

# The catholicity of the churches, globalization and forced migration

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# The Catholicity of the Churches, Globalization and Forced Migration

*Franz Segbers*

## 1. Forced migration and flight in the wake of globalization

Twenty years ago, the UN was celebrating the fall of Berlin's wall as a victory of liberty and human rights. There was the hope that after the fall of the wall Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights might finally have a chance of universal recognition: "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country."<sup>1</sup> The freedom to go and to return is a human right. But this hope failed. Only few years after the cold war, new frontiers have been established. Inside Europe, the freedom to travel within the European Union has been asserted as a fundamental principle. This is, however, maintained within strictly guarded borders which surround Europe. New bastions have been built in order to protect the European Union with their land and water borders. These are not only more effective than ever before, but also more deadly. More than 23,000 have died since the year 2000. The Mediterranean Sea has become a huge graveyard. The 2016 report of the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recorded a record level of 65.3 million displaced people. This highlights a problem that has long been suppressed in Europe.

Worldwide, the largest group of migrants is made up of people forced to migrate by a mixture of poverty, exploitation, violence, climate disaster and lack of opportunities for life. Their only aim is to have a place in which they can live in peace. The worldwide normality of hunger, poverty and disaster is now knocking at Europe's doors. For a long time, Europe has been shielded from this situation, and it was possible to avoid seeing the misery of millions of people who were fleeing from war, hunger, poverty or climate change, which forms part of global normality. The annual report of the World Refugee Organization (UNHCR) noted a record high of 65.3 million refugees for 2015 (UNHCR 2016). However, this records only the numbers of people who are registered by United Nations refugee

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<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights> (accessed 18.10.2017).

agencies, i.e. people who flee from military violence.<sup>2</sup> The UN figure therefore represents only the tip of the iceberg: it can be assumed that 200 million to 300 million are currently living far from their countries as refugees from war, climate refugees, or as refugees within their countries, like the Lumad people in the Philippines. This figure also does not include the millions of migrant workers who are seeking jobs anywhere they can get them.

Here it is important to distinguish between forced migration and flight. Migration is a more general term, while flight is a special kind of migration. Every refugee is a migrant, but not every migrant is a refugee. Guy Standing explains: “All international migrants are denizens, with different groups having some rights – civil, social, political, economic and cultural – but not others.” Considering the ongoing construction of an international rights structure that produces varieties of denizen, Standing concludes: “Beginning with the least secure, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants have civil rights (such as protection against assault) – usually based on the territoriality principle, covering everybody when they are in the country’s territory – but no economic or political rights.”<sup>3</sup>

Those people who are forced to flee or to emigrate are themselves bearers of rights. Too often, however, they are seen as posing a threat to the human rights of the established native populations, rather than being defined and treated as a vulnerable part of humanity who seek the restoration of those same human rights, of which they have been robbed. Migration has long been a part of modern history. But now, mass migration is changing its direction. Migrants are coming from the global South, whereas in earlier eras it was Europeans who migrated overseas, including to the global South. Europe has long known the (often forced) migration of “redundant” people, who, due to economic “progress”, were seen as locally “useless”, superfluous and unemployable, or who were rejected as a result of conflicts and strife caused by social or political conflicts.

Who is the winner, who the loser in this situation? A recent study by Branko Milanović, one of the world’s leading economists, proves that glo-

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/6/5763b65a4/global-forced-displacement-hits-record-high.html> (accessed 18.10.2017).

<sup>3</sup> Guy Standing, *The Precariat. The New Dangerous Class* (London – New York: Bloomsbury, 2011), 94.

balization is producing winners and losers.<sup>4</sup> Milanović argues that the new global middle class, particularly in Asian countries like China, India or Indonesia, are experiencing real gains in income. Amongst the big losers are those at the bottom of the economy worldwide, but also the lower-middle and working classes in the economically more established and wealthier countries in Europe and in the USA. It follows that the gap between poor and rich in the rich countries has widened and that the gains from globalization in the rich countries are experienced by those who were already rich. As Milanović points out, the richest one percent of the world's population is concentrated in the "old" rich countries in Europe and the USA.

Forced migration represents a dire consequence of globalization. The migrants are bringing home an important message to the established economies: globalization has not worked; the promises of globalization have failed. However, the messengers are being blamed for the contents of their message. The sociologists Brad Evans and Zygmunt Bauman describe the migrants as "the embodiments of the collapse of order".<sup>5</sup> One of the consequences of the failure of globalization is that people are forced into migration in order to survive. According to a study by the World Bank, the remittances sent home by migrants are three times the size of official development assistance, and they provide an important lifeline for millions of poor households. The majority of migrant workers today are women, who are employed as domestic workers, in the computer industry, or forced into the sex trade. For the European countries, this worldwide brain drain, or care drain, is very comfortable. Obispo Maximo Ramento raised this question in a homily delivered at the Lambeth Conference in London in 1998:

Why is it that the country is undeveloped, and children die of curable diseases like pneumonia and diarrhoea? Because our skilled laborers are exported to the Middle East and our professionals like doctors and nurses are either in the US or in England. We spent millions of dollars to send them to school but

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<sup>4</sup> Branko Milanović, *Global Inequality. A New Approach for the Age of Globalization* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), 10–45.

<sup>5</sup> Brad Evans/Zygmunt Bauman, 'The Refugee Crisis Is Humanity's Crisis', in: *New York Times* (May 2, 2016), [https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/02/opinion/the-refugee-crisis-is-humanitys-crisis.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/02/opinion/the-refugee-crisis-is-humanitys-crisis.html?_r=0) (accessed 31.05.2017).

they serve here in England. Sometimes we think that the poor Filipinos subsidize your education here in England.<sup>6</sup>

From the perspective of those on the receiving end, migration offers cheap labor from a worldwide labor market. Rich countries have out-sourced poverty and injustice, but the losers are now knocking at the door. In response, the rich countries are defending their privileges by force. The so-called “refugee crisis” is not actually a refugee crisis but a crisis of current forms of capitalism. As Pope Francis impressively puts it:

It is the tip of an iceberg. These poor people are fleeing war, hunger, but that is the tip of the iceberg. Because underneath that is the cause; and the cause is a bad and unjust socioeconomic system, in everything, in the world – speaking of the environmental problem –, in the socioeconomic society, in politics, the person always has to be in the center. That is the dominant economic system nowadays; it has removed the person from the center, placing the god money in its place, the idol of fashion. There are statistics [...] that 17% of the world’s population has 80% of the wealth.<sup>7</sup>

This description corresponds with statements made by the ecumenical movement. The 2013 World Council of Churches Assembly in Busan asserted in its declaration “Together towards Life Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes”:

This is a global system of mammon that protects the unlimited growth of wealth of only the rich and powerful through endless exploitation. This tower of greed is threatening the whole household of God. The reign of God is in direct opposition to the empire of mammon.<sup>8</sup>

These statements recognize that globalization and forced migration are two sides of the same coin. Forced migration is the shadow side of globalization. In an unequal world, migration is simply a rational response to the

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<sup>6</sup> Published in: Franz Segbers/Peter-Ben Smit (eds), *Catholicity in Times of Globalization. Remembering Alberto Ramento, Martyred Bishop of Workers and Peasants* (Lucerne: Exodus, 2011), 71.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with Pope Francis: ‘I trust the young politicians. Corruption is a global problem’, in: [http://rr.sapo.pt/noticia/34088/pope\\_i\\_trust\\_the\\_young\\_politicians\\_corruption\\_is\\_a\\_global\\_problem](http://rr.sapo.pt/noticia/34088/pope_i_trust_the_young_politicians_corruption_is_a_global_problem) (accessed 02.04.2017).

<sup>8</sup> Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes. New WCC Affirmation on Mission and Evangelism, September 5, 2012*, in: <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/commissions/mission-and-evangelism/together-towards-life-mission-and-evangelism-in-changing-landscapes>, para 31 (accessed 02.04.2017).

massive differences in standard of living. There can be no globalization without migration.

The poorer part of the world is asking the richer part: why is one part of the world's population poor and the other rich? The migrants are asking the question of justice as a global social question. Migration is a movement of counter-globalization from below against the failed globalization from above. Migrants and refugees are not only victims; they are not useless or redundant. They are appropriating their human right to life: they have rights. It is not only financial investors or multinational corporations who have rights; all people have the right to leave a place and to settle elsewhere looking for a better life and for justice.

## 2. Imperium, empire and catholicity

This opens up the question of whether there is a theological and ecclesiological response to the challenges of migration in the era of globalization. As a Catholic but non-Roman church, the Old Catholic Church has always attached importance to catholicity as a key component of its theological self-understanding. One of the main characteristics of Old Catholic ecclesiology and theology is its appeal to the Early Church.<sup>9</sup> Through its name, the Old Catholic Church looks back to a kind of a non-imperialistic catholicity of the "Early Church" in the (first half of the) first millennium. A quotation from Ignaz von Döllinger, a well-known German theologian of the late 19th century and one of the inspirations of the Old Catholic movement, may illustrate this. Döllinger rejected the new dogmas of papal infallibility and universal jurisdiction imposed by the First Vatican Council from four standpoints: as a Christian, as a theologian, as a historian, and as citizen. He saw in these dogmas an attempt by the Roman Church to establish an empire of this world, the kind of imperial catholicity that Christ had refused. In Döllinger's view, "the unceasing striving to realize this theory of world dominion has cost Europe rivers of blood, turned

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<sup>9</sup> See Mattijs Ploeger, *Celebrating Church. Ecumenical Contributions to a Liturgical Ecclesiology* (Groningen: Instituut voor Liturgiewetenschap – Tilburg: Liturgisch Instituut, 2008), 168–170; see for this in more length the proceedings of the 32nd International Old Catholic Theologians' Conference: *IKZ* 86 (1996) 1–64 (articles by Angela Berlis, Christian Oeyen and Jan Visser); Adrian Suter, 'Altkatholische Identität – altkirchliche Identität?', in: *IKZ* 104 (2014) 353–363. Adrian Suter (Bern) is currently working on a research project (*habilitation*) about the appeal to the Early Church as a criterion for theology today.



entire countries upside-down and ruined them.”<sup>10</sup> Historically there has been a strong relationship between catholicity and colonization. The World Council of Churches’ document *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* recognizes: “(...) those engaging in evangelization were complicit in imperialistic colonization, which pillaged and even exterminated peoples unable to defend themselves from more powerful invading nations.”<sup>11</sup> The Philippines were conquered by Spaniards who renamed the archipelago after the Spanish King Philip. Catholicity is in this sense not an innocent theological concept, but is stained with the blood of colonialism by sword and Bible. Döllinger saw the new dogmas of papal universal jurisdiction and primacy as forming an imperial catholicity which sought to establish an empire within the Church. This, he believed, was exactly what Jesus had refuted.

The Old Catholic Churches remember in their name an anti-imperial resistance against an empire within the Church. The name of the Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) marks a similar resistance to imperialist colonization. The IFI was born out of the struggle against Spanish colonialism and Spanish and American imperialism.<sup>12</sup> In this way, the Old Catholic Churches and the IFI to some extent share common heritage: they combat the empire, whether within the Church or within the society.

The process of globalization has led to a process of rediscovering catholicity within the ecumenical movement. The Faith and Order document *The Church* recognizes in the Church a true expression of what the Creed calls the “one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church”.<sup>13</sup> In its preface, the document underlines the unity of a humanity, “baptized into one body”, that knows no borders: “As Christians experience life-long growth into Christ, they will find themselves drawing closer to one another, and living

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<sup>10</sup> In German: “[Als Geschichtskenner] weiss ich, dass das beharrliche Streben, diese Theorie der Weltherrschaft zu verwirklichen, Europa Ströme von Blut gekostet, ganze Länder verwirrt und heruntergebracht...[hat].” Ignaz von Döllinger, quoted after: Urs Küry, *Die altkatholische Kirche. Ihre Geschichte, ihre Lehre, ihr Anliegen*, ed. Christian Oeyen, (Die Kirchen der Welt III; Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 3rd edn, 1982), 62.

<sup>11</sup> *The Church: Towards a Common Vision* (Faith and Order Paper 214; Geneva: WCC Publications, 2013), para 6. – I will refer to this document with the simplified title *The Church*; in the footnotes, I will refer to it with the abbreviation *TCTCV*.

<sup>12</sup> See for this the contribution by Francis A. Gealogo, ‘History, Globalization and Catholicity: A View from the Philippines’, in this issue, p. 247–264.

<sup>13</sup> *TCTCV*, para 9.

into the biblical image of the one body: ‘For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit’.”

Ignatius of Antioch, writing in the second century, was the first to use the term “Catholic”. He used it to refer to the grassroots Christian communities all over the Roman Empire.<sup>14</sup> The Roman Empire can be understood as an early form of globalization and imperialism, and in this sense Ignatius’s concept of catholicity is an expression of resistance against the hegemony and political power imposed from above in the Roman Empire. Ignatius was accused of participation in an insurgency, arrested and taken to Rome. As he was transported to the center of the Empire, to Rome, he wrote letters of encouragement to his communities, knowing that if he were to be found guilty, the court of the Empire would condemn him to death in a fight with animals in front of a bloodthirsty crowd. Ignatius spoke of the “Catholic Church” with a double meaning which was taken up by the Church Fathers refer: “catholic” refers to the whole church throughout the world, the Roman Empire; at the same time, each single local church is “catholic”. Catholicity thus implies the solidarity and exchange between the local Church and the whole Church in the context of the Roman Empire. However, Ignatius used the term “catholic” in a further very important way that, unfortunately, is often forgotten. Referring to a heretical group, he wrote in his *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*: “They have no regard for love; no care for the widow, or the orphan, or the oppressed; of the bond, or of the free; of the hungry, or of the thirsty.”<sup>15</sup> The heretics can be identified from the fact that they do not have any care for the widow, the orphan, the hungry, or the thirsty. It is apparent from this that the true catholic faith was, from the very beginning, defined not only by dogmas of a true faith, but also by the true practice for the poor. Compassion for the poor was a touchstone for true catholic faith. Compassion and the struggle for justice and freedom are not an application of the faith; they are essential to the practice of the catholic faith.

Jesus and the Christians of the Early Church were living in the context of an Empire. Bishops such as Ignatius were accused of insurgency like Jesus himself, who lived, taught, and was crucified in and by an empire. Jesus’s life and ministry in the Roman Empire led to his crucifixion. After he was crucified as an opponent of the Roman Empire, Paul distributed the

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<sup>14</sup> Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Smyrnaeos* 8,2: BEP 2,281 / PG 5,713 B.

<sup>15</sup> Ignatius of Antioch, *Ad Smyrnaeos* 6,2.



Gospel and founded communities all over the Roman Empire. In the context of this slave-owning society, a form of universalism was introduced, in which communities respected everybody as equal: “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal 3:28) Sharing bread and wine among poor and rich was the central symbol in the Supper of the Eucharist (1 Cor 11).

In opposition to the Roman Empire, Christians practised solidarity in a network of catholic Churches. The Early Church was able to cross all national or religious barriers and to form a united body despite the chasm between economic classes and people precisely because there was, according to Gal 3:28, neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female; rather, all are one in Christ. For many people in the Roman Empire it must have been very suspicious that people from different social classes or origins gathered in the same community. For their contemporaries, Christians were traitors or enemies of the state.<sup>16</sup> Their Christian values and their networking of catholicity can be understood as a hidden undermining and progressive overcoming of the power structures of the Roman Empire without insurgency. At the heart of the empire, the Churches formed an alternative network of solidarity throughout the Roman Empire through what we might call grassroots organizations. It was this network of communities which shared in the Eucharist and practice of solidarity and unity with and for marginalized people at the grass roots level of the Empire that Ignatius of Antioch described as “catholic” communities. Christians within the Roman Empire were amongst those who did not collaborate with the imperialist system and its military might. This non-collaboration went hand in hand with an alternative approach, namely that of sharing and solidarity as among brothers and sisters. This, then, was the foundation which enabled the Early Church to overcome both national and religious barriers. The term catholicity cannot ignore that context. It was formed in the context of the hegemony, domination, exploitation and power of the imperialism of the Roman Empire. The ecclesiological term “catholicity” offers a response to the challenge: what does it mean to live as a church in an empire?

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<sup>16</sup> Adolf von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 2nd edn, 1906), 2 vols: vol. 1, 206–234.

In the course of the fourth and fifth centuries, the church was refashioned from being a persecuted church in the Roman Empire to being a church which legitimized the Roman Empire. Later still, the church became part of the exploitation of newly conquered countries in the context of colonization. That is, the Roman Church adopted the structures of the Roman Empire and developed an imperial ecclesiology which aligned the church with the emperors of this world. One of the gifts of the consciously non-imperial catholicity of the Old Catholic Church and other non-Roman Catholic churches is their ability to offer this distinct understanding of catholicity to the ecumenical movement.

### **3. Enlarged understanding of catholicity in the wake of globalization**

Both in in the ecumenical movement and in the Old Catholic Churches, there has been a rediscovery of this Early Church understanding of catholicity. The Old Catholic Churches have been challenged by their sister church, the IFI. In reaction to the awakening of the Third World, the 1970s witnessed a growing tide of repressive governments. Just at the time when this period came to an end, a new phase of the relationship between the Old Catholic Churches and the IFI began. Against the background of the People's Power Revolution in February 1986, the IFI bishop Tito Pasco set out the aspirations of the Filipino people in his address to the 24th International Congress of the Old Catholic Churches, held in Münster (Germany) a few months later. He asked the conference to affirm its solidarity with those churches in the Philippines which are actively involved in the struggle for justice, freedom, democracy and peace. Bishop Pasco complained that the agreement between the Churches confirming their common catholicity existed only on paper, and challenged the Old Catholic Churches to make the agreement a lived reality by showing solidarity in the struggle for freedom, justice and peace.<sup>17</sup> Two years later another IFI bishop, Roman Tiples, was in Germany. He too issued a challenge: "To my German brothers and sisters, we urge you to be in support of those who struggle for life. We challenge you to be faithful to the demand of Christ."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Tito E. Pasco, 'Zeugnis und Dienst der Philippinischen Unabhängigen Kirche,' *IKZ* 77 (1987) 102–110. The paper was given in English (unpublished); the published German version was translated by Dr Ilse Brinkhues.

<sup>18</sup> Unpublished manuscript, personal archive of the author.

The IFI bishops' plea for solidarity was the starting point to fill the concordat not only with life, but also with a new understanding of catholicity. The IFI bishops' pleas encouraged a reformulation of the understanding of our shared catholicity.

A three-year consultation on "Globalization and Catholicity" (2006–2008), undertaken by the IFI, TEC, and the Union of Utrecht, with observers from the Church of Sweden, discovered ecclesiological common ground between the Old Catholic Churches of the Union of Utrecht and the IFI.<sup>19</sup> A second phase took place between 2014 and 2016. In the first consultation, the IFI theologian Eleuterio J. Revollido explained: "Our catholicity [...] is an instrument for the transformation of the global village influenced at the moment by the venom of materialist globalization schemes. Through our common belief and 'recognition and respect for all human beings as children of God,' and 'subscribing to the faith handed over by the apostles' our catholicity can defeat the dehumanizing effects of economic globalization."<sup>20</sup>

The basis of the agreements between the Old Catholic Church and the IFI was primarily their mutual recognition of each other as sister Churches with a common catholic faith. The local struggle in the Philippines became a challenge to the catholicity of the Church. Through the experience of globalization, the genuine meaning of catholicity was rediscovered in the Filipino struggle for freedom and dignity and in the Filipinos' plea for solidarity in the struggle for life. They offered a reminder that the Church is global and local. What is striking is that this understanding of catholicity in one particular ecclesial relationship corresponded with the ecumenical rediscovery of the catholicity of the church. The poorer Churches offer this understanding of catholicity as gift to the ecumenical movement. The formerly oppressed, colonized and evangelized poor opened up to a new enlarged understanding of catholicity, emphasizing that Catholicity is about solidarity not only within the worldwide churches, but also beyond the churches. *The Church* speaks about this change of direction: "Today believers from churches which once welcomed foreign

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<sup>19</sup> Marsha L. Dutton with Emily K. Stuckey (eds), *Globalization and Catholicity. Ecumenical Conversations on God's Abundance and the People's Need* (Beiheft zu IKZ 100; Bern: Stämpfli, 2010).

<sup>20</sup> Eleuterio J. Revollido, 'The Iglesia Filipina Independiente Responds to the St. Martin's Statement', in: Dutton (ed.), *Catholicity and Globalization* (as note 19), 126–130: 129.

missionaries have been able to come to the assistance of churches by whose agency they first heard the Gospel.”<sup>21</sup> The gift of the southern Churches is a reformulated, post-imperial understanding of catholicity that revives the understanding of non-imperial catholicity of the Early Church in the context of power, exploitation and suppression of the Roman Empire. Catholicity is a communion of solidarity of churches who are connected in the struggle for life and dignity, a communion that cares for the poor and fights against the structure of sin in the global world to build the Kingdom of God on earth. Catholicity is a way to unite the world through solidarity. As *The Church* observes, in the context of its definition of the mission of the Church: “The Church was intended by God, not for its own sake, but to serve the divine plan for the transformation of the world. Thus, service (diakonia) belongs to the very being of the Church.”<sup>22</sup> The catholicity of the Church is an instrument for the Kingdom of God. The vision of a non-imperialist, alternative globalization can be recognized in, and informed by, the non-imperialist ecclesiology of the Early Church.

#### **4. Being Church of, for and with migrants in a globalized world**

With the Roman Catholic theologian Robert Schreiter I would like to distinguish two approaches to catholicity, each of which has a different focus.<sup>23</sup> While the starting point of the first is unity, the second asks in which way diversity can be part of unity. Both approaches to catholicity are part of the tradition of catholicity. In accordance with Schreiter’s distinction, I can also distinguish two different types of catholicity which represent two different ways of connecting the global with the local. One of these represents an imperial way; the other a non-imperial way. The imperial way imposes a single approach on a plural world, while the second is pushing for unity that includes some aspects of diversity. The first seeks to impose a single way of life on a plural world. The second respects diversity as a part of unity. In a world that is characterized by globalization, migration and diversities, we urgently need respect for diversity. While the Western societies experience a slow decline of religion, the migrants coming from

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<sup>21</sup> *TCTCV*, para 6.

<sup>22</sup> *TCTCV*, para 58.

<sup>23</sup> See Robert Schreiter, ‘Catholicity as a Framework for Addressing Migration’, *Concilium* 44 (2008) 5, 32–46.

other societies bring with them their churches and religions, creating their own Christian or non-Christian communities. Widespread migration creates multi-religious as well as multi-cultural societies. Different cultures, ethnicities and religions share the same space, which leads to conflicts or tensions. Due to non-Christian migration, Christian Europe is becoming multi-religious Europe. As Jonathan Sacks, a British Jewish theologian and former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregation of the Commonwealth, has said: “We will learn to live with diversity once we understand the God-given, world-enhancing dignity of difference.”<sup>24</sup> Sacks’ understanding of the theological background of this “dignity of difference” is relevant for ecclesiology. For, if a non-imperial catholicity complements the mark of unity with diversity, it is the local church which provides a place where this fullness is made concrete. The primary goal for an imperial understanding of catholicity is its geographical expansion; the primary goal of a non-imperial understanding of catholicity is the gift of fullness of faith. Diversities are not annulled; on the contrary, they are retained and valued as tangible expressions of the diversities which enrich unity.

This non-imperial catholicity is a liberating catholicity which contradicts and withstands the power of the imperial way imposing a single way in a plural world. It allows space for diversities, because it is convinced of the dignity of difference and diversity. Exactly that is also the essence of the non-imperial and liberating catholicity of the Old Catholic Church with its refusal of the papal dogma of primacy and its focus on the connection between catholicity and conciliarity or synodality. This liberating catholicity is a gift to the entire ecumenical movement. As the consultation on “Catholicity and Globalization” in 2016 put it in its statement: “Christians have rediscovered the liberating power of Catholicity within its larger and re-formed post-colonial understanding, unfolded within the ecumenical movement, and offering a viable alternative to current experiences of globalization.”<sup>25</sup> The document goes on to define the prerequisites for this liberating catholicity: “It is imperative for the Church to be with the people and journey with them in the arduous but fulfilling pil-

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<sup>24</sup> Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference. How to avoid the Clash of Civilizations* (London: Bloomsbury, 2003), 209.

<sup>25</sup> ‘Catholicity as witness to God’s Justice and Peace in a Globalised World’, in this issue, p. 274–278.



grimage of justice and peace. And it is only then that Catholicity – a truly liberating Catholicity – may fully be realized.”<sup>26</sup>

What makes the non-imperial form of a liberating catholicity a helpful concept for a consideration of migration in an age of globalization is its focus on the dignity of difference and diversity. Liberating catholicity is able to create communion and partnership without relationships of dominance or submission. It is about the mutual universal recognition of all human beings as sisters and brothers respecting what Sacks refers to as the “dignity of difference”.<sup>27</sup>

This helps us to articulate an ethical answer to the challenges of migration from the perspective of catholicity. In the person of the migrants, the global is coming to the local. Migration is a way in which the global world is becoming locally experienced. At the same time, unjust worldwide economic structures and disregard for the universal dignity of human beings are undermining the catholicity of the churches. Reflections on globalization and catholicity can help to show the intrinsic link between the unity of the church and the unity of humankind as it finds its expression in human rights.

Migration in a globalized world raises questions about inter-faith relations, identity, justice, racism, and how we live together. Migration is spreading religions around the world. This is the first challenge. The second is that migrants are bringing to the rich European countries the global situation of unemployment, misery, poverty, hunger and war. The majority of the migrants are poor and living in precarious conditions. Most of them have worse jobs, earn less money, and stay in cheaper accommodation than European citizens; some live in an irregular status. Often, they are a new under-class. “Migrants make up a large share of the world’s precariat.”<sup>28</sup> Faced with this situation, the true catholic faith is the prophetic commitment to the poor people and their right to have a place where to stay.

Migrants are like ambassadors. Refugees are bringing the message of a worldwide disaster. They bring from foreign countries the message of war, misery, poverty and injustice. But Europe cannot be an island; Europe is part of a global normality of misery, and – and this is important – Europe has its part in this global situation. The migrants have one crucial

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 277.

<sup>27</sup> Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference* (as note 24).

<sup>28</sup> Standing, *The Precariat* (as note 3).



message: everybody is entitled to human rights. Human rights are the way to assure equal right to everybody in a plural world. Nobody on this planet should be alienated or without rights. Equal rights include the right to settle and the right to leave without risk of losing one's life in search of a place to settle. Migrants complete the process of economic globalization. Globalization began as a globalization of capital and goods with the balance in the rich countries' favor. Now the migrants insist that not only capital has the right to stay and to leave wherever it wants, but that people do too.

What is expressed with the theological term "catholicity" can be translated into the secular language of universal human rights. Catholicity and human rights offer a similar normative answer to the same challenge in a globalized world. Human rights are an expression of the mutual recognition of all people as equal. Similarly, the concept of catholicity does not know any border and extends the sphere of community in solidarity to include the whole human family. *The Church* describes the Church as a community that "transcends all barriers".<sup>29</sup> This constitutes a cosmopolitan and universal ethic, and this view of catholicity is about a cosmopolitan understanding of universal, humanity-wide interdependence. Human rights do the same in secular language. In the context of migration and flight this means that all people are inhabitants of this one planet created by God. Only if nobody is forced to move because of war, destruction, unemployment, poverty, or misery, can the right to free movement truly become a reality.

Capitalism unified the world by globalizing the market. Migration calls for a different and alternative response than homogenization. Liberating catholicity offers a way to resist the imperial domination of economic and cultural globalization and to unify the pluralistic world with all its diversities, globalizing the mutual recognition of every person living together as brother and sister on God's own planet.

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<sup>29</sup> *TCTCV*, para 22.

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### *Zusammenfassung*

Der Beitrag entfaltet Katholizität als einen ekklesiologischen Zugang zu den Herausforderungen der Migration in Zeiten der Globalisierung. Wie die altkatholischen Kirchen mit ihrem Namen an einen anti-imperialen Widerstand innerhalb der Kirche erinnern, so die Iglesia Filipina Independiente (IFI) an die imperialistische Kolonisierung. Die nicht imperiale Katholizität eröffnet einen Raum für Vielfalt. Das Dokument der Kommission «Glaube und Kirchenverfassung» des Weltkirchenrates, «Die Kirche auf dem Weg zu einer gemeinsamen Vision», beschreibt die Kirche als eine Gemeinschaft, die «alle Schranken überwindet». Das vermag eine kosmopolitische und universale Ethik zu begründen. Für die Migration bedeutet dies: Alle Menschen sind Bewohner dieses einen Planeten, der von Gott ohne Grenzen geschaffen wurde. Eine befreiende Katholizität ist eine Weise, der imperialen Globalisierung zu widerstehen und eine pluralistische Welt in all ihrer Vielfalt zu vereinen, in dem sie die wechselseitige Anerkennung aller als Bruder und Schwester globalisieren, die gemeinsam Gottes Planeten bewohnen.

### *Key Words – Schlüsselwörter*

Empire – Catholicity – human rights and migration – Pope Francis – Alberto Ramento