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MADE LIKE GOD: A RE-READING OF GEN 1:26

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Abstract

At the centre of formation to the sacred priesthood is a human person. A major goal of the whole process of formation to the sacred priesthood is to facilitate a Christlike human(e) person who will lead other human persons to God as he (the *formandus*) also manifests the values and principles he hopes to encourage in the faithful. Paradoxically, apart from the crisis of faith which plagues our world today, human mores, values and character are among the foremost challenges in the formation to the sacred priesthood. The qualities of respect for persons and principles, sincerity of purpose, selflessness, commitment to a worthy goal, sense of community, tolerance and transparency, right judgement and discretion are in dire demand. Gen 1:26 gives the fundamental of the identity of the human person preparing to become a priest. What does it mean to be made in the *selem* (image) and *demut* (likeness) of God? Are these two Hebrew morphemes the same? What are their implications for the self-understanding of the *formandus* and a better comprehension of his future flock? The morphological, lexical and patristic study of these Hebrew morphemes and their syntactical connection with their immediate and wider context constitute the crux of this scribal enterprise.

Keywords: Genesis, Imago Dei, Priestly Formation

Introduction

At the centre of formation to the sacred priesthood are neither values nor laws nor principles. At the centre

of formation to the sacred priesthood is a human person. Classically, a human person was defined as an individual substance of a rational nature. This definition by Anicius Boethius has been modified over time to include the other aspects of human reality like consciousness, knowledge, freedom, time, personal identity, to mention but a few.¹ In the theological debates on the nature of Christ in the 4th to 5th centuries, Christ was defined as being a person with two natures.

Christ, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity, calls and chooses human persons to serve His people in the ministerial priesthood. A major goal of the whole process of formation to the sacred priesthood is to facilitate a Christlike person who will lead other human persons to God as he (the *formandus*) also manifests the values and principles he hopes to encourage in the faithful. The first book of the Bible, Genesis, gives the scriptural capitulation of the enigma called the human person. Gen 1:26a makes a statement which the narrator probably presumes is evident to the reader: “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness”. What does it mean to be made in the *şelem* (image) and *demut* (likeness) of God? Are these two Hebrew morphemes the same? What are their implications for the self-understanding of the *formandi* and a better comprehension of his future flock? In the current enterprise, we will first embark on a close reading and exegetical study of Gen 1:26, in order to examine the semantics of its different parts with a view of sieving its core lessons in relation to the formation of the candidate to the sacred priesthood.

Let us make...

Gen 1:26 belongs to the so-called first account of creation, which follows a six-day sequence, generally introduced by a

command known as jussive in Biblical Hebrew grammar, “Let there be.”² The creation of the heavens and the earth, and the various creatures teeming in them had been through a verbal declaration. The sixth day already denotes a marked turn from the usual preceding command, Let there be. At the creation of man, there is a plural invitation – let us make (a cohortative). This plural has been the source of many decades of scholarly puzzle. In fact, many medieval Jewish scholars attempted to change it thus: “let men be made...” and were tackled by Abram ibn Ezra.³ If God is one, and the priestly writer had set out to emphasize the monotheistic nature of Israel’s God and his responsibility for the creation of the entire universe, then why the use of plural on the sixth day? Let us look briefly at the array of positions on the reasons proffered.

Summarily, there are six positions on the cause for plural.⁴ The first is grammatical in nature, proffered by Paul Joüon. He holds that the ‘we’ of majesty (whereby an individual presents self in the plural because of royal or regal powers) does not exist in Biblical Hebrew (§114e, n.2). Rather, only the plural of majesty can be found in the Hebrew Bible. He describes Gen 1:26 as a plural of deliberation with oneself. In other words, God is deliberating within Himself – let us make man. In a similar submission, the influential 20th century literary biblical scholar Umberto Cassuto views the use of plural in Gen 1:26 as self-encouragement.⁵ He compares it with 2 Sam 24:14, when David says, Let us fall into the hand of the Lord...but into the hand of men let me not fall.

A second view takes its inspiration from Isa 6:8, “I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?” Since God was here most likely speaking to the heavenly court, so also could it be that God was addressing other divine beings with him in Gen 1:26. This view is common among Jewish commentators, but it has been systematically

criticized by August Dillmann, among others, that it would imply the angels had a role in the creation of man.⁶ His second critique would hardly have a universal recognition in today's Pentateuchal studies because he argued from the traditional view of the documentary hypothesis, stating that the priestly account (P) had no evidence of angels in its account. The current state of Pentateuchal studies has very much revised such stereotyped conclusion accruing from traditional documentary hypothesis.⁷

A third view is that of the renowned Hermann Gunkel, who holds that the plural might have been as a result of the polytheistic account which the priestly author did not somehow get to expunge before the final draft. This view is based on the presumption that the creation account author copied copiously from the extant neighbouring cosmogonies (that is, other ANE documents like Arthasus and Enuma Elish). However, not minding some cross-pollination noted among them, it is clear that "Gen 1 is distinctly anti-mythological in its thrust and explicitly rejects ANE views of creation."⁸

A fourth view suggests that an individual was speaking, and simply used the plural in the sense of a plural of majesty. This argument derives its force from the plural nature of the divine name, Elohim.⁹ But Joüon has again observed that the plural of majesty in Biblical Hebrew never goes with verbs or pronouns. They can only be found with nouns.¹⁰

A fifth view is that of D.J.A. Clines (who is later supported by G. Hasel).¹¹ He bases his position on Prov 8:22 ("The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago") and a translation of *ruah Elohim* in Gen 1:2 as the Spirit of God. Thus, they propose that the *naaseh* means God was addressing "his Spirit who was present and active at the beginning of creation". This argument gives way, however, when the *ruah Elohim* is, as is more generally agreed today,

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translated as the wind of God.

A sixth view, which is closer to our tendentious position in this paper, is that of the Church fathers like Justin Martyr who saw the plural as a reference to Christ and an adumbration of the Trinity. Though it might be true that the author of Genesis was not schooled in Trinitarian Christian dogma, accentuated by the fact that conscious effort was being made to distinguish the Israelite Adonai from the polytheistic neighbouring theism. Nonetheless, the use of plural may be seen as a hint or clue of the plurality in the Godhead, a concept which would later have a *sensus plenior* in the New Testament (cf. Gal 4:4), where Christ is seen as being active in creation with the Father.¹²

A Conceptual Examination of Image (*şelem*) and Likeness (*d^emut*)

Strictly speaking, the root for the word, *şlm*, is not attested in Biblical Hebrew. In cognate languages like Arabic, Jewish Aramaic, Palmyrene and Syriac, it means, “to add images”, or “to cut off”, “to hew”. The LXX translates *şelem* as *eikōn*; which means image. The root *şlm* occurs 17 times in the Hebrew Bible with the book of Genesis having the highest number of occurrence – a total of 4 (Gen 1:26, 27; 5:3; 9:6). The occurrences of the word in Genesis have been referred to as the “theologically most significant.”¹³ This is because other occurrences of the word refer to the basic meaning of the word as figure, image or pictorial representation.¹⁴ *Şelem* can also be found in the Qumran document, CD 7:15, 17 where it has a meaning similar to that of Amos 5:26, “idol”. Thus, it is clear that outside Genesis, Gen 1:26 (together with its other Genesis occurrences) is the only passage where *şelem* “designates the representation of something which was not a taboo or illicit.”¹⁵

Demut is a noun which can be translated as likeness, form, appearance. It comes from the verbal root, *damah*, which occurs 25 times in the Hebrew Bible. Its highest occurrence can be found in the book of Ezekiel where it appears 15 times. The LXX variously renders the translation as *homoïoma*, *homoiosis* and *eikōn* – all having the nuance of likeness, resemblance and image. *Demut* can also be found in the Qumran text 4QS1 40.

The dual appearance of *demut* and *selem* in Gen 1:26 and Gen 5:3 shows that both words are quite close. They have also been found side by side in a ninth-century Aramaic inscription from Tell Fakhariyeh, illustrating the statue of King Hadduyisi.¹⁶ The closeness of the two terms can also be seen in the interchangeability of the prepositions they command (it is good to note that the preposition *beth* before *selem* has been frequently described as *beth essentiae* – “according to, after the pattern of”).¹⁷ While in Gen 1:26, *selem* takes the preposition, *be*, “in”, *demut* takes the same preposition in Gen 5:3. Again, while *demut* takes the preposition, *ke* in Gen 1:26, *selem* takes the same preposition in Gen 5:3.

Leaving the discourse on prepositions, it is apt to inquire the meaning of image and likeness in the context of Gen 1:26. What does it mean to be made in the image and likeness of God? This question has been the topic of much scholarly debate and pondering over the centuries.

Five Trends of Interpretation

Following the history of interpretation, five main possibilities are key to the concept. The first trend of interpretation, with proponents like P. Humbert and H. Gunkel, takes its cue from the literal definition of *selem* as a physical figure. The position is further buttressed by the use of *selem* in Gen 5:3 where Adam is described to have fathered

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Seth “after his image”, which surely refers to the physical resemblance between father and son. With this semantic, man is viewed to be made with a physical resemblance to God. However, the apparent emphasis in the Old Testament on the “incorporeality and invisibility of God makes this view problematic.”¹⁸ Deut 4:15-16 warns: “Since you saw no form when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire, take care and watch yourselves closely, so that you do not act corruptly by making an idol for yourselves, in the form of any figure”. Furthermore, “identifying the image of God with man’s bodily form or upright posture is unproven.”¹⁹ Though again, Num 12:8 and Psa 17:15 metaphorically describe God as having a form which can be seen. J. Skinner notes that writers of the Hebrew Bible constantly attribute bodily parts to God, and might be quite difficult to prove if they ever attained the height of describing God as formless spirit.²⁰ Thus, the position remains open-ended.

A second line of argument is that being made in God’s image makes man God’s representative on earth. This view has been embraced by scholars like G. von Rad, J. Hempel, and H. Wildberger. H. Gross champions this view by arguing that to be made in the image of God implies that man is created to rule over the animal world. M. Görg modifies the model by holding that being created in the image of God, man now assumes the function of God’s spirit over the chaos of the world, and not simply the animal world.²¹

A third line of interpretation separates *selem* from *demut* and propounds a semantic distinction between them. This position is expressed by the second century Christian scholar, Origen of Alexandria, who notes that in Gen 1:27, the narrator only says that God made man in his own image. Likeness is omitted. For Origen, this silence about likeness shows that “man received the honor of God’s image in his first creation,

whereas the perfection of God's likeness was reserved for him at the consummation. The purpose of this was that man should acquire it for himself by his own earnest efforts to imitate God."²² Origen saw Gen 1:26 as a first creation and the event of Christ's incarnation as a second. Thus, adherence to Christ would make man become similar to God, in the likeness of Christ.

Merging the Christological interpretation of the image of God with the Trinitarian dimension, is the North African Doctor of the Church, Augustine of Hippo, who in his treatise, *On The Trinity*, aptly sees the image as a trinitarian connotation. Augustine presents a more personalist, psychological and existential account of the *imago Dei*. For him, the image of God in man has a Trinitarian structure, reflecting either the tripartite structure of the human soul (spirit, self-consciousness, and love) or the threefold aspects of the psyche (memory, intelligence, and will). According to Augustine, the image of God in man orients him to God in invocation, knowledge and love.²³

For Thomas Aquinas, the *imago Dei* possesses an historical character, since it passes through three stages which are analogous to the creation, Christ's redemptive death and final salvation when one cooperates with God's grace: the *imago creationis (naturae)*, the *imago recreationis (gratiae)*, and the *similitudinis (gloriae)*.²⁴ For the angelic doctor, the *imago Dei* is the basis for participation in the divine life. The image of God is realized principally in an act of contemplation in the intellect.²⁵ This conception can be distinguished from that of Bonaventure, for whom the image is realized chiefly through the will in the religious act of man.²⁶

A fifth stream of interpretation views human beings as God's counterpart such that a dialogue is rendered possible between God and man.²⁷ The scholars that hold this view

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include W. Zimmerli, J.J. Stamm, F. Horst, W. Rudolph, O. Loretz. C. Westermann, a chief proponent of this position, succinctly expresses the theory when he writes, “what God decides to create must be something that has a relationship to him. Ultimately, this further determination in the account of creation of human beings consists in determining further the nature of the act of creation which enables an event to take place between God and humans.”²⁸

Our position will be a combination of the fourth and fifth streams of interpretation. From this union, it becomes evident that the triune God has revealed his plan to share the communion of Trinitarian life with persons created in his image.

Theological Discourse on Imago Dei

Analyzing the pre-1960 theological currents of the *imago Dei* discourse, Stanley Grenz names two basic approaches: substantial and relational views. The substantial view describes the creation of man in the image of God in categories of certain attributes and qualities which are inherent in the human person.²⁹ In this view, the human person shares some characteristics with God, and these characteristics form part of the *structure* of the human person. In other words, this similarity of feature(s) between the divine and the human does not depend on the belief of the human in God. Regardless of acknowledgement on the part of the human person, he is structurally similar to God in reason and will.³⁰

The relational view, on the other hand, perceives the *imago Dei* as reflecting a basic relationship between man and God. That is, man must be in a relationship with God for his creation in God’s image to be made more manifest. In other words, the relational view verbalizes the term, ‘*imago*’ – as a consequence of the relationship that exists

between the creature and the creator, the former “images” the latter.³¹ Many protestant theologians, like Karl Barth, are of this view, for it came to light in a strong manner from the Reformation onwards.³² Though some strains of the relational view acknowledge man’s ability to reason as a structural trait, they insist that it is man’s relationship with his creator that more efficiently reflects his ability to image him.

A third strain of the interpretation of *imago Dei*, termed the functional, was delineated by Richard Middleton. This view is based on the ANE parallels of the details of Gen 1:26-27, whereby just as powerful earthly kings erected their (royal) statues in provinces they could not physically be, so also is God in the Hebrew Bible seen as establishing man in the human realm. Thus, man is functioning in the place of God and is made in the image of God in connection with that ambassadorial function. In Middleton’s words, “on this [functional] reading [of Gen 1:26], the *imago Dei* designates the royal office or calling of human beings as God’s representatives and agents in the world, granted authorized power to share in God’s rule or administration of the earth’s resources and creature.”³³

Middleton identifies fifteenth century Italian renaissance thinkers like Marsilio Ficino, Giorgio Morandi, and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola as key proponents of the functional view. Teething strains of the functional view have been said to be found in the ante-Nicene fathers and the notes of Saadiah Gaon, a Jewish exegete, on the book of Genesis.

More Patristic Interpretation

The church fathers developed the structural view of the image of God Genesis interpretation. They were, with evidential probability, highly influenced by Greek philosophy, where the human person is defined as a rational substantial

individual. For instance, Aristotle defines man as a ‘rational animal’.³⁵ And reason had often been paired with will as two sides of the same rationality that God has granted man.³⁶

A first notable church father who gave a substantial view about man’s creation in the image and likeness of God is the second century apologist and philosopher, Justin Martyr. Justin held that man is responsible before God due to the fact that he possesses reason and will. In his work, *First Apology*, addressed to Roman Emperor Pius Antoninus, Justin writes: “In the beginning he [God] made the human race with the power of thought and of choosing the truth and doing right, so that all men are without excuse before God; for they have been born rational and contemplative.”³⁷

Furthermore, on the basis of man’s possession of reason and will and the consequent obligation of responsibility to God, Justin links man to angels. For Justin, God created men and angels with reason so that they might know their Creator and also exercise the free will. In the same stroke, they will be liable for their conduct “if they do anything contrary to right reason.”³⁸

After Justin comes Irenaeus of Lyons. Irenaeus is seen as being majorly responsible for the neat distinction between being made in the image of God and being made in his likeness. For Irenaeus, after the fall, man loses the likeness of God and only retains God’s image. This is because man cannot be *like* God in sin and disobedience. This likeness will only be restored with the redemptive power of Christ. He holds that being made in the image of God entails possession of reason and will on the part of man, qualities which he maintains even after disobeying God.³⁹

Since reason can be altered or reduced after the fall by continuing in a life of disobedience, Irenaeus kind of exalts free will over reason. For him, since man can choose either

good or evil, then the position of the Gnostics that man is automatically created good or evil with no ability to choose is very incorrect. For the Church Father, “God made man a free [agent], possessing his own power, even as his own soul, either to obey or disobey God.”⁴⁰ Irenaeus includes the body in his capitulation of being made in the image of God. By so doing, he again refutes the Gnostic position that only the soul and spirit are necessary for salvation.⁴¹

Furthermore, Irenaeus views Christ as the culmination of man’s creation in the image and likeness of God. In fact, the image of Christ should be that perfect form for which man should long and aspire. It is the direction in which man is to grow. Irenaeus writes, “We [Man] should therefore not seek after . . . another hand of God besides that which, from the beginning even to the end, forms us and prepares us for life, and is present with His handiwork, and perfects it after the image and likeness of God.”⁴² On the whole, Irenaeus’ exposition is not peculiar to him. It actually serves as a pinhole surmise of patristic era’s anthropology.

The next church father who took up the *imago Dei* discourse is Clement of Alexandria, a Christian theologian who lived between the second and third century, AD. Clement towed the line of Irenaeus in making a neat distinction between the image and the likeness of God. He held that every man was made in the image of God; but only Christians can attain the likeness of God at the end of time. For him, Adam was imperfect at creation, for he still had to long for the likeness of God by embracing a virtuous life.⁴³ For Clement, “the pious Christian alone is rich and wise, and of noble birth, and thus call and believe him to be God’s image, and also his likeness, having become righteous and holy and wise by Jesus Christ, and so far already like God.”⁴⁴

In line with his strong Hellenistic philosophical formation,

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reason had a major role in Clement's theological writings. He held that reason made man conform to the likeness of God, and made him live right and well. In fact, he almost equated reason with God himself, and "the divine likeness with the active life controlled by reason."⁴⁵ In fact, man's salvation involves the purification of his reason in order to situate him better on his eschatological journey to be like God.

Clement of Alexandria's interpretation of *imago Dei* in the line of reason (as enlightened by Hellenistic philosophy) will pervade patristic thoughts for some centuries. Apart from Athanasius who touts Clement's path, Gregory of Nyssa also describes man as a "rational animal."⁴⁶ He holds that reason is the form in which man is made in the image of God; that God 'imparted' not 'gave', mind and reason to man, because mind and reason are proper adornment of man's own nature.⁴⁷ Furthermore, in line with James 1:17 that every good and perfect gift is from God the Father, Gregory holds that God has given man all good gifts and that man is filled with all good, just like God who is goodness itself. Gregory emphasizes, among other good gifts like wisdom, virtue, and excellence, the gift of free will. Of the fourth century church fathers, St John Damascene can be said to close the scene, with the full implementation of the Irenaean-Clementine distinction between image and likeness, when he held to be made in God's image signifies possession of reason and free will; while creation in the *likeness* of God means 'likeness in virtue'; that is, leading a virtuous life in order to really be *like* God.⁴⁸

The International Theological Commission Conception: The Contemporary Catholic Image

The International Theological Commission is a body founded in 1969 by Pope Paul VI, as an advisory organ to

the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith.⁴⁹ The commission, which was a result of a proposal made during the first Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in 1967, has the primary onus of assisting the Holy See and the Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith with the examination of major doctrinal questions. It is saddled with the discussion on the discussion on and development of dogmatic and doctrinal teachings of the Church.

In 2004, the Commission came out with a seminal document on the church's understanding of the creation of man in the image and likeness of God. This document is entitled, *Communion and Stewardship*.⁵⁰ According to the document, there was a special reawakening of interest in the imagery due to the focus on the human person in major documents of the ecumenical council. With the Second Vatican Council, there arose a renewed interest in the development and application of the concept to sacred doctrine. Intense study of the scriptures, the fathers of the church and a resuscitated focus on the scholastic thinkers refreshed the relevance of the *imago Dei* concept in the years leading up to the council. At the council, the theme of the dignity of the human person, as discussed in the pastoral constitution, *Gaudium et spes*, was based on the *imago Dei* concept. Gen 1:26 and Psa 8:6 formed the background scriptural passages for the document's discussion of the fundamental dignity of the human person. According to *Communion and Stewardship*,

Because every human being is an image of God, he cannot be made subservient to any this-worldly system or finality. His sovereignty within the cosmos, his capacity for social existence, and his knowledge and love of the Creator - all are rooted in man's being made in the image of God.⁵¹

The Christological import of the *imago Dei* concept is further developed in *Gaudium et spes*. Christ is the image of the invisible God who became man in order to save humankind after the fall. Christ became man in order to restore man to the dignity of man's creation and the original intent of his creator. His mission is to restore the perfect likeness to man once again. Man's questions about the meaning of life and death only find a response in Christ, who has been revealed by God the Father.⁵² When man conforms to Christ and benefits from the gifts of the Holy Spirit, a new version of his very self is created – a version which has been redeemed from the consequences of the original fall and is capacitated to fulfil the new commandment of love.

Even after the Second Vatican council, as noted by *Communion and Stewardship*, many theologians became interested in exploring the concept of *imago Dei* and the nexus between Anthropology and Christology. There began a renewed search to further investigate the unique value of creation of man in God's image, a creation which is further ennobled by the grace of Christ's incarnation as man. The dynamism of being created in God's image is further elaborated by the evolution of human culture, such that "the *imago Dei* can in a real sense be said to be still in the process of becoming."⁵³

The Trinitarian and Anthropological Dimensions

The terms, 'communion' and 'stewardship', summarize the doctrine on man's creation in the image of a triune God. Man was created for the sake of communion with the Trinity. In fact, "the triune God has revealed his plan to share the communion of Trinitarian life with persons created in his image."⁵⁴ Man's creation in the image of God makes it possible for him to relate with the persons of the Blessed Trinity:

“created in the image of God, human beings are by nature bodily and spiritual, men and women made for one another.”⁵⁵ Communion with the Trinity renders communion with other human persons possible and healthy. Nonetheless, the destiny of man created in the image of God, is to be conformed to Christ, who is the perfect image of the Father.⁵⁶

In her definition of man, the Church views man as a whole, not sole body nor sole spirit.⁵⁷ The influence of dualistic anthropologies which tend to separate the mind and the body in man is contrary to biblical anthropology. Man is both body and soul, and his creation in the image of God entails both aspects. Man, not only his soul nor only his body, was created in the image of God. Creation in the image of God, again is not sexist in any way. It includes both male and female – “persons created in the image of God are bodily beings whose identity as male or female orders them to a special kind of communion with one another.”⁵⁸ As such, being made in the image and likeness of God, man is created as a person capable of a knowledge and love that are both personal and interpersonal.

Creation in the image of God, as the document establishes, confers the responsibility of stewardship on man in his relationship with God, other human persons, creatures and creation itself. Though distinguished from other creatures by intellect, volition and free will, man still bears a germane responsibility towards them. In stewardship, man shares in the divine governance of creation. The injunction to dominate the earth and subdue it, is not a license to despotically exploit creation but a command to majestically serve it and care for it. The words of Pope John Paul II cannot be truer in this regard: “Man’s lordship is not absolute, but ministerial...not the mission of an absolute and unquestionable master, but of a steward of God’s kingdom.”⁵⁹

Implications For the *Formandus*

Based on the foregoing, the impeccable need for unity within the *formandus* himself, made in the image and likeness of God cannot be overemphasized. *Communion and Stewardship* clearly states that the human person, created in the image of God is a being at once corporeal and spiritual. Though made of body and soul, man remains a unity.⁶⁰ A human person, understood as an irreducible entity, is entirely willed by God. This realization of inner unity is fundamental in ascertaining that the candidate to the sacred priesthood is free and stable in character. Without inner self-coherence, indeed the candidate is doomed to be uncoordinated and consequentially disoriented in his relationship with others.

The formation of candidates to the priesthood is based on a proper self-understanding of the candidate himself. The key post-synodal apostolic exhortation on the formation of candidates to the priesthood, *Pastores dabо vobis*, states it clearly that human formation remains the basis of all priestly formation.⁶¹ Now, the human person called to be a priest is called “to be a living *image* of Jesus Christ, Head and Shepherd of the Church.”⁶² The concept of image, *imago Iesu Christi*, is fundamental to the mission of the candidate. Though made in the image and likeness of God, the candidate is called to further perfection and assimilation to the image of Jesus Christ, who is the perfect image of God the Father.

A proper understanding of the core dignity of the human person will aid the *formandus* to have an understanding of his identity as king and servant. The dignity of the *formandus* is derived from his intrinsic relationship with the persons of the Blessed Trinity. This communion with the Trinity eventually translates into choices that reflect self-respect and project the dignity which ensues from that relationship. Self-respect is so important for the *formandus*, by the nature of his baptismal

calling and the noble sacerdotal vocation for which he aspires. This comprehension of self-dignity and respect, overflows into his relationship with other persons. It is also important to remember that the *formandus* was *chosen from among men*.

Consequently, the *formandus* is required to be “balanced, strong and free, capable of bearing the weight of pastoral responsibilities.”⁶³ Being balanced implies also recognizing the image of God in the persons whom he comes across and relates with. In fact, the conciliar decree on the training of priests, *Optatam totius*, goes ahead to state that the *formandus* should be trained to have self-control, develop strength of character and possess such qualities as sincerity, love of justice, fidelity to promises, courtesy in deed and modesty in speech.⁶⁴ On the necessity of human formation for evangelisation, *Ratio fundamentalis* of the Congregation for the Clergy, says clearly: “Human formation is a necessary element for evangelisation, since the proclamation of the Gospel takes place through the person and is mediated by his humanity.”⁶⁵ Self-understanding cannot be overemphasized in the formation of the candidate for the sacred priesthood, because his stewardship will be fundamentally thwarted if there is no clear concept of self-dignity in the mind of the *formandus*.

Furthermore, affective maturity is an important component in the formation of the candidate, created in the image and likeness of God. Affective maturity entails that ability to recognize and respect the image of God in other persons, especially the opposite sex, in the mission of restoring all things in Christ and bringing men and women closer to God. The *formandus*, in this sense, should have a harmonious personality, whereby the physical, psychic and spiritual aspects of his person are harmoniously integrated in the expression of his identity as a candidate to the sacred priesthood. Here, the candidate has “a clear and strong training in freedom”, where

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he truly masters himself in true Christian living and is free from all shackles of anti-social behaviour and unwholesome addictions.⁶⁶ In this line, the candidate, the royal servant made in the image of God and being formed to be like Christ, develops a healthy vision of the opposite sex and is able to consider the older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity (see 1 Tim 5:2).

Indeed, *Communion and Stewardship*, “it is in the essence of the imago Dei in man that personal beings are relational and social beings.”⁶⁷ The relation of the *formandus* with other persons should thus be founded on the relations within the Triune Godhead, who far from being a solitary being, is a communion of three Persons. Constituted by the one divine nature, the identity of the Father is his paternity, his relation to the Son and the Spirit; the identity of the Son is his relation to the Father and Spirit; the identity of the Spirit is his relation to the Father and the Son. In effect, *no person is as such alone in the universe, but is always constituted with others and is summoned to form a community with them.*⁶⁸

Conclusion

The new evangelization which the Church clamours and so much emphasizes today, has as its centre, the human person. Christianity is about Jesus, true man and God, who became a full human person, in order to redeem humanity from its original fall. The audience of the new evangelization, again is the human person, called to be configured to the person of Christ and His Church. Thus, the human person created in the image and likeness of God, has the onus to be more like Christ in his response to the original intention of God at the moment of creation. The dignity of man cannot be overemphasized in our time and age when industrialization and technology are making people to look more like chips and figures that can

be replaced at will and used. The identity and mission of the candidate to the priesthood has been clearly defined in the terms of the communion expected of him with the Holy Trinity and his stewardship among the people of God, which respects the image of God in himself and in the people he serves.

The candidate to the priesthood has to be a social being who recognizes the existence of others, respects their persons and space and interacts freely and sanely with them with the full implications of an *imago Dei* relating with other *imagines Dei*. *Pastores dabo vobis* rightly notes that that “Future priests should therefore cultivate a series of human qualities, not only out of proper and due growth and realization of self, but also with a view to the ministry. These qualities are needed for them to be balanced people, strong and free, capable of bearing the weight of pastoral responsibilities. They need to be educated to love the truth, to be loyal, to respect every person, to have a sense of justice, to be true to their word, to be genuinely compassionate, to be men of integrity and, especially, to be balanced in judgment and behaviour.”⁶⁹ These values are built on the fundament that the human person is created in the image and likeness of God and as such, has the vocation to exude the dignity which rightly reflects his source and origin.

Endnotes

¹For a more elaborate philosophical discourse on the nature of the human person, see, among others, Battista Mondin, *Philosophical Anthropology*, (Rome: Urbaniana University Press, 1985), 243-259.

²The first account of creation is described as so-called because there are contending positions that proffer another interpretation for the *toledot* that appears in Gen 2:4a, whereby Gen 2:3 is seen as the right conclusion to the account of creation. See Victor P.

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Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, NICOT, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1990), 151.

³Thus they tried to change the Qal *qatal* cohortative to Niphal participle. See *Genesis Rabbah*, 8.

⁴David J.A. Clines, “The Image of God in Man”, *TynBul* 19 (1968) 62-69; Gerhard Hasel, “The Meaning of ‘Let Us’ in Gn 1:26”, *AUSS* 13 (1975) 58-66.

⁵Cf. Umberto Cassuto, *From Adam to Noah*, Jerusalem 21989, 55.

⁶Cf. August Dillmann, *Die Genesis*, in John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, New York, NY 1910, 31.

⁷For critique of the traditional division of documentary hypothesis, see

⁸Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, WBC 1, Waco, TX 1987, 28.

⁹See Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis*, 133.

¹⁰Joüon §136 d-e.

¹¹Cf. D.J.A. Clines, “The Image of God”, 68-69.

¹²*Sensus plenior* has been defined as “that additional, deeper meaning, intended by God but not clearly intended by the human author, which is seen to exist in the words of a biblical text (or group of texts, or even a whole book) when they are studied in the light of further revelation or development in the understanding of revelation”. See. Raymond E. Brown, *The Sensus Plenior of Sacred Scripture*, (Published diss.), 92.

¹³TDOT, XII, 391.

¹⁴The only significantly difficult passages to translate are Pss 39:7(6) and 73:20 whereby *selem* has the nuance of “silhouette, fleeting shadow”. While the text of Psa 73:20 is uncertain, Psa 39:7(6) can be translated as “dreamlike image”, cf. TDOT, XII, 391.

¹⁵Hamilton, *Genesis 1–17*, 135.

¹⁶Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 29.

¹⁷Cf. Hans Wildberger, TLOT, III, 1082. For a contrary view, see Claus Westermann, *A Continental Commentary: Genesis 1–11*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1994), 145–146.

¹⁸Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 30.

¹⁹Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 30.

²⁰Skinner, *Genesis*, 32.

²¹Manfred Görg, “Alles hast du gelegt unter deine Füße”, in E. Haag – F.-L. Hossfeld, ed., *Freude an der Weisung des Herrn*, FS H. Groß, SBB 13, (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1987²), 146; “Das Menschenbild in der Priesterschrift”, BiKi 42 (1987) 25–26.

²²Origen, *On First Principles*, 3.6.1 in A. Louth – M. Conti, *Genesis 1–11*, ACCS.OT 1, Downer’s Grove, IL 2001, 29.

²³Augustine, *Confessions* I, 1,1.

²⁴Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I q.93 a.4.

²⁵Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I q.93 aa.4 and 7.

²⁶Bonaventure, *Sententiae* II d.16 a.2 q.3.

²⁷Cf. TDOT, XII, 392.

²⁸Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, 157–158.

²⁹For the attribution of the term, ‘structuralist’ originally to Emil Bruner, see Stanley J. Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Trinitarian Theology of the Imago Dei*, (Louisville, KY – London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 142.

³⁰On this summary, see Grenz, *The Social God*, 143.

³¹See Douglas John Hall, *Imaging God: Dominion as Stewardship*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 98 in Grenz, 162.

³²For the view that Barth’s stance is again influenced by Martin Buber’s relational ontology, see Richard J. Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2005), 23–24.

³³Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 27.

³⁴See Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 29.

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³⁵See Aristotle, *De Anima* 3.3.427.a19–427b9.

³⁶See Grenz, *The Social God*, 144.

³⁷Justin Martyr, *Apology*, 1.28; 1.10.

³⁸Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, 141.

³⁹Nonetheless, Irenaeus holds that a sinful man is an irrational being, for opposition to the will of God is tantamount to leading an irrational life. See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.4.3

⁴⁰See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.37.1 and 4 in Grenz, *The Social God*, 146.

⁴¹See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.6.1; Grenz, *The Social God*, 146.

⁴²Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.16.1; Grenz, *The Social God*, 147.

⁴³See Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, 6.12; Grenz, *The Social God*, 149.

⁴⁴Clement of Alexandria, *The Protrepticus*, 12.

⁴⁵Grenz, *The Social God*, 150.

⁴⁶Gregory of Nyssa, *Of the Making of Man* 8.5, 8.8; Grenz, *The Social God*, 151.

⁴⁷Gregory of Nyssa, *Of the Making of Man* 9.1; Grenz, *The Social God*, 151.

⁴⁸See John of Damascus, *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, 2.12; Grenz, *The Social God*, 152.

⁴⁹For the establishment of the Commission and the statement of its composition and functions, see John Paul II's *motu proprio*, *Tredecim Anni*.

⁵⁰International Theological Commission, *Communion and Stewardship: Human Persons Created in the Image of God* is made up of three chapters and 95 articles. It is the twenty-second document of the Commission.

⁵¹*Communion and Stewardship*, no. 22.

⁵²See *Gaudium et spes*, no. 41.

⁵³*Communion and Stewardship*, no. 24.

⁵⁴*Communion and Stewardship*, no. 25.

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⁵⁵*Communion and Stewardship*, no. 25.

⁵⁶See *Communion and Stewardship*, no. 25.

⁵⁷See *Communion and Stewardship*, nos. 26-27.

⁵⁸*Communion and Stewardship*, no. 40.

⁵⁹Pope John Paul II's January 17, 2001 discourse quoted in *Communion and Stewardship*, no. 73.

⁶⁰*Communion and Stewardship*, nos. 26, 41&42. See also *Gaudium et spes*, no. 14, §1; Catechism of the Catholic Church no. 362.

⁶¹*Pastores dabo vobis*, no. 43.

⁶²*Pastores dabo vobis*, no. 43.

⁶³*Pastores dabo vobis*, no. 43.

⁶⁴*Optatam totius*, no. 11.

⁶⁵*Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis*, no. 97.

⁶⁶See *Pastores dabo vobis*, no. 44; *Ratio fundamentalis* no. 99.

⁶⁷*Communion and Stewardship*, no. 41.

⁶⁸*Communion and Stewardship*, no. 41.

⁶⁹*Pastores dabo vobis*, no. 43. See also *Ratio Fundamentalis Institutionis Sacerdotalis*, nos. 93-99.