradigm from an ecclesiological perspective is the recognition of the magisterial authority. The bishops, in union with the Pope,

¹² William Holden and Kathleen Nadeau, "Philippine Liberation Theology and Social Development in Anthropological Perspective." *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* (2010): 96.

¹³ Edward Martin, "Liberation Theology, Sustainable Development, and Postmodern Public Administration." *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 30, no.4 (2003): 69-91.

¹⁴ Kimberly Anne Humphrey, "Gustavo Gutierrez's Liberation Theology: Traditional Catholicism from the Perspective of the Afflicted Poor," *Denison Journal of Religion*: vol. 10, article 2. (2011): 4-5.

¹⁵ Gutiérrez and Müller, *On the Side of the Poor*, 82

¹⁶ *Gaudium et Spes* 43

¹⁷ Jaime Bulatao, "Split-Level Christianity." *Philippine Sociological Review* 13, no. 2 (1965): 119-21.

¹⁸ Gutiérrez and Müller, *On the Side of the Poor*, 27





discern the “signs of the times” from the lens of the Gospel and lead the flock towards the rightful direction. This vertical aspect necessitates the horizontal plane, wherein the community of believers strives to pursue the teachings of Church leaders, not by blind faith but an exercise of freedom for the good and freedom from anything that dehumanizes the dignity of persons. The horizontal part is the human activity achieving liberation “in this world” inspired by the vertical spiritual communion with God by the leaders of the Church.

Since communion is an elaboration of Vatican II’s dialogue as the People of God with other faiths, traditions, ideologies, and cultures, the proposed framework presents dialogical collaboration instead of dialectic confrontations. Departing from the European context and history of resolving issues through conflict, such as the Marxist requisite for violence, the paradigm follows a dialogical and non-violent approach, such as the Philippine Church experience in 1986 EDSA People Power.

Conclusively, liberation theology is considered one of the most important theological reflections in the contemporary period. Emerging from efforts of freedom from economic conditions, it evolved into various forms such as gender, ecological, and political struggles. Though other forms of liberation theology may not be in line with that of the Church, the Church who is in communion with the world, continuously enter into a dialogue. Since salvation of the Cross is universal, the call to liberation is horizontally for all persons vertically sourced from God who is the model of communion.

IV. SEE-JUDGE-ACT METHODOLOGY

Pope John XXIII’s *Mater et Magistra* provided the Church with a new direction towards a major development in Catholic social teaching.¹⁹ One of which is a guide towards theological reflection responding to social challenges besetting the Church and society. If before, the major approach of the Church was a “theology from above” or deductive method, for the Pope, an emphasis was an inductive framework utilizing “see-judge-act” analysis.

The teachings in regard to social matters for the most part are put into effect in the following three stages: first, the actual situation is examined; then, the situation is evaluated carefully in relation to these teachings; then only is it decided what can and should be done in order that the traditional norms may be adapted to circumstances of time and place. These three steps are at times expressed by these three words: observe, judge, act. (*Mater et Magistra*, 236)

The three stages identified would not mean relieving the traditional method but serve as in harmony to theologizing the “signs of the times” consistent with Church’s first social encyclical – *Rerum Novarum* and its mode of response to social issues. In fact, if the Church was initially alleged to be blind to social problems before *Rerum Novarum* in 1891,²⁰ *Mater et Magistra* provided the impetus not only to respond to the plight of laborers but also to expand the view of options for the poor.²¹

The see-judge-act approach has evolved into various terms. The three-step method popularly originated from Cardinal Cardijn can be identified as Cardijn hermeneutic. It is also called the pastoral cycle, pastoral spiral, pastoral circle, or circle of praxis. Some labeled it as a hermeneutic circle or liberationist model. But

¹⁹ Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor*, 72, 102

²⁰ Eissrich, “An Economist’s View of the Work of Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler,” 11

²¹ Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor*, 100, 124





the varied terms' usage may also depend on geography. Like Northern America and Africa, the majority use pastoral circle; pastoral cycle in Europe, Australia, and Asia. In addition, pastoral spiral expression is a unique Asian phrase. Though differentiated in terminologies, the Church-aligned methodology has the Bible as the collective source of doing theology.

A. See-judge-act

A theological reflection on social issues is always rooted in the Church's social teachings, and the see-judge-act approach is one of the effective means of discernment.²² Brady points out that among the most quoted references from *Octogesima Adveniens* of Pope Paul VI is on the application of the social teachings and appropriation to the three-step method:

“in the face of such widely varying situations... analyze with objectivity the situation...” (see)
 “shed on it the light of the Gospel... to draw principles of reflection, norms of judgment...” (judge)
 “directives for action from the social teaching of the Church...” (act)
Octogesima Adveniens, 395

The anchor between the analysis of issues leading to imperative action draws from the faith history of salvation and liberation of Scriptures and from the principles of the Gospel. This crucial step is the source of direction of seeing the “signs of the times” and missionary activity responding to social problems.²³

1. Biblical Foundations

A major theme of the Sacred Scripture is often the salvation of humanity. In the Old Testament, God's plan of salvation started when He created and revealed Himself to our first parents.

Unfortunately, they sinned against God, but He did not abandon them. This original sin narrative can be an initial framework of a see-judge-act perspective leading to the promise of salvation.

“See” from Genesis 3: 8-11

Adam and Eve hid from God after they ate the forbidden fruit. But God looked for them, saying, “Where are you?” This question implies the recognition and importance of His creation in humanity as His image and likeness. God's effort of looking for them signifies there was an oddity in the regular activities of the first parents, hence trying to discover what could possibly go wrong.

“Judge” from Genesis 2:15-17, 3:17

Before the Fall, God prohibited our first parents not to eat fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil of the garden. The command was established by God for the good of the man and woman.

“Act” from Genesis 3:14-15

Though our first parents sinned against God, He did not abandon them. He translated His love to action by making a promise of salvation, realized later in history through Patriarchs, Moses, and prophets, and finally fulfilled in Christ.

The story is an appropriation of see-judge-act steps that are recurring in the history of the salvation of humanity. If the Fall of Man story is the primordial one, the Exodus narrative can be a model of the framework. When God saw (see) the suffering of his people from Egyptian slavery, he called on Moses to lead His people to freedom (act).²⁴ The depiction of the Biblical

²² Brady, *Essential Catholic Social Thought*, 171

²³ *LN1.1, LC*, 5

²⁴ *Exodus* 3



God presented is not someone who is a passive bystander. As the creator and giver of life, He compels Himself to render what is due and just to people, and slavery is an example of this injustice (judge). As “being in the image of God, the human individual possesses the dignity of a person²⁵ therefore, God impels Himself to liberate the poor and oppressed and, in turn, becomes the Church’s prophetic mission.²⁶

Moreover, Ballard illustrates the Gospel in the see-judge-act method as the parameter in addressing social injustices. The first step is to analyze and critique the situation (see), followed by the mandate of the Gospel, resulting in Christian reflection (judge) and Christian praxis (act).²⁷ For Sobrino, he stresses Biblical tradition culminating in Jesus’ prophetic activity focused on denunciation of injustices and taking the side of the oppressed.²⁸

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me, to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free,” (Luke 4:18-19)

The Pastoral cycle (see-judge-act) in the Scriptures links the faith to justice.²⁹ Banawiratma infers the Biblical God leads the faith to action by way of listening. But listening and seeing is not the terminus of faith but an inauguration to dialogue and contemplation, seeking Jesus as the liberator then translates the fruits of contemplation to planning and action. Similarly, in the formation of the Bible wherein, from the

beginning, it was a faith-lived experience.³⁰ The human experience of God delivered the people from slavery, and then it was handed down until it became in written form. The written tradition perpetuates the memory of the works of God and sets a standard for the future pursuit of freedom.

2. St. Thomas Aquinas

The see-judge-act method may have originated from the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas. For Pennington, he appropriates the three-step methodology from the Thomistic understanding of prudence. First is “counsel,” which is an act of inquiry, then “judgment” from what has been counseled, and finally, “command,” rendering the inquiry to action.³¹ Counsel takes into consideration the discovery of information or quest for data. Judgment, then, is a recourse of both speculative and practical reason leading to performative demand. Aquinas summed up these three stages in the service for the common good and attainment of justice (due end).³² Bushlack likewise derived the three-step method from Aquinas.³³ Seeing (*apprehensio*) is the initial stage together with the intention (*Summa theologiae* I-II 12) followed by judgment (*iudicium*) leading to the attainment of the intention integrated with consent. (*Summa theologiae* I-II 14) Lastly, command (*imperium*) is an application of judgment directed towards action. (*Summa theologiae* I-II 16-17)

The see-judge-act method would eventually become an authoritative framework in employing the Social Teachings of the Church inaugurated

²⁵ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004), 108

²⁶ Boff Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*. 44

²⁷ Ballard and Pritchard, *Practical Theology in Action*, 66

²⁸ Jon Sobrino, “Faith, Justice, and Injustice,” in *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*, eds. Frans Wijzen, Peter Henriot, and Rodrigo Mejía (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2005), xiv

²⁹ Johannes Banawiratma, “The Pastoral Circle as Spirituality Toward an Open and Contextual Church,” in *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*, eds. Frans Wijzen, Peter Henriot, and Rodrigo Mejía (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2005), 75

³⁰ Rodrigo Mejía, “The Impact of the Pastoral Circle in Teaching Pastoral Theology,” in *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*, eds. Frans Wijzen, Peter Henriot, and Rodrigo Mejía (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2005), 130

³¹ Bob Pennington, “Cardijn Canon: A Method of Theological Praxis in Contemporary Catholic Social Teaching,” *Praxis*, vol.1 issue 2 (2018): 89; *Summa Theologiae*, IIa IIae, q. 53, a. 4., IIa IIae, q. 47, a. 8 & 10.

³² *Summa Theologiae* IIa IIae, q. 47, a.10

³³ Thomas J. Bushlack, *Politics for a Pilgrim Church: A Thomistic Theory of Civic Virtue* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 114-115



in Pope John XXIII's *Mater et Magistra*.³⁴ The pope based his "look, judge, act" framework on the theological exposition of St. Thomas Aquinas's prudence.³⁵ Brady elaborates on Aquinas's prudence as the right reason applied to action. As counsel and judgment take as the initial state, the third phase is called practical reason. Therefore, what is known and discovered should be evaluated to form a good judgment, and then the fruits of discernment must be translated to action to formulate an essential good decision-making approach. Moreover, Brady depicts Aquinas' prudence as three steps of conscience in more specific application to social teachings, which is the formation of social conscience. First is "Look (Inquiry)," or social awareness of the situation and looking at issues based on relevant statistics or scientific research. Next is Judge (Judgment) or judgment of social situations affecting the societies using the lens of social teachings. One does not end on evaluating identified issues but requires responsibility and response in addressing forms of injustice. This leads to the third step, which is the Act (Command), turning the sense of responsibility into application and action based on the demands of inquiry and discernment. Finally, Aquinas links prudence as a constitutive element in the realization of justice.³⁶ For justice with the goal of actualizing the common good necessitates right awareness, judgment, and action.

Kotre also supports the claim of the three-stage approach as an inspiration coming from the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas. Writing a brief biography of Cardinal Cardijn, who was popularly known as the pioneer of see-judge-act or the Inquiry Method, acknowledged Aquinas as the source of the perspective.³⁷ Likewise,

Gigacz refers to Cardijn's motivation from the readings and the writings of Aquinas. And for Cleary, he views the same to Aquinas, but there is a tendency to associate it with Marxism ideology.³⁸ Referring to the Latin American experience, social actions emerged from the European movements empowering lay persons in their respective work together with students subscribing to the call of social teachings.

3. Joseph Cardijn

The influence of Aquinas on the see-judge-act process may have contributed to the founding of the Young Christian Workers Movement (*Jeunes Ouvrières Chrétiennes*, or Jocist movement) by Cardijn, then an official recognition in the social encyclical *Mater et Magistra*,

"The See, Judge, and Act method, conceived by Thomas Aquinas, activated by Cardinal Cardijn, and canonized by Pope John XXIII"³⁹

St. Thomas Aquinas not only helped form the three-step method but also inspired Pope Leo XIII, who later introduced the development of the first social encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (1891). But prior to this proclamation, the pope earlier wrote a document revisiting and infusing the teachings of Aquinas in Catholic schools and universities.⁴⁰ This paved the way and provided a foundation for the birth of Catholic social thinking, defending the rights of the workers in the context of the Industrial Revolution and the effects of the French Revolution.⁴¹ Because of the encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1878) and the rethinking of Aquinas' philosophy and theology, the Church embarked on a renewed

³⁴ Mejia, *The Impact of the Pastoral Circle*, 37; Bushlack, *Politics for a Pilgrim Church*, 114; Brady, *Essential Catholic Social Thought*, 37

³⁵ Brady, *Essential Catholic Social Thought*, 37, 39, 40

³⁶ Brady, *Essential Catholic Social Thought*, 422

³⁷ John N. Kotre, *Simple Gifts: The Lives of Pat and Patty Crowley* (Kansas City: Andrew and McMeel, 1979), 39, 48

³⁸ Edward L. Cleary, *Crisis and Change: The Church in Latin America Today*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1985), 4

³⁹ Francis Wendell, O.P., *Laymen, Vatican II's Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity: Text and Commentary* (Chicago: Catholic Action Federations, 1966), 61

⁴⁰ *Aeterni Patris*, 31

⁴¹ Brady, *Essential Catholic Social Thought*, 70





understanding of its mission as a reaction to the exploitation and slavery of laborers. *Rerum Novarum* becomes the fruit of the discernment and influence of Aquinas' on justice, human dignity, and particularly on private ownership.⁴²

Joseph Cardijn (1882-1967) formally introduced a framework "see-judge-act" as a method of Catholic social teachings and has been canonically acknowledged by Pope John XXIII in his *Mater et Magistra*. According to Gigacz, Cardijn may have found inspiration from Thomistic thought in his interpellation of prudence by embodying it in a more coherent three-step process.⁴³

Cardijn was born in Belgium at the time of intellectual integration brought about by democratic uprisings, the Industrial Revolution, capitalism, and socialism. His younger years were the dawn of Catholic social teachings, and *Rerum Novarum* was in the early stage of reception. Moved by the new direction of the Church and his encounter with young laborers helped him nurture his vocation and enter the priesthood.⁴⁴ Later, he founded *Jeunes Ouvrières Chrétiennes* or JOC (Young Christian Workers) with the goal of promoting the social teachings written by Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* and encouraging young lay people to discern and act on social problems.⁴⁵ He wrote:

The review of life, already so well-known in the circles of the lay apostolate, is one of the most important aspects of its method: see, judge, act. It is not only an irreplaceable method of education, it is also a precious element in spiritual direction and formation... this

review of life is a means to the apprenticeship and fraternal control of the total transformation of everyday life.⁴⁶

Cardijn stressed the importance of religious life in a secular world in the midst of social challenges and issues. He realized projecting the faith have the tendency of settling merely on spiritual level separated from everyday civil affairs as if God is apart of this world. This perspective can even lead to social problems as if work of salvation matters only in after life. To respond to this task, he modeled the Lord's Prayer as an integration of missionary activity establishing the kingdom of God "on earth as it is in heaven."⁴⁷

Cardijn's see-judge-act becomes a reinforcement of the continuity of Catholic social teachings. Gigacz argues that Cardijn may had either direct or indirect influences on the social thought of popes after Leo XIII, such as Pius XI and John XXIII.⁴⁸ Contributions of Cardijn and his movement (the JOC) had impacted some significant lines of the encyclicals such as in *Quadragesimo Anno* (Pius XI, 1931),⁴⁹ "many young men... are studying social problems with deeper interest, and they arouse the joyful hope that they will dedicate themselves wholly to the restoration of society."⁵⁰ Vatican had applied key principles of JOC which Pope Pius XI understood as an alignment to *Rerum Novarum*, but the succeeding Pope (Pius XII) may have not evidently followed.⁵¹ Recognizing the importance of social issues, Cardijn proposed to the next Pope (John XXIII) the idea of issuing a new encyclical to commemorate the 70th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*. In response, the Pope invited him together with a team to submit a detailed proposal and crafted a 20-page

⁴² John Finnis, "Aquinas as a Primary Source of Catholic Social Teaching," in *Catholic Social Teaching - Volume of Scholarly Essays*, eds. Gerard Bradley, E. Christian Brugger (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press., 2019), 11-15

⁴³ Gigacz, *The Leaven in the Council: Joseph Cardijn*, 91; Bob Pennington, "Cardijn Canon: A Method of Theological Praxis in Contemporary Catholic Social Teaching," *Praxis*, vol.1 issue 2 (2018): 189

⁴⁴ Pennington, *Cardijn Canon: A Method of Theological Praxis*, 91

⁴⁵ Mark Francis, "Church Life in the First Half of the Twentieth Century," in *The Cambridge Companion to Vatican II*, ed. by Richard R. Gaillardetz (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press., 2020), 16

⁴⁶ Joseph Cardijn, *Laymen Into Action*, trans. Anne Heggie (London: Geoffrey Chapman LTD, 1964), 150

⁴⁷ Joseph Cardijn, *Laymen Into Action*, 148

⁴⁸ Gigacz, *The Leaven in the Council: Joseph Cardijn*, 15, 18-19, 76

⁴⁹ Gigacz, *The Leaven in the Council: Joseph Cardijn*, 76

⁵⁰ *Quadragesimo Anno*, 140

⁵¹ Katherine Massam, *Sacred Threads: Catholic Spirituality in Australia 1922-1962* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 1996), 195





document addressing the Church's role in the world of work, espousing and recommending the 'see, judge, act' structure. His pivotal ideas were eventually reflected in the *Mater et Magistra* encyclical.⁵²

Cardijn also impacted the drafting of Vatican II documents namely *Gaudium et Spes* (Church in the Modern World) and *Apostolicam Actuositatem* (Apostolate of the Laity)⁵³ Though generally unnoticed due to his appointment as Cardinal only in 1965 which restricted him from participating in the Council deliberations, he essentially imparted drafts, particularly on the role of the laity. The see-judge-act method or the "principles of Cardijn" was substantially identified in *Apostolicam Actuositatem*.⁵⁴

29. Since formation for the apostolate cannot consist in merely theoretical instruction, from the beginning of their formation the laity should gradually and prudently learn how to view, judge and do all things in the light of faith as well as to develop and improve themselves along with others through doing, thereby entering into active service to the Church.

The influence of Cardijn goes beyond yet limited intervention in the Council. In fact, there were hundreds of bishops, and many expert advisors affiliated with the Young Christian Workers (YCW) movements passionately endorsed Cardijn's ideas and methods during the Council discussions.⁵⁵ Beyond Vatican II, the key principles of JOC were also sustained through bishops' initiatives and conferences. For example, in The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), the see-judge-act is an example method of pastoral-theological discernment recognizing Cardijn's framework.⁵⁶ In the Philippines, the CBCP President Bishop Pablo Virgilio David's

opening reflection for the National Synodal Consultation, and the Vatican's Synodal Process.

4. Liberation Theology

The "see-judge-act" method and its derivations are often linked to the liberation theology framework. Gustavo Gutierrez, the recognized "father of liberation theology" according to former Prefect of Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (now Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith) Cardinal Müller,⁵⁷ utilized the method in liberation theology. In his influential book, *A Theology of Liberation*, Gutiérrez stressed the need of critical reflection on theologizing. In doing this, deductive interpretations must not be the sole form of analysis but also drawing on the level of human experiences. This level of "seeing" tries to uncover economic and socio-cultural issues that may have an effect on the lives of communities. Other than the Christian life in the Church, going beyond the boundaries of the Church implies an openness and bringing the Church to the world.⁵⁸ Gutiérrez cites Congar:

Instead of using only revelation and tradition as starting points, as classical theology has generally done, it must start with facts and questions derived from the world and from history.⁵⁹

The second step is theology referring to the level of "judging." Based on the foundations of faith, theological reflection serves as the evaluation of situation speaking from the lens of Scriptures and Church teachings. The *locus theologicus* locates its place from human engagement and from the presence of the Spirit. In the light of faith (judge) and values of the Gospel, analysis of situations becomes God's intervention in history, leading to the third step, which is the "action." Theology then is linked to praxis. It is the faith realizing

⁵² Gigacz, *The Leaven in the Council: Joseph Cardijn*, 18

⁵³ Gigacz, *The Leaven in the Council: Joseph Cardijn*, 16

⁵⁴ Herbert Vorgrimler, ed. *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, volume 3* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 397-398

⁵⁵ Gigacz, *The Leaven in the Council: Joseph Cardijn*, 16

⁵⁶ Quevedo, Ten Theological Trends for Mission in Asia, 27-28

⁵⁷ Gutiérrez and Müller, *On the Side of the Poor*, 57

⁵⁸ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, 9

⁵⁹ Yves-Marie Congar, *Situation et tâches présentes de la théologie* (Paris: Les Editions du Cerf, 1967), 72



the prophetic role of Christian life, reflecting on praxis in the light of faith. While action or praxis is the fruit of discernment, orthopraxis and orthodoxy must go together.⁶⁰

Cardinal Müller, in his book *On the Side of the Poor: The Theology of Liberation*, co-written with Gustavo Gutierrez, also follows the three-stage methodology of liberation theology: analysis of society (see), critical and rational analysis undertaken in light of the gospel, and divine revelation, (judge) and critical reflection to action.⁶¹ Since discipleship demands God's praxis in liberation and salvation, analysis of human societies and situations must be the starting point of reflection. The use of social sciences as methods and other inductive approaches are essential tools. While this stage may result in derivations and deviations from theological insights, Müller suggests resorting to *Liberatis* documents (*Libertatis Conscientia* and *Libertatis Nuntius*) and other magisterial sources to make assessments aligned with the Church. The fruit of analysis leads to the second stage, albeit overlaps with the first one. The values of the Gospel and divine revelation are at the center of this method, essentially forming an integral process and common objective from "seeing" to "acting." Hence, Müller's final step, "critical reflection to action," indicates a Christian understanding of situations heading towards Christian praxis, defining liberation theology as a true Christian methodology reflecting on Jesus' liberating activity.

Other theologians also view "see-judge-act" as a method in liberation theology. Brothers Leonardo and Clodovis Boff elaborated it as three mediations: socio-analytical, hermeneutical, and practical mediations.⁶² But Leonardo expanded it

more to seeing analytically, judging theologically, and acting pastorally or politically.⁶³ Justin Sands considers Joseph Cardijn as a central figure in liberation theology and appropriates see-judge-act in the South African context.⁶⁴ Joe Holland, known for interpreting the method as a "pastoral circle" with Peter Henriot, claims Latin American liberation theology originated from the European context of Cardijn's methodology.⁶⁵ Though the "pastoral circle" is an innovation of the traditional three-step process, Holland and Henriot's pastoral circle consists of four stages. Anglican Bishop John Pritchard and Baptist minister Paul Ballard regarded the pastoral cycle as a liberationist model.⁶⁶ A consultant to the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Donal Dorr, features witness, judgment, and action as the foundation of liberal principle referring to the Latin American cause for freedom and option for the poor deriving from the sense of *Gaudium et Spes*.⁶⁷ American Protestant theologian Harvey Cox refers to Latin American theology of the liberation process first consideration of realities followed by theological reflection and then putting into action.⁶⁸ Like other theologians, the steps result in a cycle of continuous reflection "all in the light of faith." Jesuits Brackley and Schubeck recognize Cardijn's social action movement's "see, judge, act" as a classic liberation theology method and as three mediations of moral theology.⁶⁹ Lastly, Filipino theologian and priest Reynaldo Raluto models the "see, judge, and act"

⁶⁰ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, xxxiv, 9-10

⁶¹ Gutiérrez and Müller, *On the Side of the Poor*, 19-20

⁶² Boff Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, 24, 72

⁶³ Leonardo Boff, "What Are Third World Theologies?" in Boff and Elizondo, *Theologies of the Third World*, 12

⁶⁴ Justin Sands, "Introducing Cardinal Cardijn's See-Judge-Act as an Interdisciplinary Method to Move Theory into Practice," *Religions* 9, 129 (2018): 2-3

⁶⁵ Joe Holland, "Introduction: Roots of the Pastoral Circle in Personal Experiences and Catholic Social Tradition," in *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*, eds. Frans Wijzen, Peter Henriot, and Rodrigo Mejía (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2005), 9

⁶⁶ Ballard and Pritchard, *Practical Theology in Action*, 79

⁶⁷ Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor*, 124

⁶⁸ Harvey Cox, "Oneness and Diversity" (1988) in *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, ed. Alfred Hennelly (Maryknoll N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1990): 439

⁶⁹ Brackley and Schubeck, "Moral Theology in Latin America," 124



of *Mater et Magistra* in his ecological theology of liberation.⁷⁰

5. Cross Communion Paradigm

The Pastoral cycle (also as the see-judge-act method) is necessary in the understanding of the Cross Communion Paradigm form of liberation theology. It also contributes to the comprehension of the methodology of the social teachings of the Church. Integral in this framework is the element of contemplation, which provides elaboration of the paradigm associated with liberation. For Cardinal Bo, contemplation is synonymous with looking, gazing, and awareness of God and links it together with liberation.⁷¹ The two elements (contemplation and liberation) are cohesively expressed by way of communion with God and with our neighbors. Together, liberation becomes a goal of contemplation by nature of being in communion with the Liberator and with being liberated. Moreover, Pope Francis, in his Apostolic Exhortation, identifies an authoritative form of contemplation and should lead to recognition of situation of the self to others. The joy of the Gospel finds complete liberation when one becomes more receptive to the needs of people.⁷² If the self transcends himself to the divine calling, responds and moves away from the boundaries of the ego, then reaches out to others, lives a life fulfilled and dignified. In other words, Pope Francis locates authentic joy if true followers of Christ contemplate first His calling; consequently, frees the self from egocentric tendencies and then seeks the liberation of others, most especially the poor and afflicted.⁷³ Additionally, the Pope quotes Saint Thomas Aquinas on contemplation: *contemplare et contemplata aliis tradere*, and

stresses its pastoral importance of sharing with others the fruits of contemplation.⁷⁴ Therefore, true freedom is an exercise of contemplation and predisposes the realization of liberation.⁷⁵

The etymology of the word *contemplate* is derived from Latin *contemplatus* which means *look* or *observe*. In Dawson's view, the act of contemplation is not a 'flight from the world' or mere spiritual exercises or pious religiosity but a conscious involvement and interaction with concrete social realities associated with the first step in methodology - *seeing*.⁷⁶ Cardinal Müller quotes Latin American Bishop's conferences on contemplation, saying that in order to contemplate, one must have the eyes to recognize the suffering faces of our brothers and sisters.⁷⁷ Recognition is beyond seeing, for seeing is a primary step of passive awareness leading to recognition of situations and affiliation of self with others. For this reason, recognition as contemplation is an initial move in the formation of communion. In the Cross Communion Paradigm, *contemplation as seeing* is located on the horizontal dimension. The horizontal perspective aids in the realization of humanity created in the image of God with dignity and among human beings. This equality principle in the horizontal plane is not a static and stationary dot but a movement of a dot and makes a line connecting the self to others in communion.

The second step in methodology - *judging* - is another appropriation of contemplation linked to the paradigm being proposed. In the process of social transformation, social analysis is analogous to seeing. Generally, the Church is known to have rejected ideologies for it contradict the

⁷⁰ Raluto, *Poverty and Ecology*, 187

⁷¹ Cardinal Bo, "The Church in Communion: Theology and Expression," 7, 17

⁷² *Evangelii Gaudium*, 9, 281

⁷³ *Gaudium et Spes*, 1

⁷⁴ *Evangelii Gaudium*, 150

⁷⁵ Potworowski, *Contemplation and Incarnation*, 38

⁷⁶ Andrew Dawson, "The Social and Communal Aspects of Urban Spirituality: See-Judge-Act and the Urban Context," *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (2000): 60-61

⁷⁷ Gerhard Ludwig Cardinal Müller, *Poor for the Poor*, 83



message of the Gospel. But in reality, ideologies may be a framework in the analysis of society as long as it tries to achieve the elements of the faith and its values⁷⁸ following fundamental principles that all human beings are created in the image of God, leading to the promotion of the dignity of human persons.⁷⁹ Conclusively, it is the faith that judges ideologies and not the other way around.⁸⁰

One of the missionary thrusts of the Church is a theological reflection after a critical analysis of the society. Judgment must be anchored in the light of the fruits of contemplation from the demands of the Gospel and from Pope Leo XIII's work on *Rerum Novarum*, together with encyclicals that follow it.⁸¹ Judgment that is devoid of spiritual considerations, without reconnecting to God and with the Church, a theology of liberation is incompatible with that of the Church.

Contemplation as judging in the liberation framework lies on the vertical plane. It is established earlier that the vertical dimension is a communion between God and human persons, between God in communion with His Church. Accordingly, judging is an outcome of contemplation in communion with God and the Church, for "the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the "signs of the times" and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel."⁸²

The final stage of the pastoral method is the planning and realization of theological reflection. Orthodoxy leads to orthopraxis, correct doctrine is consummated into correct action. The teachings of the Gospel and the whole tradition of the Church pronounced by the magisterium must be

translated into Christian practice. Gomez urges the need for action, for without praxis, right belief is not saving and, therefore, not liberating.⁸³ As Pope John Paul II stated, a valid form of praxis aligned in the Church is the one that proclaims the truth about God for the authentic liberation of man, responding to a major trend in liberation theology utilizing Marxist analysis that emerged in the 70's and 80's. As a cross current of the Church, the said ideological orientation demands a need for praxis born out of class struggle and claims revolutionary change as necessary for the transformation of society, by way of eliminating the root of oppression brought about by capitalistic and oligarchic institutions. This was challenged by the Church particularly the armed resistance stance of communism. Instead of aiding real liberation from oppression, resorting to violence leads to a vicious cycle of repression consequently perpetuating human struggle.⁸⁴

Liberation as the goal of the theology would not be realized if not put into action, *faith without works is dead*. (James 2:14-26). A theology of liberation is actually more than a discerning of life situations but directed by contemplation to share with others what has been contemplated. In the Cross Communion framework, action is represented by a horizontal plane rooted in the ascent of faith, Scriptures, and social doctrines of the Church symbolized by the vertical dimension of the Cross. Horizontal, in a sense, is a pursuit of temporal liberation establishing the kingdom of God "*on earth as it is in heaven*."

B. APPLICATION

A theology of liberation is often understood as one of the frameworks of theologizing in reference to the Church's mission of preferential love for

⁷⁸ PCP II, 368

⁷⁹ LC, 73

⁸⁰ PCP II, 369

⁸¹ *Octogesima Adveniens*, 4

⁸² *Gaudium et Spes*, 4

⁸³ Gomez, "Paths of Liberation Towards Freedom," 190

⁸⁴ LN, XI.7, 10, 11



the poor. But the poor are often understood on the level of economic issues. It usually portrays beggars, the homeless, the jobless, the oppressed, or any situation of debased human conditions. However, there are also poor related to Biblical depictions, such as the *anawim* who lived in poverty yet often sought God's refuge as their source of hope and strength despite material deprivations.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, the concept of poor should not be limited to one social class but includes even the rich. In fact, the general concept of a preferential option is specifically those deprived of dignity proper to the human person.⁸⁶ More than poverty, persons whose circumstances are not attuned to the divine plan require freedom from any dehumanizing situations. For Pope John Paul II, this kind of poverty may be in a form of deprivation of basic rights⁸⁷ and for Pope Francis, the poor manifests also in physical, spiritual, social, and moral aspects.⁸⁸ Therefore, the liberating work of God should not be restricted to economic conditions but include anyone⁸⁹ who requires conversion and transformation leading to attaining authentic freedom.

The Cross Communion Paradigm, as a form of liberation theology, presents various applications that underscore the integration of vertical and horizontal dimensions. This framework is closely linked to the principles of "see, judge, and act" and can be applied in the Philippine context. The following are examples.

1. Education

The Church in the modern world considers education as an indispensable element in the

formation of humanity and social progress.⁹⁰ The Vatican II council reemphasized the Church's task of proclaiming the mystery of salvation of man with the establishment of schools forming an integral part of Christianizing the nations as evidenced in history. As they preach Christ, the great Teacher and the source of all salvation, it is also essential to teach not only what is spiritual but also significant factors in the progress of human societies. Likewise in the Catholic Church in the Philippines, education is also the most important means of evangelization.⁹¹ Since the mission of the Church is to proclaim the Gospel to the world and for the salvation of humanity, it is imperative to preach not only the Good News in religious form but also the promotion of temporal needs, the total development of persons, and the transformation of society.

The Christian perspective on education has a liberative dimension. It calls on the faithful to form communities, particularly families, free from forms of slavery or sin that can affect culture, economic, social, and political aspects.⁹² Education in Christian schools is founded on a religious perspective, but it manifests both in faith and in secular life. First, it is education in the right use of freedom.⁹³ Since real freedom is not to do anything what one wants to do, but doing according to right reason directed towards the true good of man and society. Schools then become the starting point of the development of the right to freedom and, in turn, actualization in social life. Moreover, promotion of educational levels on preferential option of the poor especially in alleviating unjust inequalities of material goods.⁹⁴ By eliminating illiteracy, Christian education establishes not

⁸⁵ Raymond Edward Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Roland Edmund, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1990), 640, 910-911

⁸⁶ Gerhard Ludwig Cardinal Müller, *Poor for the Poor*, 24-25

⁸⁷ *Sollicitudo Rei*, 42

⁸⁸ Gerhard Ludwig Cardinal Müller, *Poor for the Poor*, vii

⁸⁹ *LC*, 68

⁹⁰ *Gravissimum Educationis*, Introduction

⁹¹ *PCP II*, 623

⁹² Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, "The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (April 7, 1988)" 5, 94

⁹³ *LC*, 23

⁹⁴ *LC*, 92



only personal attainment but also seeks the good of society. In the Philippine situation, conscientization or education of awareness of basic human rights, such as economic, social, political, cultural, and religious, generates a sense of social responsibility and communion linked to a theology of liberation but stresses faith in judging secular ideologies.⁹⁵

Christian education in Cross Communion Paradigm liberation theology follows the unity of vertical and horizontal dimensions. Vertically, Catholic schools are fundamentally an encounter with Christ,⁹⁶ the source and inspiration of bringing glad tidings and evangelization to the world. Horizontally, that source of encounter must translate to the forming of both communion of persons and human development. For Pope John Paul II, the mission of the Church is entrusted to Catholic schools to bring the message of Christ (vertical) to people, to society, to various cultures, and to all nations (horizontal).⁹⁷ Since education is a formation of knowledge primarily based on empirical observation and through senses (see)⁹⁸ followed by analysis based on principles and guides (judge), consequently translates to action and application (act). Viewed in another liberative approach, God has gifted humanity (vertical) to uncover his creation (see), discern its use and value according to the plan of God (vertical, judge), then utilize it for the good of society (horizontal, act). Therefore, education serves as a proper use of freedom anchored in faith, realizing the fruits of knowledge and skills for the benefit and transformation of society.

An example institution is the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP). One of the key objectives of the organization is to promote Christian education

through its schools according to the teachings of the Church (vertical, judge) and in line with Philippine laws for the total development of a human person and transformation of society (horizontal, act).⁹⁹ As it promotes Catholic religious instruction, the organization is committed to advancing social, political, and moral order (act) and collaborations on critical issues (see). One such instance, as mentioned earlier, is conscientization. Furthermore, in relation to synodality, Cardinal Advincula stresses learning in schools should be anchored in listening (see), wherein academic institutions prioritize the building of “we” of community life.¹⁰⁰ This dialogue then leads to “conversation in the Spirit” or “spiritual conversation” (judge) because the Holy Spirit is the source of wisdom and counsel. Lastly, education should contribute to the mission of transforming societies: liberation from illiteracy and freedom to share the fruits of what has been learned (*contemplare et contemplata aliis tradere*) for the good of communities. (act)

2. Politics

Pope Francis regards politics as a noble vocation, for it seeks the common good.¹⁰¹ This perspective follows the line of tradition of social teachings of the Church since Pope Leo XIII¹⁰² and Pope Pius XI.¹⁰³ While its nature is to establish order and general welfare, politics is often marred negatively, for it is associated with graft, corruption, and abuse of power, affecting most of the least in society, especially the poor. Worse, authoritarian governments, on most occasions, do not only exploit economic resources but have tendencies to have issues with the human dignity

⁹⁵ CFC, 1139, 1165

⁹⁶ Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, “400 Years of Catholic Education in the Philippines (January 29, 2012)” 55

⁹⁷ *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, Conclusion

⁹⁸ *De Veritate*, q. 2 a. 3 arg. 19

⁹⁹ Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP), “About CEAP”

¹⁰⁰ Jose F. Cardinal Advincula, “Homily during CEAP NCR General Assembly (July 12, 2023)”

¹⁰¹ *Evangelii Gaudium*, 205

¹⁰² *Immortale Dei*, 18

¹⁰³ *Quadragesimo Anno*, 86



and rights of their citizens. In other words, politics can make or break a nation depending on how authorities exercise their power: either for personal gain or the good of the society.

Politics, in fact, is not separate from Christian faith and morals.¹⁰⁴ In the Philippines, the separation of Church and State is frequently misunderstood literally as non-interference of both institutions. Legally, it simply means religious freedom.¹⁰⁵ For the Church, the primary mission is religious more than political or economic.¹⁰⁶ But politics has the tendency to sway away from the intended objective, leading to enslavement and injustice. Instead of the common good, the good becomes self-serving of those in power, depriving society of what is right and just. Hence, it is incumbent on the citizenry, including the Church, to dialogue and call to order if issues arise against public authorities. In this case, both clergy and laity must be politically involved “when moral and Gospel values are at stake.”¹⁰⁷

The Cross Communion Paradigm views politics from the light of the faith and requirements of the Gospel. (vertical, judge) Vatican II’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World made clear that applying the faith in temporal order such as politics and economics is part of the integral missionary activity of the Church:

There are, indeed, close links between earthly things and those elements of man’s condition which transcend the world... It is only right, however, that at all times and in all places, the Church should have true freedom to preach the faith, to teach her social doctrine, to exercise her role freely among men, and also to pass moral judgment

¹⁰⁴ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life (2002)” 1; Pope John Paul II, “Apostolic Letter *Motu Proprio* Proclaiming Saint Thomas More Patron of Statesmen and Politicians (October 31, 2000)” 4

¹⁰⁵ Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, “Pastoral Letter on the 2022 Election (March 27, 2022)”

¹⁰⁶ *Gaudium et Spes*, 42

¹⁰⁷ *PCP II*, 344

*in those matters which regard public order when the fundamental rights of a person or the salvation of souls require.*¹⁰⁸

Whereas the Church’s interest is for the common good of the people (horizontal, act), likewise, it is also of public authorities. Though both the Church and the State have the same direction, the Church’s orientation toward this objective of common good is ordered to God, “the sovereign Good, the ultimate end.”¹⁰⁹ (vertical) Therefore, faith discernment in politics is necessary (vertical, judge) and a responsibility in the pursuit of building a just society. (horizontal, act)

The history of Philippine politics is often not without religious color. Utilizing the Cross Communion Paradigm in politics in the liberation theology context can be traced back to Bishop Salazar, the first bishop of the Philippines, who fought for liberation and justice against the slavery of Filipino natives.¹¹⁰ Exposing the abuses, (horizontal, see, act) he wrote a letter to the King of Spain that their goal of occupation was “that God may be known, His faith preached, and His holy law received here; and that these Indians, by love, good works, and example, may be led to the knowledge of God and obedience to your Majesty.”¹¹¹ (vertical, judge) Fast forward to World War 2, the Japanese occupation caused innumerable suffering and death for Filipinos (horizontal, see). Led by the Americans with their Filipino counterparts, the Philippines was liberated and was considered a “liberation not merely a political one, but supereminently a long-sought religious liberation” by the bishops of the Philippines (vertical, judge; horizontal, act).¹¹² Likewise, the EDSA People Power

¹⁰⁸ *Gaudium et Spes*, 76

¹⁰⁹ *CCC*, 1744, 2420

¹¹⁰ Gutierrez, “Domingo de Salazar, O.P.,” 66-69

¹¹¹ Domingo de Salazar, “Affairs in the Philipinas Islands,” in *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1803, Volume V, 1582-1583*, eds. Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson (Cleveland, Ohio: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1903), 227-228

¹¹² Joint Letter of the Archbishops, Bishops and Prefects Apostolic of the Philippines to the Catholic Episcopate of the United States of America (1945)





of 1986 peaceful revolution (horizontal, act) toppled Marcos' regime, and the dictatorship (horizontal, see) was seen not only as a political event but also as a religious one (vertical, judge).¹¹³ Furthermore, Archbishop Legaspi underscores the liberation achieved from EDSA should serve as a reminder of centering the efforts on Christ (vertical, judge) and not from temporal activities such as political, ideological or economic to avoid another repeat of another struggle.

3. Social Media

The Church recognizes the effectiveness of social communication such as the press, movies, radio, television, and nowadays the internet, for it provides considerable benefits to humanity. Its platform plays a vital role in enhancing both entertainment and education, while also fostering the growth and support of the Kingdom of God. But media is also prone to deception, manipulation, and misinformation and authorities must have proper regulations and coordination with other civil groups to counter these challenges. Same with the Church, the Pope, and bishops have the duty to give directions and proper judgment in leading the flock away from possible threats.¹¹⁴

In relation to the liberative dimension of social media, Pope John Paul II calls on social media communicators to be of "service of truth, freedom and the promotion of the whole man in all people."¹¹⁵ Through faith, communication with God engenders human truths, which enables the common good. Here, the Pope links social media to the foundations of liberation theology in the Church: God, freedom, truth, and humanity.¹¹⁶

Since the Gospel serves as a vital means of conveying God's message, true freedom is also a proclamation of redemption. Central to this redemptive message are the fundamental truths of humanity, which highlight the importance of dignity and the pursuit of the common good.

One of the major concerns of the use of social media, particularly the internet, is fake news or disinformation. Pope Francis pertains this to the dissemination of disinformation through online platforms or traditional media outlets. It involves the distribution of false information with the intention to deceive and manipulate audiences mainly to influence political and economic objectives.¹¹⁷ Also, it breeds unhealthy dialogue, oftentimes resorting to irrational confrontations and excessively sensitive attitudes, ultimately contributing to the spread of arrogance and hatred. More unfortunate are those unsuspecting individuals who may unintentionally become complicit in the dissemination of fake news. (horizontal, see)

Countering disinformation necessitates a process of discernment. (vertical, judge) From a theological perspective, the first fake news that caused the original sin of the world was from the deceit of the serpent (Genesis 13:1-15). Adam and Eve were made to believe from the tempter's enticement, telling us a lesson that what may appear to be good can also be deceptive, and living with it is enslaving. But God sent Christ, "the way, the truth, and the life," (John 14:6) so that those who have faith in Him "will know the truth and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31-32) Indeed, Pope Francis proposes *truth with charity* (*veritas in caritate*), which entails the purification of one's heart in communication.¹¹⁸ This requirement offers a "listening and speaking

¹¹³ PCP II, 234, 286

¹¹⁴ *Inter Mirifica*, 2

¹¹⁵ Pope John Paul II, "18th World Communications Day (June 3, 1984)" 1

¹¹⁶ *LN*, IV.3, V.8

¹¹⁷ Pope Francis, "52nd World Communications Day (January 24, 2018)" 1

¹¹⁸ Pope Francis, "57th World Communications Day (January 24, 2023)"





with a pure heart” and tries to veer away from apathy and resentment caused by disinformation. (horizontal, act) Furthermore, the Synod proposes the establishment of dedicated Offices for digital culture and evangelization within the Church at various levels. These offices would not only facilitate the exchange and dissemination of best practices at both individual and community levels but also develop suitable tools for digital formation and evangelization. Additionally, they could combat the spread of misinformation about the Church and advocate for public authorities to implement stricter policies and measures to protect minors online.¹¹⁹

The last three elections in the Philippines (2016, 2019, 2022) have highlighted the profound influence of disinformation, either misleading or harmful information that has negatively affected a candidate’s chances of success or a compelling narrative that can be instrumental in getting voted.¹²⁰ Research shows that the architects of networked disinformation are coming from advertising and PR enterprises employed by some politicians. Their objectives are to engage in forming political operators, then develop targeted disinformation campaigns and mobilize online engagement groups.¹²¹ This, in turn, is amplified by so-called political experts together with social media influencers and their “troll armies,” whose activities undermine political discourse and suppress dissenting voices often by disseminating disinformation and engaging in hate speech. (see) Esguerra observes disinformation plays a critical role in exacerbating the divisions within the already polarized political landscape and it is imperative

to address the issue to reduce existing gaps and promote environments conducive to civil discourse.¹²² (act)

The Philippine bishops also recognize the problem of disinformation via social media. (horizontal, see) The prevalence of “alternative facts” and “fake news,” whereby individuals are engaged in disseminating misinformation, obscuring the truth, and misrepresenting information, is regrettably evident in contemporary society.¹²³ Accordingly, Villegas reiterates the articulation and advocacy for the truth since this is one of the fundamental aspects of Jesus’ mission (vertical, judge)¹²⁴ Moreover, David also reminds that the light of the Gospel follows the path of truth, goodness, justice and peace – not falsehood, violence, vengeance nor evil.¹²⁵ If truth is closely connected to freedom (John 8:32), then truth liberates, and falsehood enslaves. To evangelize the use of social media, the Church proposes several ways such as to commit to “common dialogue and discernment, prayer and action.” (see, judge and act) Through dialogue and communion, centered on faith and guided by the Gospel, the Church recognizes social media’s benefits, potentials, and challenges. Dialogue here does not only mean a collaboration among the faithful but also “to dialogue among all people of good will,”¹²⁶ and proclaiming the Gospel “by joining with every man who loves and practices justice.”¹²⁷ Then President of Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines quotes Internet advocate Wael Ghonim that “if we want to liberate society we first have to

¹¹⁹ Synod of Bishops, “Final Document of the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops (27 October 2018)”

¹²⁰ Christian Esguerra, “Rethinking Strategies Against Disinformation: The Case of Philippine Elections and Troll Networks,” *The Solutions Review: Fighting Fake News, Misinformation, and Disinformation* vol. 1 (2023): 12

¹²¹ Jonathan Corpus Ong and Jason Vincent A. Cabañes, *Architects of Networked Disinformation: Behind the Scenes of Troll Accounts and Fake News Production in the Philippines* (2018), 2

¹²² Christian Esguerra, *Rethinking Strategies Against Disinformation*, 16

¹²³ Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, “A Pastoral Exhortation Against Fake News (June 21, 2017)”¹²³; Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, “Pastoral Guidelines on the Use of Social Media (January 30, 2017); Archbishop Antonio Ledesma, “Unfinished business of elections 2022: Ten challenges (May 11, 2022)”

¹²⁴ Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, “A Pastoral Exhortation Against Fake News (June 21, 2017)”

¹²⁵ Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, “The Truth Will Set You Free” (February 25, 2022)”

¹²⁶ *Fratelli Tutti*, 6

¹²⁷ *Gaudium et Spes*, 93





liberate the internet.” For Villegas, this would mean “internet needs evangelizing” and urges the faithful to concrete actions such as identifying sources of fake news, stopping patronizing these sources, and refraining from sharing unverified online information. (horizontal, act)¹²⁸

V. CONCLUSION

Liberation theology has evolved as one of the most important theological movements emerging from the directives of Vatican II. It maintains a continuity with the broader development of Catholic theology,¹²⁹ which is “also timely, useful, and necessary.”¹³⁰ This theology presents various expressions and is typically categorized as either aligned with or not aligned with the Church’s teachings. A proper liberation theology within the Church is grounded in the truth regarding Jesus, the Church, and humanity.¹³¹ However, the theology can be effective if faith has relevance in the contribution of the good of society. Aspirations for liberation are not exclusively spiritual and for “otherworldly” but also for “this world” and human communities. Evidently, the cause for liberation is a collective objective of each individual and of people of goodwill. While there are various hermeneutical elaborations that were sometimes divergent or convergent with one another, either parallel to the doctrines of the Church or not, the see, judge, act methodology becomes a generic theme of theologizing and doing which clearly not for the cause exclusively of individual groups or societies but for the promotion of human dignity and the common good of society. What is initially necessary is a formation of social consciousness that frees the individual from self-centeredness, not only to see the face of

the other but a resolution and commitment translated to action. Relatively, the Church offers the horizontal dimension of the Cross which is a precondition to the love of neighbor. Anchored in the vertical dimension and centered on faith in God, the Church proposes guidelines for judging and evaluating societal realities through dialogue, collaboration, and action. Therefore, liberation theology is an approach of the Church, realizing that being part of the society (see, horizontal), guided by the faith and mandate of evangelization (judge, vertical), in collaboration with other societal groups, is committed in the promotion of common good and upliftment dignity of human persons. (act, horizontal)

¹²⁸ Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, Pastoral Guidelines on the Use of Social Media

¹²⁹ Gutiérrez and Müller, *On the Side of the Poor*, 11, 14

¹³⁰ John Paul II, *Letter to the Brazilian Episcopal Conference*, 498-506

¹³¹ LN, XI.5





REFERENCES

- Advincula, J. (2023, July 12). Homily during CEAP NCR General Assembly. Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Manila. <https://rcam.org/homily-transcript-manila-archbishop-jose-f-cardinal-advincula-mass-ceap-ncr-general-assembly-ust-july-12-2023-8-am>
- Ballard, P., & Pritchard, J. (1996). *Practical theology in action: Christian thinking in the service of church and society*. London, England: SPCK.
- Banawiratma, J. (2005). The pastoral circle as spirituality toward an open and contextual church. In F. Wijssen, P. Henriot, & R. Mejía (Eds.), *The pastoral circle revisited: A critical quest for truth and transformation* (pp. xx-xx). Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Bo, C. M. (2021). The church in communion: Theology and expression. In J. N. Abogado (Ed.), *Church as a communion: Perspectives and expressions in the Asian context* (pp. xx-xx). Manila, Philippines: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House.
- Boff, L., & Boff, C. (1987). *Introducing liberation theology*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Boff, L. (1988). What are Third World theologies? In L. Boff & V. Elizondo (Eds.), *Theologies of the Third World: Convergences and differences* (Concilium 199, pp. xx-xx). Edinburgh, Scotland: T&T Clark.
- Brackley, D., & Schubeck, T. (2002). Moral theology in Latin America. *Theological Studies*, 63(1), 123-160.
- Brady, B. (2017). *Essential Catholic social thought* (2nd ed.). Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Bulatao, J. (1965). Split-level Christianity. *Philippine Sociological Review*, 13(2), 119-121. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41853568>
- Bushlack, T. J. (2015). *Politics for a pilgrim church: A Thomistic theory of civic virtue*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Cardijn, J. (1964). *Laymen into action* (A. Heggie, Trans.). London, England: Geoffrey Chapman Ltd.
- Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. (2012, January 29). 400 years of Catholic education in the Philippines. <https://cbcponline.net/a-pastoral-letter-of-the-cbc-p-on-the-occasion-of-the-400-years-of-catholic-education-in-the-philippines>
- Joint Letter of the Archbishops, Bishops, and Prefects Apostolic of the Philippines to the Catholic Episcopate of the United States of America. (1945, July 19). Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. <https://cbcponline.net/joint-letter-of-the-archbishops-bishops-and-prefects-apostolic-of-the-philippines-to-the-catholic-episcopate-of-the-united-states-of-america>
- Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. (n.d.). About CEAP. <https://www.ceap.org.ph/who-we-are/about-ceap>
- Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. (n.d.). Announcing a message of liberation. In Acts and decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines.
- Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. (2017, January 30). Pastoral guidelines on the use of social media. <https://cbcponline.net/pastoral-guidelines-on-the-use-of-social-media>
- Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. (2017, June 21). A pastoral exhortation against fake news: Consecrate them in the truth. <https://cbcnews.net/cbcnews/consecrate-them-in-the-truth>
- Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. (2022, February 25). The truth will set you free (John 8:32). <https://cbcnews.net/cbcnews/the-truth-will-set-you-free-john-832>
- Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. (2022, March 27). Pastoral letter on the 2022 election: Be concerned about the welfare of others. <https://cbcnews.net/cbcnews/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/BE-CONCERNED-ABOUT-THE-WELFARE-OF-OTHERS-CBCP-Pastoral-Letter-on-the-2022-Election.pdf>
- Cleary, E. L. (1985). *Crisis and change: The church in Latin America today* (2nd ed.). Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Congar, Y.-M. (1967). *Situation et tâches présentes de la théologie*. Paris, France: Les Éditions du Cerf.
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. (1984). Instruction on certain aspects of the theology of liberation. Vatican. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19840806_theology-liberation_en.html
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. (1986). Instruction on Christian freedom and liberation. Vatican. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19860322_freedom-liberation_en.html
- Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. (2002). Doctrinal note on some questions regarding the participation of Catholics in political life. Vatican. https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_20021124_politica_en.html
- Cox, H. (1990). Oneness and diversity. In A. Hennelly (Ed.), *Liberation theology: A documentary history* (pp. xx-xx). Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books. (Original work published 1988)
- David, P. (2022). Opening reflection for the National Synodal Consultation. <https://synodphilippines.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Opening-Reflection.pdf>





- Dawson, A. (2000). The social and communal aspects of urban spirituality: See–Judge–Act and the urban context. *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 21(1), 51–62.
- de Salazar, D. (1903). *Affairs in the Philipinas Islands*. In E. H. Blair & J. A. Robertson (Eds.), *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1803* (Vol. 5, 1582–1583). Cleveland, OH: Arthur H. Clark Company.
- Dorr, D. (2016). *Option for the poor and for the earth: From Leo XIII to Pope Francis* (Rev. ed.). Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Dussel, E., Hodgson, I., & Pedrozo, J. (1992). Liberation theology and Marxism. *Rethinking Marxism*, 5(3), 50–74.
- Eissrich, D. (2017). An economist's view of the work of Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler and its influence on the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. In J. Backhaus, G. Chaloupek, & F. Frambach (Eds.), *On the economic significance of the Catholic social doctrine: 125 years of Rerum Novarum* (pp. xx–xx). Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Esguerra, C. (2023). Rethinking strategies against disinformation: The case of Philippine elections and troll networks. *The Solutions Review: Fighting Fake News, Misinformation, and Disinformation*, 1, 12–16.
- Ferm, D. W. (1986). *Third world liberation theologies: An introductory survey*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Finnis, J. (2019). Aquinas as a primary source of Catholic social teaching. In G. Bradley & E. C. Brugger (Eds.), *Catholic social teaching* (Vol. of scholarly essays, pp. xx–xx). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Francis, M. (2020). Church life in the first half of the twentieth century. In R. R. Gaillardetz (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Vatican II* (pp. xx–xx). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Francis. (2018, January 24). 52nd World Communications Day. Vatican Press. <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2018/01/24/180124c.html>
- Francis. (2023, January 24). 57th World Communications Day. Vatican Press. <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/20230124-messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html>
- General Secretariat of the Synod. (n.d.). Vatican's synodal process. Vatican. <https://www.synod.va/en/the-synodal-process.html>
- Gigacz, S. (2021). *The leaven in the council: Joseph Cardijn and the Jocist network at Vatican II*. Melbourne, Australia: Australian Cardijn Institute Cooperative Ltd.
- Gomez, F. (1986). Paths of liberation towards freedom. *Philippiniana Sacra*, 62(May–April), 173–211.
- Gutiérrez, G., & Müller, G. L. (2015). *On the side of the poor: The theology of liberation*. New York, NY: Orbis Books.
- Gutiérrez, G. (1988). *A theology of liberation: History, politics, and salvation* (Rev. ed., with new introduction). Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Gutierrez, L. (1985). Domingo de Salazar, O.P., first bishop of the Philippines (1512–1594): Defender of the rights of the Filipinos at the Spanish contact. *Philippiniana Sacra*, 20(58), 62–79.
- Holden, W., & Nadeau, K. (2010). Philippine liberation theology and social development in anthropological perspective. *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 38(1–2), 89–129.*
- Holland, J. (2005). Introduction: Roots of the pastoral circle in personal experiences and Catholic social tradition. In F. Wijsen, P. Henriot, & R. Mejia (Eds.), *The pastoral circle revisited: A critical quest for truth and transformation* (pp. xx–xx). Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Humphrey, K. A. (2011). Gustavo Gutiérrez's liberation theology: Traditional Catholicism from the perspective of the afflicted poor. *Denison Journal of Religion*, 10(2), 1–24.
- John Paul II. (1979, January 28). Address at the opening of the conference at Puebla. Vatican. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1979/january/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19790128_messico-puebla-episc-latam.html
- John Paul II. (1984, June 3). 18th World Communications Day. Vatican. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/communications/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_24051984_world-communications-day.html
- John Paul II. (1986, April 9). Letter to the Brazilian Episcopal Conference. Vatican.
- John Paul II. (2000, October 31). Apostolic letter *motu proprio* proclaiming Saint Thomas More patron of statesmen and politicians. Vatican. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_jp-ii_motu-proprio_20001031_thomas-more.pdf
- Kirwan, M. (2012). Liberation theology and Catholic social teaching. *New Blackfriars*, 93(1044), 246–258.
- Kotre, J. N. (1979). *Simple gifts: The lives of Pat and Patty Crowley*. Kansas City, MO: Andrew and McMeel.





- Ledesma, A. (2022, May 11). Unfinished business of elections 2022: Ten challenges. CBCP News. <https://cbcnews.net/cbcnews/opinion-unfinished-business-of-elections-2022-ten-challenges>
- Legaspi, Leonardo. "Homilies Delivered during the Liturgical Rites for the Opening and Closing of the Council," Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II) (2018): 1-10
- Massam, Katherine, Sacred Threads: Catholic Spirituality in Australia 1922-1962. Sydney: UNSW Press. 1996.
- Mejia, Rodrigo. "The Impact of the Pastoral Circle in Teaching Pastoral Theology," in *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*, eds. Frans Wijssen, Peter Henriot, and Rodrigo Mejia. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books. 2005.
- Müller, Gerhard Ludwig. *Poor for the Poor: The Mission of the Church*. Washington, DC: Libreria Editrice Vaticana. 2016.
- Ong, Jonathan Corpus, and Jason Vincent Cabañes. "Architects of networked disinformation: Behind the scenes of troll accounts and fake news production in the Philippines." (2018).
- Pennington, Bob. "Cardijn Canon: A Method of Theological Praxis in Contemporary Catholic Social Teaching." *Praxis*, vol.1 issue 2 (2018): 85-103
- Pinckaers, Servais. *The Source of Christian Ethics*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press. 1995.
- Potworowski, Christophe. *Contemplation and Incarnation: The Theology of Marie-Dominique Chenu*. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press. 2001.
- Quevedo, Orlando B., "Ten Theological Trends for Mission in Asia: Fifty Years after Vatican II." *Asia Pacific Mission Studies*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2020): 22-31.
- Raluto, Reynaldo. *Poverty and Ecology at the Crossroads: Towards an Ecological Theology of Liberation in the Philippine Context*. Ateneo De Manila University Press. 2015.
- Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education. "The Catholic School." (March 19, 1977). https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html
- _____. "The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School." (April 7, 1988). https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_19770319_catholic-school_en.html
- Sands, Justin. "Introducing Cardinal Cardijn's See-Judge-Act as an Interdisciplinary Method to Move Theory into Practice," *Religions* 9, 129 (2018): 1-10
- Sobrinho, Jon. "Faith, Justice, and Injustice," in *The Pastoral Circle Revisited: A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*, eds. Frans Wijssen, Peter Henriot, and Rodrigo Mejia. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books. 2005.
- Synod of Bishops. "Final Document of the XV Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops." (October 27 2018). https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20181027_doc-final-instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani_en.html
- Vorgrimler, Herbert, ed. Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II, volume 3. New York: Herder and Herder. 1969.
- Wendell, Francis. Laymen, Vatican II's Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity: Text and Commentary. Chicago: Catholic Action Federations. 1966.

