

JESUIT HYBRIDS, CATHOLIC MODERNITIES, FUTURAL PASTS

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1 TITLE

2 In the year 1924, the Jesuit paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin was forty-three years old. After years spent teaching and excavating fossils in Egypt and Spain, he had returned to France for the First World War. Declining the safer route which would have been to serve as a military chaplain, Teilhard volunteered for the infantry and served as a medic on the front lines. He had seen the very worst that humanity is capable of, and was now returning to his life as a research scientist.

3 When Teilhard talked about his travels in the Middle East and his theories regarding evolution, his Catholic listeners were both fascinated and troubled: fascinated by the exotic stories of travel and discovery; troubled because one could not be both a believer in the Catholic faith and in evolutionary theory. Or at least so it seemed in the early century.

In response to repeated questions about how to reconcile scientific inquiry with the Catholic doctrine of original sin, Teilhard prepared written notes. These notes mysteriously made their way to Rome's Holy Office of the Inquisition — today's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, until earlier this year presided over by Cardinal Josef Ratzinger, and now to be headed up by San Francisco's Archbishop William Levada.

4 After a lengthy investigation, Teilhard's license to teach at the Catholic University of Paris was permanently revoked. This was only the beginning of the rest of his life: three more decades during which he would be forbidden to publish, teach, or even live in Paris. He would spend the remainder of his life exiled from France, first in China and then in New York where he would eventually die and his body would be buried.

5 During the great crisis of conscience that these events provoked, Teilhard wrote to a close Jesuit friend:

"They want me to promise in writing that I will never say or write anything against the traditional position of the Church on original sin. . . . I feel I should, in conscience, reserve for myself (1) the right to carry on research with professional men . . . ; (2) the right to bring help to the disturbed and troubled."

To my mind, these lines written in 1924 sum up succinctly what it means to be a Jesuit scholar — and, by extension, what it means for an intellectual institution to be in the Catholic and Jesuit traditions.

6 Teilhard's first right — to carry on research with professional peers — followed logically from the longstanding Catholic tradition of belief, extending through St. Thomas Aquinas at least back to the "twelfth-century renaissance," that the object of Truth is ultimately Being itself . . . And thus, if one is a religious believer, the object of Truth is ultimately God.

7 Unlike nominalist traditions, skeptical about what the mind can know, Catholic teaching held on to a belief — some might say an overly-naive belief — that we really can attain to a knowledge of things as they are, and that faith and reason ultimately cannot contradict one another. This optimistic stance was defined dogmatically at the First Vatican Council. It leads logically to Teilhard's first claimed right: the right to carry on research with intellectual peers — what we would call "academic freedom."

8 If this first right is quintessentially Catholic, the second right is specifically Jesuit: "to

bring help to the disturbed and troubled.” In Teilhard’s time, those who were “disturbed and troubled” were those who could not find the intellectual means with which to reconcile their positions as believing Catholics and as informed intelligent moderns. One could not, for example, be both Catholic and a believer in evolutionary science. Similarly, one could not be both Catholic and a proponent of democracy — something that would baffle almost any Catholic today.

⁹ When Teilhard said that he had a *right* to bring help to the “disturbed and troubled,” he might have added that he had a **duty**, an **obligation**, a **vocation** — precisely as a Jesuit — to do so. Throughout the writings of St. Ignatius Loyola and the early Jesuits [in this image, from the *Jesuit Constitutions* and from a diary entry of Pierre Favre] we find these two words used over and over to specify the Jesuit’s proper mission: “to help” — or “to aid” — and “to console.”

¹⁰ Thus, to be Catholic and to be Jesuit are not the same thing. To be Jesuit is a particular species of the genus Catholicism with a peculiar relationship to the hierarchical Catholic institution. A Jesuit has one foot in the Church and one foot in the world — or to use H. Richard Niebuhr’s now-classic terminology, a Jesuit bridges — I will suggest *hybridizes* — “*Christ and culture*.” There are, of course, many Catholic traditions that set Christ and culture in opposition to one another: the Benedictine monastic tradition, the medieval Dominican tradition, the early-modern Jansenist tradition, and today’s Legionnaires of Christ. These are all Catholic traditions, but they differ strongly, some even radically, from the Jesuit tradition — a tradition of reconciling Christ and culture.

¹¹ There is a sense in which we do not at all live in Teilhard’s day. Then again, there is a sense in which those days have made an uncanny return. Who would ever have imagined ten years ago that the theory of evolution would once again become a national site of contest between science and religion? And who could have predicted that Teilhard would today be regarded as a conservative in that debate? (He did, after all, argue for divine intelligence in the evolutionary process — albeit a divinity that seems to work itself out in often violent ways.)

¹² Or who could have imagined forty years after the death of John F. Kennedy that it would become controversial once again to think through being both a practicing Catholic and a practitioner of democracy — that is, a political world in which the values of some must be compromised with others?

¹³ But science and democracy are not the fundamental site on which Church and culture conflict today. That turf is the world of gender, sexuality, and reproduction — the main arenas of twentieth-century innovations extending now into our own century. Those who are “disturbed and troubled” today largely want to know this: how can the Church and culture be made commensurable in issues of gender, sexuality, and reproduction? This seems to me a key question for any intellectual institution that thinks of itself as Catholic and Jesuit.

¹⁴ And so, being a historian by trade and training, I want to offer some images of the past for our consideration. I hope they might let us creatively re-imagine ourselves as those who possess not only rights but also duties — first, to pursue truth with our intellectual peers; second, to help the “disturbed and troubled.”

15 I. JESUIT HYBRIDS

16 A hybrid is the grafting of one species onto another one to produce a new third. It used to be difficult to talk to my students about this concept of “hybridity.” Unless they were Biology majors they just couldn’t picture it.

17 But in today’s world of escalating gasoline prices, hybrids are no stranger! Just last week Californians lined up to get the new permits allowing certain hybrids to use the diamond lanes. The USF Jesuit Community owns two Prius hybrids! But Jesuit hybrids go way way back before Toyota!... Let me show you some of them:

18 By Jesuit hybrids I mean the early Jesuit practice of grafting Catholicism onto the species of found cultures. For example, here we have Fr. Mancinelli in Constantinople. This is today’s Istanbul in Turkey, the very heart of the Islamic world back then and the contested border of today’s possible New Europe.

19 Fr. Mancinelli is accommodating himself to the local culture: when in New Rome, do as the New Romans do. My undergrads love this picture of the Jesuit priest toking the bong. I remind them that Puritan Boston is not New Rome.

20 Here we have Jesuits at the court of the Great Moghul Akbar at the Imperial Court of India. Perhaps our most immediate association with this court is the Taj Mahal, a tomb built for the a Moghul emperor’s wife. The Islamic influence here is made explicit with the horseshoe-shaped Arabic arches as well as the Arabic script.

21 The Jesuits opened art schools throughout their missions including one at this Court that produced this work. Here, St. Jerome seemingly sleeps beneath a Bodhi tree with a copy of the Bible in his hand. (Jerome is most famous for having translated the original Biblical languages into one Latin Vulgate.)

22 We find depictions of St. Jerome everywhere in the 1500s and 1600s — those of Albrecht Dürer in Germany or El Greco in Spain (dressed as a cardinal) or of De La Tour in France (looking very scientific). Jerome was an icon for Renaissance Humanist translations of the Bible going on in both north and south Europe.

23 But this is a very different Jerome. This is a Jesuit-Indian hybrid: it is St. Jerome hybridized with the Buddha, seated beneath the Bodhi Tree, undergoing an experience of enlightenment.

24 Here is another production from the same Jesuit court school. We see a Madonna and Child by a Hindu court artist named Basawan. Arabic calligraphy and architecture situate the Madonna within her Moghul court setting.

25 But her bared breast suckling the baby is somewhat out of character with other court productions. It sharply contrasts, for example, with this heavily draped women portrayed in a piece by Basawan or one of his imitators from the same period – *Woman Playing a Zither*.

26 And in fact, the bare breasts of the Madonna **are** a foreign element. They come from Italian Renaissance Humanism and emphasize the humanity of a God become incarnate.

27 The Christian Humanism of the Italians has been hybridized with indigenous Moghul elements to produce this Hindu Madonna & Child. The hybridization served both parties: the Jesuits could preach Christianity and the Moghuls could use the images to assert a divine-right kingship.

28 Traveling farther Eastward from Europe, we see two Jesuits dressed as Buddhist monks.

This was how they originally attempted to inculturate themselves in China. However, some locals tried to kill them — apparently they didn't like Buddhist monks who had bad reputations for some luxurious living and for sexual improprieties and assumed that Jesuit monks must be the same.

29 So the Jesuits changed their approach and adopted the garb of Confucian scholars. In this engraving, Fr. Johann Adam von Bell, an astronomer and mathematician in the Chinese imperial court, typifies the early Jesuits' fascination with science.

30 The more I read about Fr. Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot – I have reproduced his Chinese name here but regret to say that I cannot read the characters – the more I want to study him. He lived in the imperial court at Beijing until his death in 1793. He produced the first dictionary of the language used by the Tartar Monguls in Manchuria, as well as volumes on Chinese music, court dance, and the life of Confucius.

31 He was also an amazing composer. When I play parts of the Mass of the Jesuits in Beijing for my students, I always begin by showing them a bit of Beijing Opera from *Farewell My Concubine*. Without it, the students are completely lost since Fr. Amiot and his fellow Jesuits had completely mastered and wrote in the court operatic style.

32 Fr. Matteo Ricci is well-known to the USF community, thanks to the presence of the Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History in the University's Center for the Pacific Rim. Fr. Ricci's missionary strategies of cultural accommodation continue to be controversial even four centuries later.

33 The Jesuits accommodated themselves to the cultures they found because they genuinely **reverenced** what they found. A really wonderful recently-published volume of excerpts from the *Jesuit Relations* — that is, the letters sent back to Europe from the North American missionaries **relating** what they had discovered — introduces undergraduates to the complexity of 16th- and 17th-century attitudes toward indigenous peoples. My own students have been shocked at just how much the Jesuits were fascinated by — and spent so much time meticulously noting — what they found: new plants and animals; religious beliefs of the natives; spoken languages, marriage customs, and value systems.

34 Certainly, they did not approve of everything they found ... but in general, I doubt that any reader can come away unimpressed by the passionate **reverence** the Jesuits had for what they encountered.

This specifically Jesuit vision — a vision that worked “to seek God in all things” — grew out of several influences. Let me underscore three of them:

35 First: the early Jesuits inherited the medieval metaphysics which I have already mentioned. All the world is one Great Chain of Being — descending grades of participation of beings in Being itself. Insofar as anything exists, it participates in Being — the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. All creation is always-and-already blessed.

36 Second: the early Jesuits were trained in Renaissance Humanism. This turn to the *humanum* recovered Greco-Roman antiquity. It was a celebration of re-born classical literature, of the human body, and of civic participation. As John O'Malley has reminded us in a recent essay in *America*, Jesuit education's fundamental curriculum was based – shockingly enough – on reading

literature of the so-called “pagans” like Plato, Cicero, and others.

37 These curricula you see floating by you are not from the Renaissance — they are from the academic year 1907-08, just one year after the great San Francisco earthquake. They are the syllabi for the high-school seniors, and the college freshmen and sophomores at St. Ignatius College — today’s University of San Francisco. Jesuit Humanism, focusing on the Incarnation in Jesus Christ, celebrated humanity here-and-now. Amazingly enough, it used pagan antiquity to overcome a Christian dualism that dominated medieval thought.

38 Third: the early Jesuits were born and grew up in the Age of Discovery. Jean de Léry’s 1578 illustrations from *A Voyage to Brazil* show us the passion these explorers had to convey back to Europe the wonders of the New World. The same passion can be found in John White’s *Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* published just twelve years later. Everything was new and marvelous for these early adventurers. The Jesuits’ fascination with what they found was one in tandem with their contemporaries.

39 But they were also specifically Jesuit and flowed directly out of the *Jesuit Constitutions*. Note, for example, this directive found in paragraph #449: “When a plan is being worked out in a college or university to prepare persons to go among the Moors or Turks” – note the shock value: to go into Islamic countries! – “Arabic or Chaldaic would be expedient; and Indian would be proper for those about to go among the Indians; and the same holds true for similar reasons in regard to other languages...”

40 To sum up Jesuit hybrids: although certainly there were other influences, these three — the Catholic conviction that all being is blessed simply by the fact of its existence; the Renaissance turn to this human material world; and the fascination with the other in the Age of Discovery — these three produced a specifically Jesuit species of Catholicism.

41 If I had to summarize this Jesuit vision in just one word it would be St. Ignatius’s own word: reverence — found repeatedly in his autobiography, in the *Spiritual Exercises*, and in the *Constitutions*. The early Jesuits had a reverence for what they found. They viewed the cultures that they encountered not through the eyes of alienation or dualism. The early Jesuits held a theology of reconciliation — a conviction that Christ and culture, faith and reason, grace and nature, God and the world were ultimately united. They fostered a reverence for what they found, and they creatively hybridized that with what they brought. They produced distinctively new Catholic cultures.

42 II. Catholic Modernities

These were early-modern times. How did Jesuit hybridization play itself out in late modernity?

Well, somewhat humanly, it played out both well and tragically. We are aware of the Jesuit successes — and we are gathered here to celebrate the sesquicentennial of one of them. However, others saw Jesuit hybridizations of Catholicism and modernity as an illegitimate and unacceptable blurring of boundaries.

43 Here again, the example of Matteo Ricci and the Chinese mission provides an excellent illustration. The so-called “Chinese Rites” were Jesuit adaptations of certain Confucian rites to be used in Christian services – for example, the veneration of both ancestors and Confucius himself. Others saw Jesuits’ accommodation these “pagan” cultural elements as fitting into a much larger

problem they saw in the Jesuits — that is, “laxism” in religion and morals.

In 1645 Pope Innocent X decreed that Chinese rites were no longer to be used in the liturgy. In 1656, Pope Alexander VII reversed that decision and permitted the rites. In 1704, Clement XI voided the ruling of Alexander VII and reinstated Innocent X’s restrictions. Eleven years later, the papal bull *Ex Illa Die* closed down the Jesuit Chinese Mission. Clement XII renewed the ban in 1735. In 1742, Benedict XIV renewed the ban and required all missionaries to take an oath to observe it. (He also called Jesuits “disobedient, contumacious, crafty, and reprobate men.” Clement XIII disagreed and defended the Jesuits “in perpetuity” with the “plenitude of [his] Apostolic power.”) In 1773, Clement XIV suppressed the Jesuits — also “perpetually” — and shamefully condemned the Jesuit general to the papal prison in Rome’s Castel San Angelo. Mercifully, death ended the general’s sufferings there two years later.

Thanks to the intransigence of the notorious Russian Orthodox Empress Catherine the Great — she refused to publish the papal decree in her imperial lands — a remnant of Jesuits survived in the East. This helped Pius VII restore the Jesuits in order to help build a Church radically changed by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. However, it took 235 years for the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith to reverse Clement XI’s [1704] decision on the Chinese Rites.

44 Why 1939? Surely it had something to do with the ominous last years of the 1930s, the growth of Japanese militarism and the unstable situation in China, and the imminent end of the European colonial empires in Asia as elsewhere. The Japanese Empire invaded China in 1937; their allies, Hitler’s Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, igniting World War II; the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941. The end of the Chinese Rites controversy should be seen within this ominous epoch.

Certainly, fights over the Rites involved political and economic issues galore. But if we look at the central theological issue, we can see the problem at stake in the fundamental Jesuit practice of hybridization. Where Jesuits in general discern a graced world to be revered, their historical opponents have charged that Jesuits have overly-accommodated culture and overly-assimilated Christ.

45 At the turn of the twentieth century, Jesuits paid heavy prices during the so-called “Modernist Crisis.” The Irish Jesuit George Tyrrell was attacked by the Belgian Cardinal Mercier. In reply, Tyrrell wrote a brilliant work entitled *Medievalism*, attacking intransigence and arguing for a dialogue with modernity and change.

46 Tyrrell’s *Medievalism* was recently reprinted by “Christian Classics” as “a brilliant expose of the Church’s tradition.” This tells us something about the fluid fortunes of “tradition” and “heresy.”

47 Tyrrell was eventually excommunicated, and when he died shortly thereafter (tragically young at the age of 48) he was not permitted a Catholic burial. (There was some disagreement over whether he had recanted in the end.) His close friend, the French Jesuit historian Henri Bremond, went out on a limb, accompanied Tyrrell’s casket to the graveside and said prayers of blessing over it with holy water. Bremond’s Jesuit superiors disciplined him by forbidding him to celebrate Mass or the other sacraments publicly. Bremond prudently left the Jesuits (though not the priesthood) to avoid further problems. He became well-known as the “Abbé Bremond,” published a seven-volume history of French mysticism that remains a standard scholarly reference today, and was inducted as an “Immortal” into the Académie Française.

⁴⁸ Teilhard de Chardin's long and tragic conflict with Jesuit superiors and the Church has been recently recounted in this beautifully illustrated volume, *Spirit of Fire*.

⁴⁹ Until his dying day Teilhard was denied permission over and over again to publish what he wrote and to accept any French teaching positions — including one offered at the prestigious and thoroughly secular Collège de France. When he died in 1955 and was buried at the Jesuit novitiate in upstate New York, the novices were not allowed to accompany the casket to the gravesite. Apparently Teilhard's ideas were *really* contagious.

⁵⁰ During a second wave of Vatican repression during the late 1940s and continuing throughout the 1950s — the period of *Humani Generis* and of the *nouvelle théologie* movement — the Jesuit Fathers Karl Rahner of Germany, Henri de Lubac of France, and John Courtney of the United States were all silenced. Each attempted in his own way to bridge the yawning gulf between Catholicism and a modernity whose existence could no longer be ignored after the unprecedented horrors of 1939-1945.

However, in the end, these silenced Jesuits' ideas were transformed into Church teaching during the Second Vatican Council. The British intellectual historian Nicholas Boyle pointed out this past summer that Teilhard's thought pulsates as the lifeblood, albeit posthumously, of the Council's final work, *The Church in the Modern World*, forty years old this year.

⁵¹ "The accelerated pace of history is such that one can scarcely keep abreast of it," declared the Council. "The destiny of the human race is viewed as a complete whole, no longer, as it were, in the particular histories of various peoples: now it merges into a complete whole. And so humanity substitutes a dynamic and more evolutionary concept of nature for a static one, and the result is an immense series of new problems calling for a new endeavor of analysis and synthesis."

⁵² In their attempts to hybridize Catholic modernities by mediating Christ and culture, these Jesuits were thoroughly traditional. Through it all, it seems to me, Jesuits have been ardent defenders of a distinctive – and I would say absolutely central – Catholic belief: namely, that faith is not incompatible with reason. The First Vatican Council may have defined this dogma; but it is the Jesuits who have most concretely defended it, even in — and perhaps most especially in — those moments when the Church silenced them for it. In the late-modern period they remained faithful to their early-modern foundation as ministers formed to hybridize Christ and culture.

⁵³ III. FUTURAL PASTS

So far, I have tried to argue two points historically. First: that the Jesuit species of Catholicism is marked by a strong, perhaps even extreme, belief in the compatibility of Christ and culture. Second: that this Jesuit accommodation resists other Catholic voices who hold for a strong division, distinction, or even opposition between Christ and culture, between the Church and the world. If Catholicism is a big tent, Jesuits stand somewhere close to the door with at least one foot jutting out into the world. This isn't an accident or an aberration. It's essential to the church's institutional location of the Society of Jesus.

⁵⁴ I now want to make a third and final point about the present and the future as I see it. I would say that the primary cultural legacy of twentieth-century modernity was a revolution in the areas of sexuality and gender. What does it say, after all, that in 1918 women could not vote (in this slide the suffragette holding up the sign "Kaiser Wilson" is referring to President Woodrow Wilson who had fought to liberate the Germans but stood in the way of women's suffrage) ... and that today

the two California senators are women and that the Democratic minority leader in the house is a women representative from this state as well? The same goes for Harvey Milk's pioneering political career in this City; and for Barney Frank from Massachusetts.

This legacy continues into the twenty-first century in morphed ways — especially as areas traditionally thought of as sexual reproduction are now interwoven with stem cell research and the potential of genetic manipulation. Combining this observation with my first two points, I would suggest this: first, that a Jesuit institution needs to be the place that **reverences** this cultural modernity of the past century turning into the present; and second, that although such accommodation might mean a rocky relationship with other Catholic elements and traditions, a Jesuit institution should take the long historical view and not be swayed by short-term blindness or fear.

Let me flesh this out first with personal reflections on some recent experience and then with one final historical example.

⁵⁵ I spent the last six years living in Boston and teaching at Boston College. These have been simply astonishing times to live in that city and at that institution, and I doubt that any of us there have really fully processed this experience. For me, it has been the kind of historical moment that others talk about who lived through 1968, or those I read about who lived through 1914-1918. First there was the Church sex abuse crisis; then there was the gay marriage court decision and the constitutional convention that followed; and then there was Terry Schiavo.

⁵⁶ First: gay marriage. The Massachusetts Superior Court decision on gay marriage was followed by a constitutional convention. The convention was called to amend the Massachusetts constitution in order to outlaw gay marriage and in effect nullify the Superior Court's decision. The event provided an amazing ongoing civics lesson for my History students because the constitution was written by an American founding father, John Adams. Adams' thoroughgoing mistrust of human beings, deeply rooted in New England Puritan theology, shows itself somewhat humorously in the Massachusetts constitution. Adams made it almost impossible for future humans to amend! But that's another story...

⁵⁷ During this convention, my Jesuit colleague at Boston College, moral theologian Fr. James Keenan, was asked to testify on behalf of those who opposed amending the constitution. In his testimony, easily found on the web, Fr. Keenan made a distinction between what he called the Church's "theology of chastity" and its "theology of justice." While acknowledging that the Church's "theology of chastity" forbids same-sex activity (let alone marital unions), he argued that the Church's "theology of justice" insists that human beings have certain non-negotiable rights. These include access to health care, to insurance, to retirement, and so on. Thus, he concluded, the Church's "theology of justice" — in other words, Catholic Social Teaching — would argue for the extension of civil marriage protections to same-sex couples.

⁵⁸ Fr. Keenan's testimony was immediately countered — one might say attacked or assaulted — by the legal counsel for the Massachusetts Catholic Conference (also easily available on the web). Predictably, the Catholic Conference's response used the Church's "theology of chastity" to deny that opposing legalized same-sex marriage is "unjust discrimination." (The *Catholic Catechism* implicitly provides for "just discrimination." See ¶ 2358.) I would note that this argument replayed itself in Spain this past year.

Here at the University of San Francisco, as the sesquicentennial history of the university

recounts [*Legacy & Promise*, 391-2], the “the trustees of the university voted in June 2003 to extend healthcare benefits to all adults legally-domiciled with USF employees ... [establishing] USF as the first Jesuit university in the nation to make a healthcare commitment to same-sex partners, non-married other-sex partners, and financially dependent family members such as parents or siblings.” Although “some argued that extending healthcare benefits to same-sex partners violated Catholic doctrine,” for University President Fr. Stephen A. Privett, “the extension of health care benefits to this population was an ethical imperative, supported by Catholic doctrine.”

59 Back in Boston: it would be difficult, even if I had several hours, to recount all the political and personal drama that this episode entailed. I will only say that the irrationality and viciousness of it all made a lasting impact on me. It also convinced me that the Church’s Social Thought as it is presently constituted — that is, straddling this divide between a “theology of chastity” and a “theology of justice” — has run its historical course. It no longer provides a coherent framework within which to think through the social questions we are confronting. Catholic Social Thought needs a new synthesis. Let me return to this after a second personal experience.

60 I assume we’re all familiar with the Terry Schiavo case. One of the main Catholic voices arguing on behalf of Michael Schiavo was another Jesuit colleague of mine at Boston College, moral theologian Fr. John Paris. Fr. Paris voiced his position in various venues – most conspicuously by appearing on MSNBC and CNN – that Terry Schiavo’s life was being supported by extraordinary means. He argued from traditional Catholic teaching that Michael Schiavo had no moral obligation to keep these means in place.

As one might expect, especially in these bitterly divided times in our nation, both Fr. Paris and the Boston College Theology Department received a great deal of email and faxed messages in response. Much of it was hate mail – and much of it was shockingly violent. Among the most colorful (although disturbing) lines I recall was this: “You [i.e., Fr. Paris] are a pus filled cyst on the colon of the Mystical Body of Christ.” I confess that I found some of this simply unimaginable — and this is what I mean when I say that this was one of those life-altering experiences.

61 First, I simply could not believe how vicious some of this was. As I told one of my History colleagues, I half-expected a fire-bomb to be thrown through the front window of our Jesuit community any night. Second, I was astonished at just how deep the hatred is for the Society of Jesus in many quarters at large. (Another memorable line from the hate-mail: “Remind me again why the Pope ever restored you guys? Hopefully John Paul II will not die before taking care of that mistake.”) Third, even I — and I don’t think I am naive about Church matters — even I was shocked to see what a profound and bitter internal divide fragments Catholics today.

62 Certainly, it is in part simply a reflection of a wider cultural divide today. But I also think it is symptomatic of a deeper problem in the Church to which I’ve already referred. Namely, that the gap between the Church’s “theology of chastity” — and of course this is now extending into all areas of life-sustenance and reproduction — and its “theology of justice” has run its course. Questions of gender and sexuality will become increasingly economic questions of justice.

63 As a recent article in the *Atlantic Monthly* on “The Coming Death Shortage” underscored with some rather dark humor, technology will continue to render traditional Catholic distinctions like that between “artificial” and “natural” almost meaningless. “Ordinary” and “extraordinary” means will be measured not in mechanical complexity but rather in dollars. Whose access to increasingly expensive procedures of prolonging life will be denied when limited resources are monopolized by those with means? These are the questions of a brave new world.

I would like to conclude now by returning to a futural past — a moment in the past that can illuminate for us a future path.

64 That moment is the first half of the year 1931, almost exactly seventy-five years ago. Picture the scene: the Great Depression had officially begun with the stock market crash in the fall of 1929. Both America and Europe were filled with soup lines and families on the streets. The next year Franklin D. Roosevelt would be elected to power in the United States. In Germany, popular elections voted in the Nazis as a desperate solution to widespread poverty and desolation. These were epochal times.

65 On the very last December day of the calendar year 1930, Pope Pius XI published *Casti Connubii* — a wide-ranging encyclical now mostly remembered for condemning contraception. (In fact, just two days before, the Pope was on the cover of *Time* magazine. The feature article was entitled “Souls, States, and Helicopters.”) *Casti Connubii* reacted to the approval of contraception by the Anglican Church’s Lambeth Conference earlier that year.

66 Five months later, on May 15, 1931, Pius XI issued *Quadragesimo Anno*, an encyclical celebrating the fortieth anniversary of Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum*, the founding document on human labor that finally came to grips with what was by then a century of industrialization, capitalism, and all their attendant problems.

67 It’s curious to me how this encyclical on labor and economics is always considered a “social encyclical” while the one on marriage is not. They are thoroughly intertwined – for example, it is argued that men should receive just wages that support a family because women should not work outside the home. Even at this early date, I would say, the theoretical distinction between the Church’s thought on economics and that on gender was already unraveling. (Or as one of my History Department colleagues quipped during the gay marriage debate, “Anyone who thinks marriage is not about property has never negotiated a divorce.”)

It is very illuminating to sit down and read these two works from 1931 side-by-side as I did with a number of very bright students a couple years ago. To present-day ears, *Casti Connubii* is about a “theology of sexuality” — it condemns contraception, civil divorce, and women working outside the home. We would tend to identify it with the political right.

68 However, I would note that it also condemned the forced sterilization of those considered inferior, a popular plank with Progressivist American eugenicists (and later the Nazis). It was enshrined in law by the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1927 ruling on *Buck v. Bell*, most notoriously remembered for Oliver Wendell Holmes’s judgment that “Three generations of imbeciles are enough.”

69 *Casti Connubii* also condemned laws that forbid marriages between persons considered to be of different racial descent. (Not coincidentally, California would pass a sweeping statute during that year of 1931. The Nazis soon followed America’s lead.) By insisting that marriage is about the rights of persons to marry whom they want, the encyclical appears far more progressive than Progressive-era California. It resists easy pigeonholing.

70 *Quadragesimo Anno*, on the other hand, was written in response to the collapse of laissez-faire capitalism and the onset of widespread economic depression. It is “a theology of justice” and we would tend to identify it with the political left along with its descendants, from John XXIII’s

Peace on Earth to John Paul II's *On Human Labor*.

71 I would note, however, that one of its most notable features is found in paragraphs 94 and 95: there the Pope quotes with approval the Fascists' Labour and Anti-strike Law of 1926 – prohibiting both lockouts and strikes. In the encyclical's consideration of right-wing solutions out of fear of Socialism, it too resists easy pigeonholing.

72 In that fateful first five months of 1931, we see an implicit parting of the ways in Catholic Social Thought between a “theology of chastity” and a “theology of justice.” Seventy-five years is not long enough for us to have sorted out such a conflict ... but it is long enough for it to have unraveled.

My sense is that this has had three very serious outcomes:

First, Catholic pronouncements on sexuality and gender have become “teaching” while those on economics or war or the death penalty have become “thought.” “Teaching” seem unbending and absolutely binding. “Thought” seems (if noticed at all) to be optional advice.

Second, this divergence supports the bitter and vicious divide that I saw first-hand in these past two years between the Catholic right and left.

Third, because the system does not cohere, Catholics – tending to reject one or the other strand of these pronouncements – increasingly do not think of the Church as a “teacher” at all. Whether one rejects the papal documents on contraception or unequivocally condemning the war in Iraq, the outcome is the same: the Church's role as a teacher is seriously eroded. While I do think this is understandable, I do think it will have very serious consequences for Catholicism's future.

73 Calling to mind Teilhard's two “rights” seems to me an urgent need today. Preserving the right to research with scholarly peers and the right to help the “disturbed and troubled” may help preserve something else as a side-effect. It may help preserve a sense of Catholic thought as a teacher – that is, as one to whom a disciple would turn in times of need for guidance, direction, and wisdom.

CONCLUSION

⁷⁴ There is something wonderful about the presence of the Matteo Ricci Institute here in USF's Center for the Pacific Rim. For this a great debt of gratitude is owed to the late Fr. Ed Malatesta. It's wonderful in an obvious way for the year 2005: because the near future, as everyone just seems to be figuring out, belongs to China and India. And that future has already arrived at USF, now ranked as the fourteenth most diverse college in the nation, with 22% of its student body self-identifying as being from Asian descent.

⁷⁵ The Ricci Institute also stands to remind the viewer of what is absolutely central in the Jesuit species of Catholicism. And so it seems to me profoundly linked with the Lane Center for Catholic Studies and Social Thought. The Chinese Rites remind us that Jesuit eyes are trained to revere the culture that they encounter as something that is always-and-already blessed. The Chinese Rites also remind us of the hard price that is somewhat regularly paid for this **BRIDGING** vision. In the long run the Chinese Rites seem to me ultimately hopeful. They remind us of a Jesuit strand of the Catholic tradition somewhat desperately needed today: an unyielding belief that both faith and reason aim at a single Truth.

Forty years ago, the Second Vatican Council addressed itself to humanity's existential concerns that cross all boundaries of space and time:

⁷⁶ "Meanwhile, every human being remains a question to him or herself, a question that is dimly perceived and left unanswered. ...

⁷⁷ "For there are times, especially in the major events of life, when no one can altogether escape from such self-questioning. ...

⁷⁸ "God alone, who calls the human being to deeper thought and to more humble probing, can fully and with complete certainty supply an answer to this questioning."

⁷⁹ This is the truth that the University of San Francisco, situated on the shores of the Pacific Rim, has served for 150 years.

May it serve 150 more.

POWERPOINT SLIDES

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5. Quoted in *Letters to Leontine Zanta*, 29.
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43. Chinese Rites slide:

1679: Innocent XI condemns 65 “laxist” propositions

1704: Clement XI rules against the Chinese Rites

1715: *Ex Illa Die* closes the Chinese Mission

1741: Benedict XIV’s papal bull: Jesuits are “disobedient, contumacious, crafty, and reprobate men>.”

1765: Clement XIII (*Apostolicum pascendi*) defends Jesuits “in perpetuity” with “plenitude of Apostolic power”

1773: Clement XIV (*Dominus ac redemptor noster*) suppresses Jesuits “perpetually”

1814: Pius VII (*Sollicitudo Omnium Ecclesiarum*) restores Jesuits

1939: Sacred Congregation of Propaganda reverses Clement XI’s [1704] decision on Chinese Rites

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