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Restorative Justice As intrinsic to the Church's Mission, Catholic Theology and Sacramental Ethics

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Restorative Justice As intrinsic to
the Church's Mission, Catholic Theology and
Sacramental Ethics

A Pastoral Synthesis Project by
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the Faculty of
Loyola Marymount University
Department of Theological Studies
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Director Signature:

Director
Jonathan Rothchild, Ph.D.

Date

Introduction

Jesus comes to meet us, so that he can restore our dignity as children of God. [...] to restore our faith and trust [...] to [help us] realize that we have a mission, and that confinement is never the same thing as exclusion. [...]The Lord tells us this clearly with a sign: he washes our feet so we can come back to the table. The table from which he wishes no one to be excluded. The table which is spread for all and to which all of us are invited.ⁱ

In his address to detainees at Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility in Philadelphia, Pope Francis laid out the fundamental premise of restorative justice in Catholic theology upon which this project is based. In building on this premise, I propose to design a pastoral tool for Catholic parishes in the Diocese of San Bernardino, aiming to foster welcoming parish communities that minister to victims of crime, to the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated and their families, and also to encourage a more active participation in addressing the social justice issues affecting their local communities.

Through this program, we intend to address the pastoral need for educating parish communities about social justice and the mission of the Church, particularly in the area of restorative justice. This pastoral tool has been designed taking into consideration the local statistics of crime, poverty, and incarceration in San Bernardino and Riverside counties, and also the current level of involvement of parishes in restorative justice ministries.

The program consists of three learning sessions and one immersion experience in which parishioners will gain a broader understanding of the relationship between social justice issues and the criminal justice crisis in the United States of America. They will reflect on these issues from the perspective of our Christian tradition and our sacramental ethics. Participants will be invited to reflect on the Church's teaching on restorative justice, and to analyze the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' document "Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration."

Parishioners will also learn about specific ways in which they can get involved in restorative justice or advocacy ministries.

This work is based on two recent Catholic responses to the criminal justice crisis in the United States: the USCCB document “Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice” and Amy Levad’s proposal in her book *Redeeming a Prison Society: A Liturgical and Sacramental Response to Mass Incarceration*. From these documents I draw upon to support this project.

Also included in this document is my understanding of pastoral ministry with regard to the issues and the theological themes discussed in this project, particularly the Church’s mission and its relation to social justice. I also offer my reflection on the role of the pastoral theologian in accompanying and inspiring Christ’s disciples to fulfill the mission of the church as missionary disciples, as Pope Francis calls us in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*.

We hope this project bears abundant fruit among Catholics in the Diocese of San Bernardino so their parish communities become a sign and instrumentⁱⁱ of the love of Christ for this marginalized sector of the population in their midst.

I. PASTORAL PROGRAM

a) The Audience

This program is a pastoral tool designed for Catholic parishes in the Diocese of San Bernardino to educate parishioners about the social justice issues facing our communities in the U.S., particularly crime and the criminal justice system, in light of Catholic social teaching and our faith tradition. This program aims to foster welcoming parish communities that minister to victims of crime and to incarcerated or formerly incarcerated members of the community and their families. The program also aims to encourage parishioners to take a more active role in addressing the social justice issues affecting their local communities, expressing our Catholic sacramental ethics and continuing Christ's mission in the world as baptized disciples.

The program is intended for an audience of adult and young adult parishioners who can play an active role in restorative justice and social justice ministries as adult members of society. The activities included at the end of the program are also designed for adult participants, since some require legal responsibility and paperwork required by governmental agencies, for example detention ministry. The program and its activities could be adapted for youth with the proper pastoral care that minors require.

This program is open to all parishioners, but those with leadership roles in their parish community are especially encouraged to attend for two main reasons. They are primary examples of discipleship in their parish community, and they are the ones guiding the pastoral activity of the community. It would be important that parish leaders understand, live and teach the mission of the Church in their ministries, and that they are formed and form others in the Catholic social teaching in order to carry on the full ministry of the Church: to teach, to sanctify, and to serve the human race.

This program is also highly recommended for parents of young children, particularly parishioners who have their children enrolled in religious education, sacramental preparation programs, or Catholic schools. As the primary educators and guardians of the nucleus of society, young parents must understand the social structures that influence their family life and the neighborhoods and communities in which their children are growing up. It is imperative that they take action in the present to shape society now and also the future society their children will live in. It is our responsibility as a Church to teach not only doctrinal contents to families in sacramental preparation or to provide quality academic education in Catholic schools, but also to form these families in our sacramental ethics and prepare them to carry on the mission of the Church.

b) Description, Content and Features of the Program

The program will consist of three learning sessions and one immersion experience. Through this program parishioners will gain a broader understanding of the relationship between social justice issues and the reality of crime and mass incarceration. The program will invite reflection on the moral imperatives that emerge from listening to the stories of local people who are directly affected by these issues, from the perspective of our faith tradition. Participants will analyze the Church's position about restorative justice, particularly the recommendations of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) for transforming the U.S. criminal justice system into one that is more coherent with our faith values. Parishioners will also learn about specific ways in which they can get involved in restorative justice ministries and will develop a plan of action to implement in their parish. The program will also include communal celebration of some of the Eucharistic rites that inform our Catholic ethics in regards to this topic.

Participants in this program will finalize their training with a “hands on” experience in any of the following: a day in detention ministry; an advocacy action; or participation in any other restorative justice ministry arranged by the facilitator and the parish.

c) Process and Structure of the Program

A. Structure of the Program

The training content will be divided into three 2 hour sessions. Implementation may vary at each parish accommodating to their schedules, facilities, or participants’ pastoral needs. One possible arrangement could be three weeknight sessions and one Saturday or Sunday for the immersion experience. Another possibility could be four weekend sessions, including the immersion experience. It could also be implemented as a Lenten retreat or Lenten reflection sessions.

Session I

Objective:

Participants will analyze the key factors driving the criminal justice system in the U.S., its impact in society, and its relationship with social justice issues. They will gain a broader understanding of the interrelationship between social justice and crime and its impact in local communities. They will be introduced to the Catholic social teaching in regards to these issues.

Learning Outcomes:

- Participants will learn how the criminal justice system works in the U.S. compared to other countries.
- Participants will analyze statistics, facts, and stories, in order to expand their understanding of the criminal justice crisis and its interrelation with social justice issues.
- Participants will be invited to see the moral side of these issues.

- Participants will be introduced to key components of Catholic social teaching as discussed by the USCCB in its document, “Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration.”

Session Outline:

Welcome/Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Session Overview (5 minutes)

Part 1: Analyzing how our criminal justice system works (20 minutes)

- Corporations running prisons, immigration detention facilities, and enforcement of policies like “zero tolerance”ⁱⁱⁱ and “three strikes.”^{iv}

To explain “zero tolerance” and “three strikes” see:

- Davis S. Mitchell, “Zero Tolerance Policies”^v

- Philip Mongan and Robert Walker, “A Historical, Theoretical, and Legal Analysis of Zero-Tolerance Weapons Policies in American Schools”^{vi}

- Alexander Tabarrok and Eric Helland, “Measuring Criminal Spillovers: Evidence from Three Strikes”^{vii}

- John R. Sutton, “Symbol and Substance: Effects of California’s Three Strikes Law on Felony Sentencing”^{viii}

- Richard Boyd, “Narratives of Sacrificial Expulsion in the Supreme Court’s Affirmation of California’s ‘Three Strikes and You’re Out’ Law.”^{ix}

- Sharing stories from people from our local communities who have been convicted, or who have had a loved one in prison or in the deportation process.

Part 2: Analyzing our history (30 minutes)

- Consider U.S. history from this point of view and analyze how that history continues influencing life today.

Suggested audiovisuals and reading materials to prepare this section:

- Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*^x
- Amy Levad, *Redeeming a Prison Society*^{xi}
- PBS series “Slavery and the making of America”^{xii}
- “Immigrants for Sale” documentary from Brave New Films^{xiii}

- Guide a conversation about what has been shown or shared and the impact of that history

we see today in our communities.

Break (10 minutes)

Part 3: USCCB document “Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration” General Overview

(30 minutes)

- Provide a brief summary of the document sharing important highlights.
- Q & A about this document’s teaching and recommendations.
- With previous consent from the USCCB, have the printed document available and assign

it as reading material or guide people to access it online.

Part 4: Communal Celebration: Penitential Rite (20 minutes)

- Prepare the group to connect their learning experience with our liturgical tradition. Invite them to participate in an expression of communal prayer in light of what they have reflected in this session. Provide instructions necessary so that after the celebration people are dismissed in reflective silence.

- Lead the group in a communal examination of conscience and act of contrition, a prayer for conversion from any form of complicity, omission, or negligence to impact this reality with the gospel values.

- Conclude the prayer and dismiss participants keeping a prayerful environment.

Session II

Objective:

Participants will be invited to reflect on their own discipleship and call to embody the corporal works of mercy. They will also learn about Restorative Justice Ministry in the Diocese of San Bernardino; they will be introduced to the different restorative justice ministries offered in the diocese and the way these ministries respond to the mission of the Church.

Learning Outcomes:

- Participants will reflect on the Church's calling to embody Christ's mercy, not only through charity but also through social justice.
- Participants will understand the different ways in which restorative justice ministry can be practiced. They will be introduced to the ministries that already exist in the Diocese of San Bernardino.

Session Outline:

Welcome/Session Overview (5 minutes)

Part 1: Communal Celebration: Liturgy of the Word (20 minutes)

First Reading Isaiah 58:1-11; Psalm 50; Second Reading 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Gospel Reading Luke 15:11-32 or Matthew 25:31-45

Part 2: Theological Reflection on Mercy and Restorative Justice (30 minutes)

- Reflection in small groups using the following questions:
 - What is the Word of God calling us to do?
 - How does our parish community embody Christ's mercy to the incarcerated or formerly incarcerated in our community, and to their families? How do we reach out to them?

➤ What might be keeping us from ministering to the incarcerated and their families, or from welcoming formerly incarcerated members of our communities? Are there internalized fears, judgmental attitudes, or other feelings holding us back from doing so?

➤ What are the prejudices and biases we perceive in our social media towards people of different race or nationalities? How much our own fears (unconscious biases) influence the way we interact (or don't interact) with people other than our own group?

➤ What am I doing as a Christian to reverse injustice in the public sphere?

- Note: These are only guiding questions, it is not necessary to discuss them all.
- Share reflection highlights with the large group using similar questions.

Break (10 minutes)

Part 3: Restorative Justice Ministry (20 minutes)

- What is restorative justice according to Catholic social teaching?
- Overview of existing restorative justice ministries in our diocese.
- Personal testimonies of people involved in restorative justice ministries.

Part 4: Communal Celebration: Profession of Faith and Prayer of the Faithful (30 minutes)

• Invite participants to gather in their small groups to prepare a symbol of their personal and communal response to God's Word in this session (example: "We believe in a Merciful God, thus we respond to his commandment to be merciful by promoting in our parish more participation in detention ministry.")

• Have each group present their symbol and state their commitment resolution as a profession of faith.

- Close this section with prepared prayers of the faithful, praying for the Church, for the world, for politicians and better policies, for victims of violence and crime, for the incarcerated and their families, for justice for immigrants, etc.
- Final blessing (or closing prayer in the absence of a priest) and sending song.

Session III

Objective:

Participants will be invited to discern practical ways in which they personally and their parish community can embody the works of mercy within a framework of restorative justice or advocacy ministries, in order to start addressing some of the issues reflected upon in the past two sessions.

Learning Outcomes:

- Participants will make an assessment of their pastoral resources and potential to embody Christ's mercy through restorative justice and/or advocacy ministry.
- Participants will develop a personal and a communal plan of action to implement in their parish in the following months, based on what they have learned in these sessions.

Session Outline:

Welcome/Session Overview (5 minutes)

Part 1: Communal Celebration: Preparation and presentation of the gifts (20 minutes)

- Invite participants to work in small groups listing an inventory of their gifts and resources as individuals and as parish community. Provide guiding questions and a worksheet for this purpose.
- After they have finished this inventory, invite participants to a moment of communal celebration in which each group present their gifts through an offertory rite.

Part 2: Transformation of the gifts into the body of Christ: transforming potential into reality (30 minutes)

- Invite participants to share in small groups creative ideas of how to:
 - Share this information with other parishioners.
 - Create a restorative justice ministry at the parish that advocates for restorative justice practices and legislation in the public sphere.
 - Join any of the existing restorative justice ministries in the diocese.
 - Become a welcoming parish to formerly incarcerated and/or families of the incarcerated, and/or victims of crime.
- Invite participants to draft a personal plan and a plan for their parish that they can start implementing in the following months. Provide examples and a worksheet.
- Invite participants to share their plan or part of it in the large group, coming to a consensus forming one plan that includes the different ideas proposed by each group.

Break (10 minutes)

Part 3: Communal Celebration: Communion Rites and Rite of Sending (25 minutes)

- Prepare participants for this celebration by explaining the meaning of the communion rites we celebrate in the Eucharist and that they will be invited to celebrate symbolically, in the context of our reflection: 1) The “Our Father;” 2) Sign of peace and reconciliation; 3) Breaking of the bread; 4) symbolic sacramental communion.
-
- Guiding questions: Are we ready to celebrate communion with those who have been excluded from our table as of today? Are we ready to forgive and receive them as they are our

brothers and sisters? Are we ready to take the first step to break down the barriers that divide us right now? Are we willing to reach out to our brothers and sisters in the margins of society?

- Lead the group in celebrating these communion rites in preparation to their immersion experience.
- Conclude with a sending rite for those who have committed themselves to transform their parish community's potential into a real ministry of Christ's mercy to the outcast and to bring back into communion the marginalized.
- Note: Unless the pastor decides to culminate this session with a celebration of the Eucharist instead of the symbolic rituals suggested, this part of the session remains symbolic; therefore there is no sacramental communion involved.

Immersion Experience

Objective:

Participants will be provided an opportunity to participate in a restorative justice ministry for one day. While discerning if they are called to this ministry, participants will be invited to enter this experience as a learning experience and as a moment of giving and receiving God's grace in any interpersonal encounter throughout the day.

Learning Outcomes:

- Participants will learn about a particular restorative justice ministry through experience.
- This experience will aim to help people overcome any fears or misconceptions they could previously have about people in prison or any other restorative justice ministry.
- Participants will be provided an opportunity to discern their calling to a restorative justice ministry.

The Diocesan Office of Restorative Justice will arrange this immersion experience for the first group piloting this program. When parishioners are implementing the program in a second phase, they will be responsible for previously arranging this experience in collaboration with the Diocesan Office of Restorative Justice and their Pastor.

B. Implementation process

Phase I

The Restorative Justice Office invites piloting parishes or a piloting group of participants and implements the program with them. Participants commit to facilitate the program at least in one parish, which could be their own parish.

Phase II

Trained parishioners start implementing the sessions at the same time in different parishes, under the supervision of the Restorative Justice Office, meeting regularly to evaluate and share best practices.

Phase III

Still under the supervision of the Restorative Justice Office, trained parishioners train other parishioners who have experienced the program and would like to continue sharing this experience with other Catholics throughout the diocese. Under the guidance of the Restorative Justice Office this particular group of trained parishioners develops their own strategies for promoting and implementing the program throughout the diocese. This could in turn develop into a Restorative Justice Education Ministry.

II. PASTORAL THEOLOGY

Introduction

Based on two recent Catholic responses to the criminal justice crisis in the U.S. (the USCCB document “Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice” and Amy Levad’s book *Redeeming a Prison Society: A Liturgical and Sacramental Response to Mass Incarceration*), I will highlight some aspects of Catholic theology and ethics found in both documents that provide the theological foundation for this Pastoral Synthesis Project.

First I will present the pastoral challenge I foresee in the community for which this project was developed. Second, I will propose that we need to educate parish communities in order to foster welcoming communities and more active participation in advocacy efforts towards restorative justice. I will then analyze the theological themes found in the two Catholic responses in which I base this project. Lastly, I will offer a conclusion for this section.

A. The Pastoral Challenge

The Diocese of San Bernardino serves about 1.6 million Catholics in San Bernardino and Riverside counties. With a territory of 27,293 square miles, San Bernardino is the fifth largest diocese in the United States^{xiv} and also one of the poorest areas in the nation.^{xv} The United States Census estimated that, for 2014, the total population of Riverside and San Bernardino counties would be approximately 4,441,890,^{xvi} from which approximately 829,280 people would live in poverty,^{xvii} almost one fifth of the total population.

The population estimates by race in 2014 Census,^{xviii} in average between the two counties, were: White 34%, Hispanic or Latino 49.55%, Black or African American 8.25%, Asian 7.05%, American Indian and Alaskan Native 1.95%, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander 0.45%, two or more races 3.4%. In 2012, the Census Bureau's report on Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States^{xix} calculated a median household income for Asian families of \$68,636, for White families \$57,009, for Hispanic families \$39,005, and for African American families only \$33,321.^{xx}

This report reveals that poverty in the United States is very much related to race. With those statistics, one can also infer that income inequalities lead to social inequalities that increase the risk of crime within poor populations. As of San Bernardino and Riverside counties, according to the State of California Department of Justice (SCDJ), in 2014 alone, there were 139,063 arrests.^{xxi} From those arrests, only 13,436 were violent felonies whereas 82,783 were misdemeanors and status offenses. 59,479 arrests were drug and alcohol abuse related offenses while 26,074 were non-violent property offenses, and 880 more were prostitution offenses.

The fact that almost 43% of the total arrests were substance abuse related crimes (drugs and alcohol) indicates that these mental health issues are a major cause of crime in these counties.

Also, non-violent property and prostitution offenses, averaging 20% of the arrests, reveal that poverty and lack of education is another important cause of crime in this area.

In average, 34.17% of arrested people within San Bernardino and Riverside counties in 2014 were White, 46.52% were Hispanic/Latino, and 15.85% were African American. In proportion to the total population in the two counties, African Americans were arrested at a rate almost two times their total population. Considering that African Americans are at the bottom of the median household income chart, the argument about the interrelation between crime, race, poverty, and mental health issues seems to be true in this area.

On the other hand, a comparison of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's inmate population monthly reports from March 2014^{xxii} and March 2016^{xxiii} reveal that, despite the implementation of Proposition 47 in November of 2014, that reclassified non violent-low level felonies to misdemeanors, state prisons in California are still overcrowded. This comparison shows that inmate population in state prisons has decreased only by 8.2% after the implementation of Proposition 47. As of March 2014, state prisons' total occupancy percentage was 140.5%, whereas as of March 2016 it was 132.3%. In spite of this decrease, state prisons are still overcrowded by 32.3% of their design capacity. In contrast, the comparison of both reports shows that the number of prison staff has significantly increased. While as of March 2014 there were 4,166 employees in California state prisons, as of March 2016 there were 11,725.^{xxiv}

Prisons are part of the everyday life of entire communities in this geographical area (e.g., they are an employment source for locals), but I would also argue that prisons represent, at the same time, a pastoral challenge for the majority of Catholics in this diocese. Many Catholics do not seem to be aware of the interrelation between the issues of crime and other social justice

issues such as poverty, race, substance abuse, and mental health issues. Restorative Justice Ministries (i.e., Detention Ministry, Pastoral Care to Victims and Families of Victims, Ministry with Families of the Incarcerated, Re-Entry Ministry, etc) seem not to be as popular as other ministries in parishes; on the contrary, these ministries struggle to serve so many prisons scattered in this massive territory.

Within diocesan territory there are about 26 prisons, including juvenile detention centers, county jails, one community correctional facility,^{xxv} one immigration detention center,^{xxvi} one federal correctional complex,^{xxvii} and five state prisons^{xxviii}. From about 1.6 million Catholics in the diocese, only 220 to 270 are involved in detention ministries at least once a month, and only around 45 are involved in other restorative justice ministries in the diocese. Clergy are not as involved either. From over 200 active priests in the diocese, only two of them minister at prisons regularly and one helps occasionally.^{xxix}

In my opinion, these statistics show that pastoral ministry at the parish level is not entirely focused on reaching out to this marginalized population yet. Based on what local statistics reflect about violence and crime in this local community and its connection to poverty, substance abuse, and also racial and social inequalities, and by assessing this overwhelming reality in relation to the current involvement of Catholics in our diocese in restorative justice ministries, I foresee the pastoral need for implementing this program in our parishes.

Despite Pope Francis' efforts to model what he is calling the Church to do, by visiting the incarcerated in different occasions, this ministry does not seem attractive for many. I would argue that the apparent lack of interest in these ministries is mostly due to a lack of knowledge, and to a contagious atmosphere of fear and judgment, among other barriers people encounter when navigating the criminal justice system as it is now. This pastoral tool aims to respond to

this pastoral challenge, educating parish communities about these issues, so they become more welcoming communities that reach out to the marginalized in their midst, and more active participants in restorative justice and advocacy ministries.

With these considerations, we will now dive into some of the theological themes supporting this pastoral project, analyzing two recent Catholic responses to the criminal justice crises in the United States.

B. Catholic Responses to Crime and the Criminal Justice Crisis in the United States

A document released in 2000 by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) called “Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice,” and Amy Levad’s book *Redeeming a Prison Society: A Liturgical and Sacramental Response to Mass Incarceration*, are two recent Catholic responses to the criminal justice crisis in the U.S. These documents not only identify problems with the current criminal justice system, but also highlight the theological foundations of restorative justice in which we base this pastoral project.

In her critical assessment of the Bishops’ document Catholic theologian Amy Levad points to the fact that the criminal justice crisis in the U.S. is not an isolated issue but rather an important component of the social justice crisis in the U.S.^{xxx} Institutionalized and systemic injustice^{xxxi} that allows profiting from the pain and distress of impoverished minorities^{xxxii} is the broader picture Levad invites us to see when responding to the criminal justice crisis in the U.S. Both the USCCB and Amy Levad agree that crime in our society is directly related to social justice issues such as poverty, lack of education, lack of attention to mental health and substance abuse issues,^{xxxiii} along with a history of racial and social inequalities in the United States.^{xxxiv}

Following these insights, the basic premise of this work is that, in order to foster welcoming communities and more active participation in advocacy efforts to transform a retributive system into a restorative justice system, we need to educate parish communities so they understand the interrelation between social justice issues and crime in our society and the moral imperatives of our Christian ethics upon those issues.

We will now reflect upon the Catholic theology and ethics these documents portray in relation to crime, punishment, human dignity, and the Church's mission, to better understand the pastoral theology sustaining this project.

I. USCCB. "Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice."

This document by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops challenges the ways in which the U.S. criminal justice system is currently addressing crime and punishment. The bishops note that the current proceedings not only lack Christian morality but also are limited in addressing the consequences of crime in society and the rehabilitation of inmates. They write: "As bishops, we believe that the current trend of more prisons and more executions, with too little education and drug treatment, does not truly reflect Christian values and will not really leave our communities safer."^{xxxv} Based on Catholic social teaching, specifically on the theological premise of human dignity^{xxxvi} and the basic principles of Christian faith such as community^{xxxvii} and the common good,^{xxxviii} the option for the poor,^{xxxix} and the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity,^{xl} the bishops offer some policy recommendations to the U.S. criminal justice system from a Catholic moral perspective.^{xli} Also, drawing on the mission of the Church, the bishops call Catholics to advocate for criminal justice policies that are consistent with our faith values^{xlii} and to resist the ones that are against those values, and also to take action addressing community issues as they are the root causes of crime.^{xliii}

This document consists of four sections. An introduction that describes the reality of crime faced by church communities, and the ways in which the U.S. criminal justice system is currently addressing crime. A second section contains a glimpse of the scriptural, theological, and sacramental Catholic heritage regarding the issues of crime, punishment and restoration. In this

section, the bishops offer the Catholic theological foundations to support a criminal justice system reform in the U.S. In the third section, the bishops offer some policy foundations and directions to the US criminal justice system to make the necessary improvements and corrections the system needs. Lastly, they speak to the Church itself, reminding Catholics about our mission in the world and calling us to take more action toward a criminal justice system reform, implementing restorative justice practices and advocating for better policies to address the issue of crime and its root causes. For the purpose of this paper, I will focus on sections II, III and IV which contain the theological arguments founding the bishops' response.

In section II, the bishops emphasize the Christian demands for justice and mercy, the reality of sin and forgiveness, and the unalienable nature of human dignity, as their arguments for the need for implementing restorative justice practices when addressing crime and punishment. Each of these arguments is based on a scriptural, a sacramental or a theological perspective and in accordance with key principles of Catholic social teaching.

From a biblical perspective, the bishops allude to God's covenant with the people of Israel and the Ten Commandments as the way in which God established his justice among the Israelites. In spite of people's failure to the Covenant, God demonstrated his love and mercy to both victims and sinners with his loyal presence. The bishops write:

God never abandons us, so too we must be in covenant with one another. We are all sinners, and our response to sin and failure should not be abandonment and despair, but rather justice, contrition, reparation, and return or reintegration of all into the community.^{xliv}

The bishops also appeal to several examples of the New Testament in which Jesus reflects God's zeal for justice, his rejection for sin and, at the same time, his mercy for sinners (the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15) and his compassion for the victims of crime (the good Samaritan parable in Luke 10).

From a sacramental perspective, the bishops talk about the sacraments of penance and Eucharist as “real encounters with the Saving Lord and central Catholic signs of true justice and mercy.”^{xlv} They make a correlation between the traditional elements of penance and the process of healing from a harmful behavior or crime; starting with repentance, taking responsibility, restitution or accountability, and reintegration to the community. Their theological foundation for proposing a criminal justice reform is Thomas Aquinas’ notion of the constructive and redemptive purpose of punishment.^{xlvi} The bishops argue that punishment should not be inflicted for the sake of punishment, but in order to hold offenders accountable for their actions and to help them reflect on their sin, repent, and be reconciled and reintegrated to the community.^{xlvii} Thus they advocate for a reform to the criminal justice system, implementing restorative justice practices, more rehabilitation programs, etc.

In the larger part of this section, the bishops recall six fundamental principles of Catholic social teaching. Their main argument, reinforced in different ways throughout this section, is the dignity of the human life. They write:

The fundamental starting point for all Catholic social teaching is the defense of human life and dignity: every human person is created in the image and likeness of God and has an inviolable dignity, value, and worth, [...] Human dignity is not something we earn by our good behavior; it is something we have as children of God.^{xlviii}

Thus, victims and offenders, as well as members of the community at large, all possess human dignity that must be protected. Based on that premise, the bishops continue to stress the importance of the right to life of every person, and the necessity to hold offenders accountable “without violating their human rights.”^{xlix} They also stress that participation of family and community members is key in the rehabilitation of inmates and the reduction of recidivism.¹ They also mention the efforts for the reconstruction of families as a means of preventing and responding to crime, and the importance of responding to the victims’ needs for healing

processes, instead of just “using” their pain to obtain convictions and sentences for the offenders.^{li}

Under the principle of common good in Catholic social teaching, the bishops underline three principal purposes to punishment and a principle of “redress,”^{liii} meaning that the offenders are expected to repair the harm done in order to restore the common good. The threefold purpose of punishment they point out consists of protection of the common good, restoration of the public order, and restoration the offender.^{liiii} Regarding the option for the poor, the bishops recognize that “lack of adequate resources, [as well as] unaddressed needs, [...] can be stepping stones on a path towards crime.”^{liiv} They suggest that the Church’s role is to address those needs “through pastoral care, charity and advocacy.”^{liiv} And, lastly, based on the principles of subsidiarity and solidarity, they imply that the local community is responsible for crime prevention and its solution, and for the rehabilitation, healing and restoration of, both, victims and offenders.^{livi}

In section III, the bishops propose eleven *Policy Foundations and Directions* in response to the criminal justice crisis in the US. They emphasize the need to respond to the two fundamental principles of human dignity they previously explained, the need for justice and mercy. Justice as the means of holding wrongdoers accountable for the harm they have inflicted on individuals and communities, and, at the same time, God’s mercy, providing an opportunity for reconciliation, rehabilitation, and reintegration to the community. They write:

In light of this moral framework, we seek approaches that understand crime as a threat to community, not just a violation of law; that demand new efforts to rebuild lives, not just build more prisons; and that demonstrate a commitment to re-weave a broader social fabric of respect for life, civility, responsibility, and reconciliation.^{liiii}

With the premise that punishment must have a purpose of treatment and restitution, their first recommendation is to remove dangerous people from society in order to ensure public safety;^{liiii} this is the resource called “incapacitation.”^{lix} Second, they express a rejection for

“simplistic solutions and rigid mandatory sentencing,”^{lx} encouraging community-based solutions instead, with an emphasis on treatment and restoration. Thirdly, the bishops ask for serious efforts to prevent crime addressing the risk factors of poverty, family disintegration, and lack of quality education.^{lxi}

The bishops’ fourth recommendation is to counter a culture of violence with a culture of life.^{lxii} They encourage stronger regulations over the commerce and use of firearms; they also denounce other anti-ethical and anti-human cultural customs of contemporary society that promote a violent environment superposing possessions, power and pleasure over the values of life and human dignity.^{lxiii} The bishops also build on Pope John Paul II’s insight and reiterate their strong opposition to the death penalty, for “the death penalty offers the tragic illusion that we can defend life by taking life.”^{lxiv}

Recommendations five and six emphasize the necessity for restorative justice practices and the victims’ full participation in the process.^{lxv} Insisting on the constructive and rehabilitative purpose of punishment, in recommendation number seven, the U.S. bishops ask for the government’s investment in rehabilitation and reintegration programs and services, as well as preventive and treatment programs in local communities.^{lxvi} In this regard, the bishops question the viability of true restoration efforts on the part of private, for-profit corporations running the prisons in this country.^{lxvii} They also express their opposition to the use of isolation units and reiterate their support to returning citizen’s right to vote.^{lxviii}

In recommendations eight and nine, the bishops reassure the inmates’ right to religious participation and formation as a means for spiritual healing, renewal and rehabilitation,^{lxix} they encourage federal, state and local instances to make a serious commitment to provide treatment for inmates with substance abuse and mental illness, and to address the issues of lack of

employment, poverty, inadequate education, family disintegration, etc., that attract people into the illegal economy of drugs.^{lxx} They also encourage a just treatment to immigrants whose basic rights to fair judicial proceedings and to religious expression and pastoral care have been violated.^{lxxi}

Lastly, the bishops insist on the importance of community responsibility and involvement to address public safety issues, in preventing and solving local crime issues.^{lxxii} This is precisely what this pastoral project intends; it is an effort to motivate parish communities to take action in addressing these issues, taking responsibility for the wellbeing of the larger community.

In section IV of this document, entitled *The Church's Mission*, the bishops address Catholics in an invitation to take responsibility and action. They recognize and praise the current participation of Catholics in service, advocacy, and crime prevention programs, yet they call for more involvement in the areas of: 1) Teaching moral and Christian values, and respect for life and the law;^{lxxiii} 2) Developing victim ministry programs and pastoral care;^{lxxiv} 3) Providing pastoral care for offenders and their families, and advocating for more treatment programs; also teaching the parish community about Catholic social teaching and restorative justice, challenging the parish community to live out the values of forgiveness, reconciliation, and responsibility for all members of the community;^{lxxv} 4) Encouraging local parishes to be an agent of transformation of the local community, partnering with other churches, law enforcement, local civil movements, and service agencies to address and prevent crime in the neighborhoods, in order to “rebuild community;”^{lxxvi} 5) Calling for more advocacy work to implement policies that reflect Christian values, countering a culture of violence, broken families, poverty, substance abuse, etc., through restorative justice;^{lxxvii} 6) Organizing diocesan and state consultations; facilitating forums where crime victims, former inmates, jail chaplains, judges, police officers, community leaders,

persecutors, families of victims and offenders, and others, can share their faith, stories, hopes and fears, in order to take action in healing their community;^{lxxviii} and 7) Urging Catholics to work for new approaches for a comprehensive reform of both the criminal justice system and society and to address and prevent crime through healing the local communities.^{lxxix}

With these reflections in mind, we now turn to Amy Levad's perspective on these issues, her critical assessment of the bishop's document, and her proposal for an adequate Catholic response to the criminal and social justice crisis in the U.S.

II. Levad, Amy. *Redeeming a Prison Society: A Liturgical and Sacramental Response to Mass Incarceration*.

Amy Levad's basic claim in her book is that an adequate response to the "crisis of justice"^{lxxx} in the U.S. must consider the fundamental correlation between the criminal justice and social justice crises.^{lxxxii} In my view, Levad suggests that current reflection on American criminal justice must consider these factors: the specific context of the U.S. history that has led it to become "the first genuine prison society;"^{lxxxiii} the U.S. present reality in comparison to the rest of the world; and it must provide sufficient resources to address crime and its root causes.^{lxxxiii} Levad proposes that an adequate Catholic response to this crisis of justice must "draw upon the heart of our religious and moral tradition,"^{lxxxiv} which we find in liturgy and the sacraments.

Levad's initial argument is that the criminal justice crisis in the U.S. is a manifestation of a social justice crisis that is the root cause and the direct effect of a broken criminal justice system. She writes: "In the United States, racial, ethnic, and class inequality undermine social justice and fuel the crisis of our criminal justice systems. At the same time, our criminal justice systems

contribute to the ongoing effects of these disparities in our society, exacerbating our failures to achieve social justice.”^{lxxxv}

Levad talks about the socio-cultural, economic, and political factors that led the U.S. to become a prison society,^{lxxxvi} as well as the impact of such reality on concrete sectors of the population, still being targeted and harmed by this social structure, especially its impact on families and communities.^{lxxxvii} She also reflects on the impact this justice crises has on minority peoples who, alike people in prison, are not given a fair opportunity to a life with dignity. She also offers a critical analysis of the complexity of changing a situation that benefits many corporations and employs millions of people in the country who would resist such change.^{lxxxviii}

In this complex reality, Levad thinks “religious voices”^{lxxxix} can be catalysts for this resistance, offering a moral perspective and calling for change. In this regard, she argues that Catholic responses have not been sufficiently prophetic and adequate.^{xc} She identifies a lack of Catholic voices in contemporary theological conversation about the criminal and social justice crises^{xcii} and finds Catholic responses limited in number and in perspective and, thus, not entirely adequate to the reality of mass incarceration in the U.S. She writes: “Without recognizing the connections between social and criminal justice, and without relating the core insights of Catholic tradition to our particular circumstances, these Catholic efforts will not provide sufficient resources for a more just future.”^{xcii}

Levad analyzes differing perspectives within the Catholic tradition: the Thomistic Theories of Criminal Justice by Peter Karl Koritansky and Kathryn Getek Soltis and their approach to punishment; the USCCB document “Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice;” and Andrew Skotnicki’s argument for prisons. While recognizing that all of these approaches touch on the fundamental Catholic belief in the

human dignity of all persons, Levad concludes that none of them represent an adequate Catholic response to the present reality of mass incarceration in the U.S.^{xciii}

Regarding the USCCB document “Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration,” Levad’s impression is that the document recapitulates valuable insights of two previous documents written in the 1970’s, “Rebuilding Human Lives” (1973) and “A Community Response to Crime” (1978),^{xciv} in an effort to apply Pope John Paul II’s 2000 Jubilee message addressing the worldwide penal systems to the particular situation in the U.S.^{xcv}

In her critical assessment, Levad argues that “the bishops’ recommendations still fail to acknowledge fully the ways in which crises of social and criminal justice are fundamentally intertwined, independent of problems of crime.”^{xcvi} She thinks that the bishops are not being prophetic enough in confronting the U.S. social justice crisis that underlines and sustains the U.S. broken criminal justice system.

Levad points out some strengths and weaknesses in the way the bishops describe the U.S. criminal justice crisis. She writes:

They seem to recognize that our criminal justice systems have grown independently of crime rates, and that crime rates have fallen for reasons other than our reliance on incarceration. [...] they explore ways in which our criminal justice crisis sustains social injustices, [but] they miss the ways in which social, cultural, economic, and political factors contribute to the creation of our prison society – they miss the fact that our criminal justice crisis also reflects a social justice crisis, independent of the effects of social injustice on crime.^{xcvii}

As an example of this, she comments on the bishops’ second recommendation in the USCCB document: “Rejecting simplistic solutions and rigid mandatory sentencing.”^{xcviii} She points out how the bishops base their stance on the ineffectiveness of these measures instead of lifting a prophetic voice on the immorality of those laws. She says: “the bishops should reject these policies not only because they are ineffective at reducing and preventing crime, but also – and more fundamentally – because they are built on and perpetuate social injustice.”^{xcix}

Levad does not disregard the bishops' insights; on the contrary, she recognizes that the USCCB document "offers important guidance about Catholic resources for reassessing our criminal justice systems."⁹⁰ Her critique is that they would perhaps take "a more prophetic stance against the social injustices that our criminal justice systems reflect and help sustain if they were to recognize this interrelationship more fully."⁹¹ For instance, considering the bishops' third recommendation, "Promoting serious efforts toward crime prevention and poverty reduction,"⁹² Levad argues that the bishops could have been more prophetic in confronting the political and social structures that have led to the U.S. criminal and social justice crises. She writes:

They might, for example, call upon politicians to refrain from fear-mongering "war-on-crime" language with racist overtones to win elections. They might decry the ways in which we have constructed a "cradle-to-prison" pipeline that shuttles young minority males from jobless ghettos to school suspensions to juvenile hall, and ultimately, to prison. They might call for the divestment of funds from prison industries. They might recognize the need for a social movement to dismantle the structures that have made us the first genuine prison society. And they would do so because that is what social and criminal justice demands.⁹³

In light of this reflection, Levad offers a liturgical and sacramental approach to justice. She argues that "[t]he liturgy of the sacraments provides a starting point in Catholic tradition for theological and moral reflection about justice."⁹⁴ In exploring other ways to cultivate moral reflection about justice, she also appeals to philosopher Iris Murdoch's insight that religious practices can alter consciousness and foster moral transformation.⁹⁵ Based on this insight, Levad suggests that:

Liturgy and sacraments alter the quality of our consciousness by guiding us through a particular vision that grounds 'an actual reorientation of sensibility and intentional acts... a new self-understanding and a world-picture.' [Thus,] As we rehearse this vision in liturgy, we practice seeing the world from a different perspective than our own [...] we are asked in liturgy to adopt a world-picture from God's perspective.⁹⁶

This theory seems to be the foundation for Levad's claim that liturgy and sacraments form our consciousness and dispose our hearts to work for justice, as we feel called to replicate the vision of the world from God's perspective which we celebrate in liturgy. She writes:

As we take the vision offered in liturgy and sacraments as our own, we are called to act in new ways for justice. As liturgy and sacraments are always communal rites, our celebration draws us into the community that is a foretaste of God's reign. In these ways, liturgy and sacraments are united with ethics and the work for justice. As we participate in them, we are drawn into a public, political, and pluralistic tradition that is called toward justice emulating God's reign for life in the community and in the world beyond.^{cvii}

She then offers a theological reflection on the moral vision that the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist portray, as they constitute a prophetic vision of what our society ought to become and ought to do regarding the social and criminal justice crises.

Tracing back our historical tradition about the sacrament of reconciliation, Levad offers three valuable insights that illuminate our reflection about how to respond to individual wrongdoing,^{cviii} and also how to take responsibility for social injustice,^{cxix} recognizing our complicity in social sin.^{cx} These are three fundamental components that inspire this project. Our intention is to help people reflect on these issues in light of our sacramental ethics, motivating them to take responsibility and a more active role in transforming sinful structures.

Regarding individual wrongdoing, Levad writes:

The history of the sacrament [of reconciliation] suggests that it is best to understand individual wrongdoing not in legalistic terms as a violation of the law [...] but as a violation of relationships [...] People who commit wrongdoing must work to correct the harms they have done to community members. At the same time, community members ought to provide guidance and relationship in order to restore the wrongdoer to full communion.^{cxix}

The bishops also stress this when they call the Church community to get involved and take responsibility for the healing and restoration of communal relationships with the incarcerated, with their families, and with the victims of crime. This valuable insight emerging from our

sacramental tradition provides this project its main underpinning; we want to educate parishioners in these issues so they become active participants in healing and restoring their communities.

From a biblical perspective, Levad reminds us the basic premise underlying the sacrament of reconciliation: God's mercy and his commandment that the disciples forgive and show mercy and support one another when somebody fails (Matthew 18). She writes: "the following passage [Matthew 18:21-35] suggests that the church ought to maintain forgiveness as the guiding principle for responding to sin and conflict."^{cxii} Also, recalling Pauline tradition she writes: "for Paul, the body of Christ is a reconciled community that also continues to seek and deepen reconciliation [...] judgment and discipline ought not be extended indefinitely; forgiveness ought to arise eventually in a reconciled and reconciling church."^{cxiii}

From the early church tradition Levad reminds us how the Christian community dealt with public sins:

The repentant sinner would be excluded from the Eucharist, but not necessarily excluded from the community. Church members would pray for them weekly and would serve as mentors to them. During their period of penitence, sinners would progress through several stages that drew them back into the community over time [...] When the community was convinced that the sinner had completely reconverted, the bishop would lay hands upon him to reincorporate him fully into the body of Christ.^{cxiv}

Here Levad emphasizes that exclusion from the community or isolation is not the way Christians deal with a person who has harmed the community; on the contrary, the community is involved in the process of conversion, while the ultimate goal of the penitential practice is reconciliation and reincorporation to the community. The USCCB coincides with this view; the Bishops denounce isolation practices and the exclusion of family members from the rehabilitation process of inmates because such practices deter the healing process, increasing the risk of recidivism.^{cxv}

Continuing her reflection, Levad talks about “the moral vision of the Eucharist.”^{cxvi} She discusses the covenantal relationships that bind us with God and with one another.^{cxvii} Also, from a biblical perspective, she talks about the inclusiveness that Jesus inaugurated in his meals,^{cxviii} particularly in the Last Supper, when Jesus modeled and established yet another aspect of the Eucharist, which is servanthood. Levad points out how servanthood is understood in early Christianity as an inherent aspect of the Eucharist. She writes: “The text of Acts links the breaking of bread within the early Christian community to its public service to others, especially to the poor.”^{cxix}

According to Levad, these three aspects of the Eucharist ought to inspire Christians to reach out to the poor and the marginalized, and to bring whoever is missing back into communion. Furthermore, the Eucharist ought to “draw Christians more deeply into confrontation with the injustices of the world.”^{cxx} To this regard Levad writes:

As the Eucharist fosters visions of God’s justice, which sometimes contrast sharply with justice interpreted in human terms, Christians ought to become increasingly aware of injustices in our midst that demean and degrade our neighbors. Brokenness within our communities, violations of the bodies of human persons, exclusions from the political life of our society ought to inspire Christians to work for redemption, healing, and inclusion of all people.^{cxxi}

Although Levad recognizes the challenges we face in connecting liturgy and sacraments to ethics and justice (acknowledging, for instance, the privatization of worship and the reality of injustice within the church, among other challenges),^{cxxii} Levad insists that “the moral visions disclosed in the sacraments suggest alternative norms and values for responding to our criminal and social justice crises.”^{cxxiii} From this perspective, Levad offers some recommendations for a criminal justice reform and calls for a movement for justice grounded in liturgical and sacramental ethics. Her proposal is that U.S. society “must endeavor to create a new society that takes seriously the inviolable and inalienable dignity of every human person,”^{cxxiv} excluding no

one, based on the moral vision of God's kingdom celebrated in the sacraments, particularly reconciliation and the Eucharist. Her approach here coincides with the USCCB document when they propose both sacraments as the sacramental foundation for implementing restorative justice practices into the U.S. criminal justice system.^{cxv}

Levad argues that we must start by acknowledging the reality and the damages of mass incarceration and by learning to care for people in prison as they are part of the Eucharistic community, members of the One Body we are in Christ.^{cxvi} Furthermore, she implies that we must cross racial and social divides to create a multi-racial, multi-religious alliance to counter the issues of mass incarceration,^{cxvii} and to eradicate its root causes by addressing our social justice crisis. All this, inspired on the visions we celebrate in liturgy and the sacraments.

We have designed this pastoral project based on these reflections. We aim to offer participants an opportunity to link some of the rituals we celebrate in the Eucharist, including the act of communal reconciliation we celebrate in the penitential rite, to the broader picture Levad and the USCCB invite us to see. We hope to inspire participants to experience the moral visions of the Eucharist and reconciliation that Levad talks about, and act in consequence.

Conclusion

The two Catholic responses analyzed here, the USCCB document “Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration,” and Amy Levad’s book *Redeeming a Prison Society*, are based in the fundamental premise of Catholic social teaching: the inviolability of human dignity. As the bishops point out in their document:

Human dignity is not something we earn by our good behavior; it is something we have as children of God. We believe that because we are all created by God, ‘none of us is the sum total of the worst act we have ever committed. . . . As a people of faith, we believe that grace can transform even the most hardened and cruel human beings.’^{cxxviii}

Both responses also draw upon the theology of the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist in their proposal for a criminal justice system reform that enables offenders to rehabilitate, reconcile, and return to the community, in other words, a criminal justice system that allows God’s grace to rebuild lives and communities.^{cxxix}

Both documents call us to understand our Catholic tradition rooted in the sacraments, to impact the world with our faith values, particularly U.S. society addressing its criminal and social justice crises. These documents urge us to live our sacramental ethics, particularly the Eucharist with its reconciling effects, reaching out to the outcast of U.S. society: the poor, the incarcerated, the victims of crime and violence in their neighborhoods, the mentally ill and those dealing with substance abuse issues.

In my view, these documents are calling Catholics to understand that, as baptized disciples, we are immersed into the full mission of the Church: to teach, to sanctify, and to serve; we are at the same time prophets, priests, and servants. Thus, we cannot separate worship from doctrine and from ethics. Our worship would not be complete if we do not live and teach our sacramental ethics,^{cxxx} just as our service to the world would not be ministry if it is not “rooted in the intention to continue Christ’s mission.”^{cxxxii} Deepening our understanding of the richness of our

Catholic tradition, we will hopefully become better disciples of Christ, impacting society with the gospel values that we celebrate in the sacraments.

These are some of the themes we will address in the following section of this project, where we will reflect on the nature of ministry in the church and, more specifically, on the role of pastoral ministry in fulfilling the mission of the church.

III. PASTORAL MINISTRY

Introduction

In this section I offer an overview of my understanding of pastoral ministry in relation to this project, highlighting what I consider to be some of the core elements that define ministry in the Catholic Church.

I will develop this section in four parts, touching upon different aspects of pastoral ministry. First, I will talk about ministry in the church as a call received in Baptism. Second, I will reflect upon the mission of the church and its relation to social justice. I will then explain my understanding of pastoral ministry as a call to leadership in the church. And lastly, I will offer my perspective on the role of the pastoral theologian in accompanying and inspiring Christ's disciples in fulfilling the mission of the church.

A. Ministry as a call received in Baptism

Ministry, as I understand it, is a calling derived from the calling to Christian life in baptism. As Edward P. Hahnenberg points out, this notion was recovered in Vatican II, where “Baptism has become a sacrament of ministry.”^{xxxii} God’s providence calls us first into human existence. He then calls us to communion with him through Jesus Christ. Incorporated to Christ and the church through Baptism, we become part of the community which is called to continue Christ’s mission in the world. Thus, from our incorporation to Christ, we are called to ministry.

According to Richard M. Gula, “The call to ministry is secondary to discipleship as a specific expression of it.”^{xxxiii} We are first called to be Christ’s disciples joining the community of believers; and it is through the community^{xxxiv} that God calls us to share our gifts, as members of one body (Romans 12:4-6; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 and 12-28), for the good of the community.

B. The Mission of the Church

Once we are disciples, and members of the community, we are called to participate in Christ’s mission. Gula expresses this as follows, “As the whole people of God, the community of all the baptized, the church is moving through history sharing in Christ’s saving mission to proclaim, embody, and serve the coming of the reign of God in its fullness.”^{xxxv} Hahnenberg coincides with Gula stating that “All Christians are made like Christ in baptism and share in his prophetic, priestly, and royal missions.”^{xxxvi}

This notion that Christ’s mission becomes the church’s mission is also rooted in our biblical tradition. Different gospel passages narrate how Jesus sent his disciples to continue his mission (Mark 6:7; Luke 9:1-6; Luke 10:1-20; Matthew 28:19; John 20:21). He gave them authority and

commanded them to perform his deeds of healing, restoring, and bringing the good news to the poor, proclaiming the reign of God, and also forgiving sins (John 20:23).

Hahnenberg provides further explanation about the mission of Christ realized in his incarnation, which we are called to continue today. He writes:

All Christian ministry finds its source in the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ [...] Jesus' ministry came from God; it was a ministry of love and of service which did not avoid a political stance against oppression; it was a ministry of preaching centered on the gift of the Spirit, overcoming Satan, the dawn of God's kingdom, and good news for the poor.^{cxxxvii}

Gula, on his end, reinforces the idea that “the mission of the church is both spiritual and social: the church is to be both a sign and an instrument of our union with God, and of the unity of all human kind.”^{cxxxviii} The Second Vatican Council articulates this in both the Dogmatic and the Pastoral Constitutions on the Church: *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*. *Lumen Gentium* # 1 states:

Christ is the Light of nations. Because this is so, this Sacred Synod gathered together in the Holy Spirit eagerly desires, by proclaiming the Gospel to every creature, to bring the light of Christ to all men, a light brightly visible on the countenance of the Church. Since the Church is in Christ like a sacrament or as a sign and instrument both of a very closely knit union with God and of the unity of the whole human race, it desires now to unfold more fully to the faithful of the Church and to the whole world its own inner nature and universal mission. [...] The present-day conditions of the world add greater urgency to this work of the Church so that all men, joined more closely today by various social, technical and cultural ties, might also attain fuller unity in Christ.^{cxxxix}

Gaudium et Spes describes the mission of the Church as related to social justice when it talks about solidarity with the human race, particularly the poor and the afflicted. It also describes the church as a community that impacts human history with the good news of salvation for all. In *Gaudium et Spes* # 1 we read:

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men. United in

Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every man. That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with mankind and its history by the deepest of bonds.^{cxl}

From these reflections we can infer that the mission of the Church is very much related to social justice, as we proclaim God's reign and strive to live under the new order of creation Christ inaugurated in his incarnation. Christ himself did this. Jesus, the Son of God, walked through human history in solidarity with the poor, the afflicted, and the marginalized; He proclaimed the good news of salvation to every person, and preached His Father's Reign in an invitation to conversion of heart and deeds. In my view, these are the works of social justice that Christians are called to do as continuation of Christ's mission.

Thus, the community of believers is called to evangelize the world, proclaiming good news to the poor and afflicted, and transforming society with the gospel values. Furthermore, as Christ reconciled humanity with the Father, the community of believers is called to bring the marginalized of society back into communion with God (2 Corinthians 5:18-21). This, I believe, is where restorative justice ministry is rooted. We are called to heal and restore human relationships with God and within the community.

C. Pastoral Ministry

On the other hand, I see pastoral ministry as a more specific calling to leadership in the Church. I see it as the service of a shepherd, also modeled by Christ (Cf. John 10:1-16; Luke 15:1-7; Matthew 18:10-14) and extended to his disciples as an invitation to a deeper commitment for the love of Christ (John 21:15-17). As Gula points out:

The pastoral ministry is a way of specifying our basic vocation to the discipleship of Jesus by assuming a religious, ecclesial role within society. The pastoral minister focuses the call to discipleship on all that pertains to being a representative of the church committed to sharing in God's mission of bringing all peoples and the whole creation into harmony under God's reign.^{cxli}

Gula talks about pastoral ministry as a vocation received and realized in community. He writes: “As a vocation, then, pastoral ministry is a free response to our experience of God in and through the community.”^{cxlii} Thus, I conceive pastoral ministry as a commitment to serve God and his people, modeling discipleship and commitment to Christ’s mission; encouraging fellow disciples in this journey of faith and works.

Although pastoral ministry in the Catholic Church has been historically reserved for ordained men, the scope of pastoral ministry has been expanded to the laity after Vatican II, retrieving early Christian tradition. According to Hahnenberg, after Vatican II, “Baptism has replaced ordination as the primary sacrament of ministry.”^{cxliii} This is not to diminish the particular role of the ordained minister in the church but to recognize the value of lay ministry, and, I would argue, the value of female presence in ministry. In Hahnenberg’s view, Vatican II recovered “the Pauline notion of charisms as broadly available and beneficial to the church. Charisms are recognized as various and widely diffused; they are affirmed as gifts given for the renewal of both the church and the world.”^{cxliv} Since Vatican II, pastoral ministry is open to lay participation and, with it, to women taking leadership roles in the church.

Thus, in my view, pastoral ministry belongs not only to the ordained ministers but also to any person serving as a leader in the church, whose ministry is discerned and recognized by the authority of the Church.^{cxlv} We are called to pastoral ministry when we are called by the community to lead and journey with the people of God, while we strive together to live as missionary disciples in the world.^{cxlvi} As Pope Francis points out in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* when he talks about personal accompaniment in processes of growth, “Genuine spiritual accompaniment always begins and flourishes in the context of service to the mission of evangelization. [...] Missionary disciples accompany missionary disciples.”^{cxlvii}

D. My understanding of ministry as a pastoral theologian in the context of this project

One of my main tasks as a minister, and more specifically as a pastoral theologian, I believe consists of leading the people of God to gain a deeper understanding of the mysteries we believe, proclaim, and celebrate as a Church, by connecting them to people's life and with the issues affecting society. Because I contend that pastoral theology needs to address people's life and concrete experiences, I see my responsibility in making that connection between human experience and our faith tradition. I also affirm that pastoral ministry aims to form "missionary disciples"^{cxlviii}, promoting their agency and leadership in ministry.

It seems important in our days that any church leader takes into consideration that the gifts are many, as the body has many members, and that no one possesses them all, as we are called to put our gifts at service of the community (Cf. Romans 12:3-8). In my view, calling forth the gifts of others,^{cxlix} and developing new leaders within the community is one of the responsibilities of the pastoral minister today. Fostering collaboration in ministry,^{cl} as well as ownership of the church's mission within God's people, would be a first step towards forming more missionary disciples active in the world, as Pope Francis is calling us to be. This is the role I see myself fulfilling as pastoral theologian in the church, leading God's people to a deeper reflection about the impact our faith tradition has in our human history, and to inspire more missionary disciples to take on the full mission of the church in our days.

Conclusion

As we have discussed throughout this work, restorative justice should not be considered an appendix to the Church's mission, or a particular calling for some church members. On the contrary, as we have reflected here, restorative justice is intrinsic to our core values as Catholics, rooted in Christ's mission and inherent to ours.

As Catholics, we believe every person is created in the image and likeness of God and thus possesses inalienable dignity. We believe in the forgiveness of sins, as Christ's work of reconciliation between the world and his Father. We celebrate our unity with Christ and among us in the Eucharist, as we partake of one bread, confessing that we are one body and that no one should be excluded from this table. We live in hope for God is among us, and every time we gather to celebrate the mysteries of faith, we accept our common mission to bring about God's reign in our midst. As the body of Christ, we strive to continue his reconciling mission, looking for the lost sheep (Matthew 18:12-14; Luke 15:4-6), gathering them into one flock (John 10:15-16), and back into the Father's house (Luke 15:11-32).

Thus, I consider that part of my responsibility as pastoral theologian is to bring this to my fellow Catholic's attention, in order to inspire more participation in social justice issues in general, and a deeper commitment to restorative justice, since this ministry is at the core of our Catholic theology and our sacramental ethics, as we have reflected throughout this document.

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ⁱⁱⁱ "Zero tolerance policies' are school discipline policies that create mandatory punishment for specific offenses [...] the result is often severe punishment for any breach of a rule, regardless of how minor or whether there are extenuating circumstances [...] the concept of zero tolerance was originally developed outside of the school context as a law enforcement approach to drug trafficking. Zero tolerance became widely adopted in schools and accepted as the preferred means for addressing school conduct and meting out punishment in the early 1990s." S. David Mitchell, "Zero Tolerance Policies: Criminalizing Childhood and Disenfranchising the Next Generation of Citizens," *Washington University Law Review* 92, no. 2, (December 2014): 277.

^{iv} "California's three-strikes law took effect in March of 1994. A 'strike' is a conviction for a serious or violent felony called a qualifying or 'strikeable' felony as these are laid out in the California Penal Code. A criminal with one strike who is convicted of any subsequent felony faces an automatic doubling of the sentence length on that conviction and cannot be released prior to serving at least 80% of the sentence length. A criminal with two strikes who is convicted for any subsequent felony faces a prison sentence of 25 years to life and cannot be released prior to serving at least 80% of the 25-year term." Alexander Tabarrok and Eric Helland, "Measuring Criminal Spillovers: Evidence from Three Strikes." *Review of Law & Economics* 5, no. 1, (April 2009): 252.

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^{xiv} Roman Catholic Diocese of San Bernardino website, URL: <http://www.sbdiocese.org/about/facts.cfm>, (last accessed May 2016)

^{xv} Small Area Income & Poverty Estimates: 2014, United States Census Bureau website, URL:

<https://www.census.gov/did/www/saipe/data/statecounty/data/2014.html>, (last accessed May 2016)

^{xvi} See population in San Bernardino County: 2,112,619 plus population in Riverside County: 2,329,271. United States Census Bureau website, URL: <http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/06071,06065>.

^{xvii} See *Income and Poverty* facts table (San Bernardino County 20.4%, Riverside County 17.1%). Ibid.

^{xviii} See *Race and Hispanic Origin* facts table. Ibid.

^{xix} *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2012*, United States Census Bureau website, URL: <http://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2013/demo/p60-245.pdf>, (last accessed May 2016)

^{xx} See Figure 1, page 5. Ibid.

^{xxi} Data collected from the State of California Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General website, URL: <https://oag.ca.gov/crime/cjsc/stats/arrests>, (last accessed May 2016)

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- ^{xxii} *Monthly Institution/Camps Population Detail Report*, March 2014, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation website, URL:
http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports_Research/Offender_Information_Services_Branch/Monthly/TPOP1A/TPOP1Ad1403.pdf, (last accessed May 2016)
- ^{xxiii} *Monthly Institution/Camps Population Detail Report*, March 2016, Ibid, URL:
http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports_Research/Offender_Information_Services_Branch/WeeklyWed/TPOP1A/TPOP1Ad160323.pdf, (last accessed May 2016)
- ^{xxiv} See “Staffed Capacity” column on both reports to compare numbers.
- ^{xxv} Desert View Modified Community Correctional Facility: 10450 Rancho Rd, Adelanto CA.
- ^{xxvi} Adelanto West: 10250 Rancho Road Adelanto, CA, 92301.
- ^{xxvii} Federal Correctional Institution: 13777 Air Expressway Blvd, Victorville, CA.
- ^{xxviii} Cf. California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Adult Institutions, URL:
http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Facilities_Locator/docs/CDCR-Adult-Institution-Addresses.pdf, (last accessed May 2016)
- ^{xxix} Data collected from San Bernardino’s Diocesan Office of Restorative Justice.
- ^{xxx} Cf. Amy Levad, *Redeeming a Prison Society: A Liturgical and Sacramental Response to Mass Incarceration* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014), 2.
- ^{xxxi} Cf. Ibid, 3.
- ^{xxxii} Cf. Ibid, 12-16.
- ^{xxxiii} Cf. Levad, 14-16 and USCCB, “Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice,” 2000, Section III, Policy Foundations and Directions #3.
- ^{xxxiv} Cf. Levad, *Redeeming a Prison Society*, 20-28.
- ^{xxxv} USCCB, Responsibility, Rehabilitation and Restoration, Introduction.
- ^{xxxvi} “The fundamental starting point for all of Catholic social teaching is the defense of human life and dignity: every human person is created in the image and likeness of God and has an inviolable dignity, value, and worth, regardless of race, gender, class, or other human characteristics.” USCCB, Responsibility, Rehabilitation and Restoration, Section II, Human Life and Dignity.
- ^{xxxvii} Cf. Ibid, Section II, Family, Community, and Participation.
- ^{xxxviii} Cf. Ibid, Section II, The Common Good.
- ^{xxxix} Cf. Ibid, Section II, The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable.
- ^{xl} Cf. Ibid, Section II, Subsidiarity and Solidarity.
- ^{xli} Cf. Ibid, Section III, Policy Foundations and Directions.
- ^{xlii} Cf. Ibid, Section IV, The Church’s Mission, #5.
- ^{xliiii} Cf. Ibid, Section IV, The Church’s Mission, and Appendix, Suggestions for Action.
- ^{xliiv} Ibid, Section II, Scriptural Foundations.
- ^{xli v} Ibid, Section II, Sacramental and Historical Heritage.
- ^{xli vi} Cf. Ibid, Section II, Sacramental and Historical Heritage.
- ^{xli vii} Cf. Ibid, Section II, Sacramental and Historical Heritage.
- ^{xli viii} Ibid, Section II, Human Life and Dignity.
- ^{xli x} Ibid, Section II, Human Rights and Responsibilities.
- ^l Cf. Ibid, Section II, Family, Community, and Participation.
- ^{li} Cf. Ibid.
- ^{lii} Ibid, Section II, The Common Good.
- ^{liii} Ibid, Section II, The Common Good.
- ^{li v} Ibid, Section II, The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable.
- ^{li v i} Ibid.
- ^{li v ii} Cf. Ibid, Section II, The Option for the Poor and Vulnerable.
- ^{li v iii} Ibid, Section III, Policy Foundations and Directions.
- ^{li v iii i} Cf. Ibid, Section III, Policy Foundations and Directions #1.
- ^{li x} Cf. Levad, *Redeeming a Prison Society*, 58.

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- ^{ix} “We should support community-based solutions, especially for non-violent offenders, because a greater emphasis is placed on treatment and restoration for the criminal, and restitution and healing for the victim.” USCCB, Responsibility, Rehabilitation and Restoration, Section III, Policy Foundations and Directions #2.
- ^{lxi} Cf. Ibid, Section III, Policy Foundations and Directions #3.
- ^{lxii} Cf. Ibid, Section III, Policy Foundations and Directions #4.
- ^{lxiii} Cf. Ibid.
- ^{lxiv} Ibid, Section III, Policy Foundations and Directions #4.
- ^{lxv} “Restorative Justice focuses on the victim and the community harmed by the crime [...]” Ibid, Section III, Policy Foundations and Directions #6.
- ^{lxvi} Cf. Ibid, Section III, Policy Foundations and Directions #7.
- ^{lxvii} “We bishops question whether private, for-profit corporations can effectively run prisons. The profit motive may lead to reduce efforts to change behaviors, treat substance abuse, and offer skills necessary for reintegration to the community.” Ibid, Section III, Policy Foundations and Directions #7.
- ^{lxviii} Cf. Ibid, Section III, Policy Foundations and Directions #7.
- ^{lxix} Cf. Ibid, Section III, Policy Foundations and Directions #8.
- ^{lxx} Cf. Ibid, Section III, Policy Foundations and Directions #9.
- ^{lxxi} Cf. Ibid, Section III, Policy Foundations and Directions #10.
- ^{lxxii} Cf. Ibid, Section III, Policy Foundations and Directions #11.
- ^{lxxiii} Cf. Ibid, Section IV, The Church’s Mission #1.
- ^{lxxiv} Cf. Ibid, Section IV, The Church’s Mission #2.
- ^{lxxv} Cf. Ibid, Section IV, The Church’s Mission #3.
- ^{lxxvi} Ibid, Section IV, The Church’s Mission #4.
- ^{lxxvii} Cf. Ibid, Section IV, The Church’s Mission #5.
- ^{lxxviii} Cf. Ibid, Section IV, The Church’s Mission #6.
- ^{lxxix} Cf. Ibid, Section IV, The Church’s Mission #7.
- ^{lxxx} Cf. Levad, *Redeeming a Prison Society*, Chapter 1.
- ^{lxxxii} Ibid, 109.
- ^{lxxxiii} Ibid, 2.
- ^{lxxxiv} Ibid, 77.
- ^{lxxxv} Ibid.
- ^{lxxxvi} Ibid, 16.
- ^{lxxxvii} Cf. Ibid, 11-40.
- ^{lxxxviii} Cf. Ibid, 33-41.
- ^{lxxxix} Cf. Ibid, 41-43.
- ^{xc} Ibid, 44.
- ^{xc} Cf. Ibid, 77-78.
- ^{xcj} Cf. Ibid, 47.
- ^{xcii} Ibid, 48.
- ^{xciii} Cf. Ibid, 77.
- ^{xciv} Cf. Ibid, 57-60.
- ^{xcv} Ibid, 61.
- ^{xcvi} Ibid, 66.
- ^{xcvii} Ibid, 64.
- ^{xcviii} USCCB, Responsibility, Rehabilitation and Restoration, Section III, Policy Foundations and Directions #2.
- ^{xcix} Levad, *Redeeming a Prison Society*, p. 66.
- ^c Ibid, 78.
- ^{ci} Ibid, 67.
- ^{ciic} USCCB, Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration, Section III, Policy Foundations and Directions #3.
- ^{cii} Levad, *Redeeming a Prison Society*, 67.
- ^{civ} Ibid, p. 80.

^{cv} “While Christians may bristle at Murdoch’s reduction of liturgy and sacraments to devices for moral transformation rather than as models of worship of God, her insight that religious practices can foster this transformation remains important for linking liturgy and sacraments to ethics and work for justice.” Ibid, 91.

^{cvi} Ibid.

^{cvi} Ibid, 109.

^{cvi} Cf. Ibid, 106.

^{cix} Cf. Ibid, 107.

^{cx} Cf. Ibid, 108.

^{cx} Ibid, 106.

^{cxii} Ibid, 100.

^{cxiii} Ibid, 101.

^{cxiv} Ibid, 102-103.

^{cxv} Cf. USCCB, Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration, Section II, Introduction, and Family, Community, and Participation.

^{cxvi} Levad, *Redeeming a Prison Society*, 92.

^{cxvii} Cf. Ibid, 94 and 96.

^{cxviii} “Jesus ate with prostitutes and tax collectors; he included at this table people who were excluded from society and whom he would welcome in God’s kingdom.” Ibid, 94.

^{cxix} Ibid, 95.

^{cxix} Ibid, 97.

^{cxix} Ibid.

^{cxix} Cf. Ibid, 81-84.

^{cxix} Ibid, 110.

^{cxix} Ibid, 198.

^{cxix} Cf. USCCB, Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration, Section II, Sacramental and Historical Heritage.

^{cxix} Cf. Levad, *Redeeming a Prison Society*, 92-93.

^{cxix} Cf. Ibid, 184.

^{cxix} USCCB, Responsibility, Rehabilitation and Restoration, Section II, Human Life and Dignity.

^{cxix} Cf. Levad, *Redeeming a Prison Society*, Chapter 5.

^{cxix} Cf. Isaiah 58:1-11

^{cxix} Loughlan Sofield and Carroll Juliano, *Collaborative Ministry: skills and guidelines* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1987), 57.

^{cxix} Edward P. Hahnenberg, *Ministries: A relational approach* (New York: Crossroad Pub., 2003), 163.

^{cxix} Richard M. Gula, *Just Ministry: professional ethics for pastoral ministers* (New York : Paulist Press, 2010), 7.

^{cxix} Cf. Gula, *Just Ministry*, 17-18.

^{cxix} Ibid, 35.

^{cxix} Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 52.

^{cxix} Ibid, 41.

^{cxix} Gula, *Just Ministry*, 34.

^{cxix} Lumen Gentium #1, URL: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html, (last accessed May 2016)

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^{cxix} Gula, *Just Ministry*, 11.

^{cxix} Ibid, 20.

^{cxix} Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, 175.

^{cxix} Ibid, 67.

^{cxix} Cf. Hahnenberg, *Ministries*, Chapter 4, and Gula, *Just Ministry*, Chapter 1.

^{cxix} Cf. Marti R. Jewell and David A. Ramey, *The Changing Face of Church: Emerging Models of Parish Leadership* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2010), 77-80.

^{cxlvii} Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World, "Evangelii Gaudium," 2013, #173, URL: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html#The_joy_of_the_gospel, (last accessed May 2016)

^{cxlviii} Cf. Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* # 120.

^{cxlix} Cf. Susan R. Komives, and Wendy Wagner, *Leadership for a better world: understanding the social change model of leadership development* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2009), xi.

^{cl} Cf. Jewell and Ramey, *The Changing Face of Church*, 77-78.