

Editorial

Dear Readers,

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately corrupt; who can understand it? I, Yahweh, search the heart and penetrate the mind, to give to every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings (Jer. 17:9-10).

Is the human person trustworthy? Am I right to live with the conviction that within the depths of your heart and mind, you are exercising your freedom to give your brother, indeed all men, what is rightfully theirs; to love your sister, indeed all women, graciously and with respect in a way that protects their dignity; and to plan your life's priorities and purposes thoughtfully in a way that gives your child, indeed all children, the opportunity to let their littleness blossom forth into greatness... am I right to live with the conviction that you deserve my trust? Or must I resign myself to the fact that your heart, no matter how well I think I know you, has become so selfish and perverted that I cannot trust your manipulations, schemes, and subterfuges?

On the 29th of October, 1980, during a General Audience that immediately garnered attention in the international public forum, Pope (St.) John Paul II gave academia an opportunity to examine its conscience about the many and diverse determinisms that riddle its social scientific conclusions. Aligning himself with Paul Ricœur, the Pope sharpened his focus to target three intellectuals who suspect the human heart, i.e., thinkers who have attempted to structure their theories about the human heart without any reference to the God who created and designed it. They have relegated the human heart to a continual state of suspicion because they believe the dynamisms present in the heart have overtaken the human person's capacity for freedom and holiness. From their perspective, the heart is fated to be perpetually untrustworthy.

Corresponding his own views to Ricœur's critique, the Pope cited three well-known figures in the world of academia, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and Frederick Nietzsche, and then suggested discreetly and forthrightly that we should suspect these

masters of suspicion. Karl Marx, for example, espouses a point of view that condemns the human heart to an unbridled desire to profit, to acquire, and to possess. "I am what I have" is the principle that governs the human heart even when the person himself or herself is not conscious of it. A person may perform an act of true altruism, but according to Marx's way of thinking there is a subtle, hidden purpose to the altruistic act, namely, the desire to accumulate the esteem, honour and respect and even material benefits that may ensue because of the act of charity.

Sigmund Freud raises his voice to suggest that even subconsciously the sexual instinct, the desire for sensual and emotional self-gratification, and the felt wish for personal fulfilment through relationships governs the human heart. The human person sinks into the mind-set, "I am what I feel," and loses his/her very sense of what it means to be a human being that freely acts according to the norms of truth independently of feelings, attractions and impulses.

Frederick Nietzsche holds the human heart in suspicion because of the human inclination to control and dominate. The human person has the attitude expressed in Plato's *Theages*, "Each one of us would like to be lord over all men if possible or, even better, be God."¹ This will to power masks the fear that there always lurks the possibility that everyone will ignore me, forget about me, marginalize me or give me very low priority. Nietzsche harbours the conviction that reinforcing one's sense of privilege, influence, prestige, and power brings satisfaction to the human heart. "I am because I control and influence" is the theme song of the human heart given over to this school of suspicion.

Do humility and meekness serve the thirst for power? The meek and humble person disarms the famous, the powerful, and the influential with his or her sincerity and transparency. The persons in first place find themselves ready to invite the meek and humble to come higher and remain close by bonds of friendship. Mother Teresa's friendship with Princess Diana is a paramount example. Only persons with Mother Teresa's integrity could accept

¹ *Theages*, 125e8-126a4, cited by Nietzsche in *Will to Power*, §958.

friendship with the rich and powerful and remain steadfast in their primary friendship, namely, the one they enjoy with God.

Hence a person like Mother Teresa of Kolkata radiates the prototype of a new and more liberated kind of human being: a human being that habitually remains outside the range of suspicion while accepting as a primary mission in life the task of serving others so that they, too, may find true freedom in a lasting friendship with God. “I am because God is... God is, therefore, we are; we are, therefore, I am” seems to accurately describe the range of this person’s freedom within the Family of God. With God, nothing is impossible; and this holds true at every moment of one’s existence. I may always live in the freedom, the faith, the hope, and the love that bind human beings together in their freedom and in their personal identity as children of God. It is possible to have a heart of flesh, free of suspicion. It is possible to be trustworthy.

In his article on the contemporary scandal of faith and the Kierkegaardian resonance, the Claretian Fr. Philip Ogbonna introduces us to the scandalous complexity that defies the machinations of reason when we in faith cross the threshold – a threshold fraught with contradictions – of Eternity’s entrance into time. The person who crosses the threshold of faith, finds liberation from the schools of suspicion. With Fr. Ogbonna, we acknowledge that the point of emphasis is not a coming into being but rather the Eternal One’s coming into the spatial-temporal actualization of any possibility and the individual, historical incarnation of the Eternal. It is the Eternal One who liberates.

With the incarnation of the Eternal, the human person who crosses not once but repeatedly the scandalous threshold of faith knows that his very existence is made possible by faith. He or she lives in a state of rebirth, of renewal, as a follower and a disciple. The transition to this new state of existence is a liberating one: the individual gains the possibility for true action, free from all suspicion, because God has chosen to take care of the individual’s guilt and the responsibility incumbent upon the individual’s sin.

God forgives sin. The renewal in faith in all of its prismatic dimensions, a faith that defies the contours of human reason, is God’s gift to anyone who chooses to receive it.

The Salvatorian Fr. Marcel Mukadi complements handsomely the convictions that Soren Kierkegaard and Philip Ogbonna express about the positioning of the human person – each and every human person – before God. Fr. Mukadi draws from the sacramental nature of the Catholic Church and explains how the deacon – the Church servant who is called to join himself to Jesus precisely in meekness and humility – has his own vital role to play in the growth of the Family of God. The deacon is meant to be a very special blessing to us all: he is meant to be a stimulus for us to cross the threshold from the false security of human reasoning into the scandalous complexity of faith.

The deacon, however, is not God. There are limits to what he can do; and he accepts those limitations with the spirit of the divine Deacon, Jesus Christ, who is among us as one who serves.

Father Bernard Witek continues his serial presentation of principal themes from the Book of Proverbs. One of his points of focus is the slanderer: one who spotlights others, reveals their secrets, and then lays bare the claim that these others are worthy of suspicion is himself worthy of suspicion. Fr. Witek's exegesis brings to light the futility of those who would subscribe to the materialist school of suspicion: generosity engenders honour, but greed proves to be quite futile indeed. The righteous person who looks for the good of others, for the good of the community, is the one who – before God – preserves a good name.

Fr. Patrick Mwanja, a Spiritan Father, brings to the forefront of the public eye a very timely issue indeed: from the treasury of his divine Heart, God has acted with the intention of giving a good name to those elements of African culture that not only resonate with the truth of the Gospel but bring into sharper focus Gospel truths that may have remained hidden from the public eye if confined to dry, doctrinally mastered scripts, that do not fit the cultural expressions that have developed with beauty and grace throughout the centuries. There are elements of culture that are seeds of goodness, truth and beauty: they do not deserve to be suspected but rather cherished.

The one who has acted from within cultures to bring forth their beauty and power is God himself, the Logos, one with the Father in eternity; and in time rendered incarnate by the power of the Holy

Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and given the name Jesus. This divine activity of the Logos has planted seeds of the Gospel within cultures so that, by the mysterious activity of the Holy Spirit, all may come to the living waters of salvation, come to the knowledge of the truth, accept the presence of the crucified and risen Redeemer in their lives, and so find communion with him even if they have not learned precisely that he goes by the name of Jesus. They may not have not enjoyed the opportunity to participate directly in the social dimension of Church life, but their heart and conscience have remained open to the goodness, beauty and truth that flow forth from within the Heart of our Lord and our God.

Mr. Arockia Dhas Calisthu addresses a dilemma that faces particular tribes, societies, and nations who desire earnestly their rightful place in the international forum where intellectual life seems to shine forth its rays into even the darkest political, economic, philosophical, religious, and social controversies and crises. In order to participate in the dynamics of a global forum that carries the ability to impact the life of the smallest, most forgotten person and at the same time the lives of the rich, the influential, the talented, and the powerful... in order to find one's rightful place within this forum one must carry the basic tools of communication. Having carefully studied the writings and conclusions of perhaps the world's most noted expert on the history of international culture, Fr. Walter Ong, S.J., Mr. Dhas offers his own thoughtful insight into the requirements of local language development. If the local people were not to pay attention to these requirements, they might not only lose their voice in the international forum but may also find their own language becoming extinct.

Mr. Dhas, therefore, offers hope to those who are in a position to make the political and educational decisions needed to facilitate the effort to cultivate and fortify the languages that need to be resilient and capable of adaptation, in their grammar, syntax and vocabulary. Languages need to describe what is concretely available to one's society and to the world; languages need to explain in the more abstract categories of the arts and sciences what others have already described. When languages come to flower, cultures more beautifully come to flower. Consequently there is a new order in the world.

Ms. Ijukaine Elfrida details example after example in order to demonstrate the truth of her conviction that there are influential people and organizations in the world who deserve to be suspected. As a lawyer, she chooses an issue that money-making commercial enterprises would like to ignore: that of stealing the Traditional Knowledge that indigenous people have been using for centuries to create traditional medicines and other useful products. The true possessors of the Traditional Knowledge are left unprotected by global policies because patent protection is presently considered only for products that involve an invention. Traditional medicines are products of nature and so do not fit this category. It goes without saying, however, that the local African experts who have been handling the medicines for centuries have developed skills that the “bio-pirates” would not have discovered without studying the African methods.

The ones doing the stealing are obviously masters of the materialist school of suspicion. Having stolen the Traditional Knowledge and the natural formulae of the medicines associated with that knowledge, they devise a manipulation or two in order to label it an “invention” and then proceed to acquire a patent. The patent allows them to prepare products, based on Traditional Knowledge, and then market them among masses of people throughout the world, who – as consumers – will fill the pockets and purses of these bio-pirates with money. Meanwhile the members of the local tribes and the indigenous cultures who are really the guardians of Traditional Knowledge and the products that come forth from an intelligent application of Traditional Knowledge are, practically speaking, left penniless.

Ijukaine exercises her abilities and knowledge as a lawyer to offer very practical and at the same time very necessary recommendations to right this insidious wrong. Her article opens our eyes to the down-to-earth fact that it is incumbent upon all of us to examine how we have subscribed to the materialist, psychosocial, and power/ prestige schools of suspicion. Thankfully God has graced all of us with the ability to learn how to extricate ourselves from these three forms of “heart disease” so that we may live in the justice, peace, truth and freedom of the children of God.

The Editor