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POST-TRAUMATIC ECCLESIOLOGY AND THE RESTORATION OF HOPE

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THE DISTURBING REVELATIONS of sexual abuse by clergy and the woeful handling of the situation by many bishops beggar belief. As yet more depressing news of the pattern of abuse and cover-up emerges, what are the prospects for what we could term a "post-traumatic ecclesiology" that can address this profound harm and institutional dysfunction, and restore hope in the Catholic Church? More generally, what does the Christian understanding of the theological virtue of hope bring to the Church's self-understanding today? How can this pivotal virtue, which is often conceived in terms of the individual believer, direct and give substance to the mission of the Church as a whole? Most basically, how can the Church better embody a lived hope in a modern age, even as it must deal with the much broader historical trauma of widespread secularization?

To address these questions, I draw upon Thomas Aquinas's definition of hope as the movement of the will toward a future difficult, yet possible, good.[1] I take up three specific foci of hope—on the difficult, on the good, and on the particular—and suggest how these features inform and sustain the Church's mission to evangelize a secular culture.

Given the widespread publicity and massive criticism of the Church's handling of the abuse crisis, any attempt at evangelization will require the prior step of getting the Church's own house in order. My first point therefore explores the *ad intra* message of hope to church members, specifically, how this virtue points the way to the restoration of the

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[1] For Aquinas's presentation of the four conditions of the object of hope—as something future, difficult, possible, and good—see *Summa theologiae* (hereafter *ST*) 1–2, q. 40, a. 1. All translations from Aquinas are mine.

Church's credibility. I argue that hope's attention to difficulty provides the conceptual distinctions and basic vocabulary for a post-traumatic ecclesiology, in particular, by suggesting a relationship between faith and hope as one of dialectic development. Such an appropriation of hope creates the fundamental mindset for the Church's attempt to rethink and reform some of its ingrained yet obsolete patterns of operation and organization.

My second point explores one aspect of the Christian message of hope *ad extra* to the world. Because of this virtue's basic orientation to the good, it may help avoid the totalizing rejection of modern culture that is not uncommon in some contemporary theologies. When coupled with a more discriminating engagement with modernity, as in the work of two influential Catholic public intellectuals, Charles Taylor and Nicholas Boyle, the appropriation of the theological virtue of hope creates the conditions for a more balanced theological response to secularization. But I also bring in an evaluative dimension here to argue for the superiority of Boyle's contribution because of its greater attention to the ecclesial dimensions of Christian hope. One cannot think for long about theological hope without paying attention to the concrete forms and institutions that give it shape and substance, and that therefore allow it to influence the broader culture. Such concerns mark the difference between a public intellectual and an "ecclesial intellectual."

My third and final point lays out a suggestive parallel between the dynamics of hope and a recent trend in ecclesiology. Following modern Thomistic interpretations of hope, I argue that whereas faith regards the *universal* belief of the Church, hope regards its acceptance and realization in *particular* circumstances. This particularizing function of hope supports the contemporary interest in the theology of the local church, for it suggests a loose analogy between personal faith development and ecclesial devolution of authority. Together, these three explorations indicate the value of thinking about church in terms of hope and, conversely, of thinking about hope (a virtue too often individualized) in terms of church. For as Gerard Mannion has recently and persuasively argued, we need a "virtue ecclesiology" that "draw[s] afresh from such a well [of virtue ethics] . . . when seeking to shape the vision that will inform our mechanisms of authority and governance, of empowerment and community enhancement for the church local and universal today."[2] This article takes up Mannion's challenge from the perspective of the theological virtue of hope.

[2] Gerard Mannion, *Ecclesiology and Postmodernity: Questions for the Church in Our Time* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2007) 220.

THE SEXUAL ABUSE CRISIS AND HOPE FOR REFORM

Whereas desire regards any future good, hope seeks a future good that is not easy to reach. As Aquinas states in the *Summa theologiae*, hope regards "something arduous and attainable with difficulty, for someone is not said to hope for any trivial thing that is immediately in one's power to have. And in this, hope differs from desire or cupidity, which concerns the future good absolutely."[3] Hope's specificity, then, comes in part from the striving toward a goal that is difficult.

The Church today, in the midst of the sexual abuse crisis, faces acute difficulty as it acknowledges the scale and the systemic nature of its failings. To heal wounds, make restitution, prevent reccurrence, and make painful changes—including changes in the mindset that gave rise to the failings—is no easy task. Addressing this complex nest of internally generated problems—especially those concerning sexuality and authority—presents the further difficulty that the ones best positioned to make these changes are embedded in inadequate structures and often saturated in ideologies that need to be changed. Indeed, that fact constitutes a significant part of the trauma itself. For, as many have pointed out, shepherds became wolves, and their superiors failed to stop them. Why? In the words of the Murphy Commission report on the handling of cases of clergy sexual abuse in Dublin from 1975 to 2004:

> The Dublin Archdiocese's pre-occupations in dealing with cases of child sexual abuse, at least until the mid 1990s, were the maintenance of secrecy, the avoidance of scandal, the protection of the reputation of the Church, and the preservation of its assets. All other considerations, including the welfare of children and justice for victims, were subordinated to these priorities.[4]

The honor of the regiment trumped the protection of the child.

In truth, the way the Church's authorities have handled this situation recalls the understatement in *Gaudium et spes* that "believers can have more than a little to do with the birth of atheism"[5]—a judgment that Pope Benedict XVI has reinforced with his recent comment that "the greatest persecution of the Church does not come from outside enemies but is born of sin within the Church."[6] The problem, then, cannot be pinned on external foes or put down to bad luck; the problem, as Benedict clearly acknowledges, lies within.

[3] *ST* 1–2, q. 40, a. 1.

[4] *Report by Commission of Investigation into Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin* 1.15 http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/PB09000504. This URL and all others herein cited were accessed on March 12, 2011.

[5] *Gaudium et spes* no. 19, in *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter Abbott (New York: America, 1966) 217.

[6] Quoted in CathNews http://www.cathnews.com/article.aspx?aeid=21245.

How might the theological virtue of hope address this urgent need for a post-traumatic ecclesiology that addresses the internal roots of the problem? I will argue that the experience of hope recasts and renews a proclamation of faith that has overlooked—and even been damaged by—the shortcomings of the proclaimer. The virtue of hope can address the difficulties that arise from an imperfect expression and living out of faith. One can go further and argue for a dialectic relationship between faith and hope, in which the advent of hope changes not the faith itself, but some of the attitudes of the persons and institutions who "hold" the faith.

To see what such a dialectical relationship looks like, one must first grasp the general idea of dialectic. A dialectical process, according to Michael Buckley, is one that "moves through negation to resolve contradiction in a higher unity."[7] An intellectual claim, for example, invites its own negation when it becomes destabilized by significant internal tensions or incompleteness. Following its collapse, there may emerge some resolution in which the fragmented elements are reconstituted into a new, higher form. Buckley presents such a dialectical pattern in his account of the emergence and progress of modern atheism. Thus, early modern apologetics involved a contradiction between using *impersonal* evidence to prove the existence of a *personal* God. But as this internal contradiction generated an atheistic denial, that denial in turn may itself be denied when, for example, its subsequent projection theories are read not as disproving God's existence, but rather as a purgative stage in the unfolding disclosure of the incomprehensible mystery of God, who lies beyond "the radical finitude of religious ideas."[8] This awareness of the limitations of religious ideas and, by extension, the institutions that proclaim them can be applied to our understanding of the relationship between faith and hope.

The theological virtues, especially the far-from-seamless development of hope from faith, can be interpreted in terms of this dialectical process of moving through tension or incompleteness to negation, and then moving yet further through the removal of negation and the resolution of contradiction into a higher, more secure unity. To clarify this dialectic reading, it is helpful to give a contrasting, nondialectical account of how the theological virtues unfold. Aquinas's succinct summary of the smooth, organic unfolding of the theological virtues is one such account (although Aquinas's fuller account of the theological virtues need not itself admit this nondialectical interpretation). In the following lapidary remarks in his

[7] Michael J. Buckley, S.J., *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, 1987) 23.

[8] This phrase is the first part of the title of chapter 5 of Michael J. Buckley, S.J., *Denying and Disclosing God: The Ambiguous Progress of Modern Atheism* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University, 2004).

commentary on 1 Timothy, Aquinas states: "faith shows the end, hope moves to the end, charity unites one with the end."[9] Benedict himself employs a similar image in his 1989 retreat lectures *Aus Christus Schauen: Einübung in Glaube, Hoffnung, Liebe*.[10] It is worth quoting that work's longest statement on the interrelation of the theological virtues: "Hope is the fruit of faith . . . ; in it our life stretches itself out towards the totality of all that is real, towards a boundless future that becomes accessible to us in faith. This fulfilled totality of being to which faith provides the key is a love without reserve. . . . Christian hope approaches [this divine love] in the light of faith."[11] In this account, faith lights up the way upon which we travel by hope toward the final goal of love. From this integrated, developmental account of the theological virtues, there results a firm insistence on their unity. "Hope and love therefore belong immediately to each other, just as faith and hope are not to be separated from each other."[12] This brief image of light, way, and goal—and the consequent assertion of inseparability—suggests a harmonious development from faith to hope. But these pleasing images suggest a continuity that, in fact, overlooks some critical internal tensions within the experience and structure of faith itself that only the advent of hope can resolve. Two tensions within faith stand out.

First, it is not so much that "faith shows the end," but rather that it prompts the mind's assent to a divine reality that exceeds the capacity of the human intellect. Faith remains a *cognitio aenigmatica*[13] whose central act is opaque. It therefore makes the believer restless, since, as Aquinas observes, "the knowledge of faith does not calm desire, but arouses it."[14] It reveals what the intellect barely grasps, let alone approaches. But the believer wants to know more about the object to which she has given assent. Thus, in the words of Romanus Cessario, "theological faith remains radically incomplete with respect to . . . final fulfillment."[15]

This internal tension within faith—between the reality to which it assents and its own inadequacy for satisfying the desire such assent

[9] Aquinas, *In Epistolam I ad Timotheum*, cap. 1, lc. 2, in *Expositio in Omnes S. Pauli Epistolas*, in *Opera Omnia*, Parma ed., 25 vols. (New York: Musurgia, 1949) 13:587.

[10] Joseph Ratzinger, *Aus Christus Schauen: Einübung in Glaube, Hoffnung, Liebe* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1989); translated as *To Look on Christ*, trans. Robert Nowell (New York: Crossroad, 1991); republished as *The Yes of Jesus Christ: Spiritual Exercises in Faith, Hope, and Love* (New York: Crossroad, 2005). References here are to the 2005 English edition.

[11] Ratzinger, *Yes of Jesus Christ* 69.

[12] Ibid. 70.

[13] *ST* 2–2, q. 7, a. 2, obj. 3.

[14] *Summa contra gentiles* 3, c. 40, n. 5.

[15] Romanus Cessario, *Christian Faith and the Theological Life* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1996) 101.

creates—generates the need for a distinct virtue that brings the believer closer to the divine object that, although somehow grasped, still exceeds faith's opaque vision. That new virtue, which issues from faith's inquietude, must be volitional rather than intellectual, since the will is the appropriate power for an object that is higher than the human person. As Aquinas argues:

> In those things that are above the human person, love is nobler than knowledge. For knowledge is perfected insofar as the known is in the knower; but love [is perfected] insofar as the lover is drawn to the reality beloved. But that which is above the human person is nobler in itself than it is in man, because each thing is in another according to the mode in which this other thing exists. The opposite is true for those things that are below the human person.[16]

As primarily a cognitive relation to God, faith remains inferior *in via* to volitional relations to God. Faith's incompleteness, therefore, can only begin to be resolved by the operation of a distinct virtue of the will that moves the believer to union with the goal. That virtue is, of course, hope.

The second tension within the structure of faith arises when its fundamental incompleteness is not acknowledged and, as a result, the fullness of Christian life is shrunk to an unbalanced, even neurotic, focus on doctrine and social boundaries. In this arrested development, Christian identity becomes calcified as it resists allowing itself to undergo a dialectical reworking through the cruciform passage of hope. For a faith that has yet to face difficulties and own up to its own personal and collective imperfections—and instead resorts to a facile apologetics[17] and dismissive

[16] *ST* 1–2, q. 66, a. 6, ad 1. See also *ST* 1, q. 82, a. 3: "Whether the will is a higher power than the intellect."

[17] See, e.g., George Weigel's claim that the clergy sexual abuse crisis primarily derives from the culture of dissent begun in the 1960s. "We can't understand the crisis of clergy sexual abuse and episcopal leadership failure outside the context of the past three and a half decades. During that time, a culture of dissent took root in the Church in the United States. . . . Is it surprising that some men who learned to live lives of intellectual deception and deceit in the seminary—men who were told that they could take a pass on authoritative teaching—eventually led lives of behavioral deceit, becoming sexually abusive? It shouldn't have been surprising, given our sex-saturated culture. Is it a surprise that bishops who were unwilling to fix what was manifestly broken in seminaries and Catholic universities in the 1970s and 1980s—in part, because they were unwilling to confront the culture of dissent, often for fear of fracturing the unity of a local Church—also failed to come to grips with the scandal of clergy sexual abuse? The primary answer to a crisis of infidelity is fidelity. Period. . . . Like every other crisis in 2,000 years of Catholic history, the current crisis is caused by an insufficiency of saints. . . . This crisis marks the last hurrah of the aging, intellectually sterile champions of 'Catholic Lite,' who can't even describe accurately the crisis they helped create" ("George Weigel on the Church Crisis in U.S," August 29, 2002 interview with Zenit, http://www.zenit.org/article-5202?l=english.)

defensiveness[18]—may seem to the observer to be more a possession than a gift. Prior to the emergence of a hope that sustains faith through difficult times, there always remains the danger of appropriating faith as a mere identity marker.

There is no such danger in hope. The advent of hope makes Christian belief more believable, since it not only proclaims God's truth but also manifests God's mercy and power through a nonpossessive attitude of humble reliance on divine help and patient expectation of an eschatological goal. The metaphors of "wayfarer" and "pilgrim," which are correlative to the transcendence of the goal, convey how the experience of hope addresses the incompleteness of faith's intellectual assent. Moreover, these metaphors negate the contradictions that beset the possessive narrowing of faith into a triumphal and rigid dogmatism, which Buckley characterized in his 1978 *Theological Studies* article as simply "bad faith," by which he meant

> an explicit confessional stance which is rooted in anxiety and is sustained through dishonesty, pretense, and false apologetics. It appears in the manifold tensions of self-deception or in the falseness between verbal belief and actual practice. Bad faith constitutes a contradiction at the heart of consciousness, because what is projected as piety or orthodoxy or religious experience is actually a fearful attempt to evade the psychological and social costs of reflection and freedom. Paradoxically, this attempt to escape human responsibilities in the name of religion undermines any chance of genuine faith, because it disengages personal commitment from the truth within life.[19]

Appropriately, hope's negation of "bad faith" works through characteristics that are the opposite of triumphalism and rigidity. Hope negates triumphalism through its greater recognition of, and openness to, human suffering and perplexity; and it negates rigidity through its key feature of movement. Greater recognition of this virtue strips away the facile synthesis of what Alasdair MacIntyre calls the "Catholic bland both/and."[20] It similarly undercuts the muscular Scholasticism that taught John Courtney Murray to assert that the purpose of theology was to mount "a triumphantly argumentative defense of the faith against error."[21] The virtue of hope gives rise to humility because it accepts the need for help that is

[18] See, e.g., Cardinal Angelo Sodano's address at the start of the papal Easter Sunday Mass, 2010: "The people of God are with you and will not let themselves be influenced by the petty gossip of the moment, by the trials that sometimes assail the community of believers" (quoted in http://www.zenit.org/article-29741?l=english).

[19] Michael J. Buckley, S.J., "Transcendence, Truth, and Faith: The Ascending Experience of God in All Human Inquiry," *Theological Studies* 39 (1978) 633–55, at 633.

[20] My note from his unpublished lecture, "How to Be a European: Questions for Tariq Ramadan," delivered November 30, 2007, at the "Dialogue of Cultures" conference, the Center for Ethics and Culture, University of Notre Dame.

[21] John Courtney Murray, "Towards a Theology of the Layman," *Theological Studies* 5 (1944) 43–75, at 62.

beyond one's power as it moves toward a goal that is beyond one's ordinary reach. It therefore recognizes God as ever greater, as radically transcending the world, and, for that very reason, as the appropriate source of help and the fitting goal of desire.

Precisely in hope's inner reworking of the limits—even contradictions—of faith lies its relevance for correcting ecclesial shortcomings. For as I argued, the problem is internal, and so the internal development that hope occasions in the life of the believer will form the basis of any adequate solution. To repeat, hope does not change the theological content of faith, but it does give this critical reminder: faith is not a boundary for social belonging but is the beginning of eternal life.[22] Centrally marked by movement, the experience of hope fashions an adaptive identity that can reverse the seemingly inexhaustible potential of lay Catholics to accept, with astonishing institutional complacency, too much second-rate, unaccountable leadership. By registering the imperfections and internal tensions within faith, the virtue of hope moves the believer to expect more. It prepares her to imagine new forms of church, to see God at work in change, not only in continuity. Most importantly in the context of the abuse crisis, it generates a mindset in which the Church can be open to the difficult changes required to prevent such widespread abuse and failure in leadership from happening again. The Church's ability to adopt this mindset and thus reform effectively will go a long way toward restoring its credibility and thus aiding its evangelization of a modern, secular culture. And since the very onset of modernity constitutes a rupture from the settled patterns of Christendom, I must now ask how the virtue of hope may guide the Church through this broader traumatic passage.

THE TRAUMA OF MODERNITY AND THE TASK OF THE ECCLESIAL INTELLECTUAL

An appreciation for the dynamics of hope fosters the mindset in which genuine internal reform can take place. But what does this virtue teach the Church about its mission *ad extra*? This question becomes particularly acute in the context of modernity, given its central process of secularization and differentiation, whereby the Church ceded control over many areas of society, such as education and legal and moral codes. How does the theological virtue of hope help the Church cope with this traumatic upheaval?

Clearly, one cannot expect the theological virtue of hope to dictate a believer's proper stance to modernity. But hope does help foster a responsible and discerning attitude toward modern culture, in contrast to

[22] From Aquinas's definition of faith, based on Hebrews 11:1, as "a habit of the mind, whereby eternal life is begun in us, making the intellect assent to what is not seen" (*ST* 2–2, q. 4, a. 1).

exaggerated criticism or total rejection of it. For, notwithstanding hope's recognition of the difficulty of its future goal, hope nonetheless regards that goal as good. Critically, Christian hope, while primarily seeking eternal life, manifestly includes many secondary goods, such as basic economic security ("give us this day our daily bread") and domestic and international peace and justice ("deliver us from evil").[23] Not only are these temporal goods encompassed by the eternal good, but a person's desire to provide them for others plays an integral role in his or her salvation (see Mt 25). Since a key feature of modernity is the heightened concern for such economic and political emancipation, the recognition of the breadth of Christian hope and of its resonance with modern ideals helps avoid a certain cultural pessimism when evaluating modernity. Hope thus creates the possibility for a more discerning "ecclesial intellectual" who can recognize the shortcomings of a "secular age" (especially its inattention to the eschatological horizon of human endeavor) without overlooking its considerable achievements for human betterment.

Striking examples of this style of Christian engagement with modernity can be found in the thought of Charles Taylor and Nicholas Boyle, especially in their critiques of, respectively, secularization and globalization. This is not the place to summarize their wide-ranging work.[24] I simply advert to the fact that many find value in their writings because of their critical yet hopeful evaluation of the twin challenges of deeply engrained secularism and the transition to a world-wide economic system. Both Taylor and Boyle seek to understand the complicated dynamics of these changes and suggest how Christians can chart a way forward through the perplexities the changes occasion. Rejecting nostalgic appeals to Christendom, both draw upon Hegel's dialectical method to delineate the contradictions, dangers, and opportunities of the great modern upheavals.[25]

[23] On the primary and secondary causes of hope, see *ST* 2–2, q. 17, a. 4. For some examples of his sense of the breadth of Christian hope, see his comments on prayer, which he regards as the interpretation of hope. "Man lawfully asks God not only for eternal happiness but also for goods of the present life, both spiritual and temporal, and, as seen in the Lord's Prayer, also for liberation from evil, which will not exist in eternal happiness" (*ST* 2–2, q. 17, a. 2, obj. 2).

[24] I do so in the first chapter of my forthcoming book, *The Promise of Christian Humanism: Thomas Aquinas on Hope* (Crossroad/Herder & Herder).

[25] Both thinkers are deeply influenced by Hegel. Taylor's early works (*Hegel* [Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University, 1975] and *Hegel and Modern Society* [Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1979]) established his reputation as a leading Hegelian scholar; and Boyle, professor of German intellectual history, named Hegel in the title of his *Who Are We Now?: Christian Humanism and the Global Market from Hegel to Heaney* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame, 1998) and asserted therein that "the prospects for a Catholic Hegelianism have never been so bright" (146).

Forgoing appeals to a purportedly timeless natural law, they opt instead to understand these changes in the more historically sensitive terms of culture and identity. As part of this hopeful, yet far from optimistic, approach, Taylor and Boyle discern and engage with modern secular culture, rather than dismiss it wholesale. In fact, their attitude of taking time to discern difficult changes, finding the good therein, and incorporating it into Christian self-understanding, itself manifests a spirit of hope.

By way of contrast, a representative example of a more dismissive attitude can be found in Tracey Rowland's influential book, *Culture and the Thomist Tradition: After Vatican II*. Synthesizing elements found in Radical Orthodoxy, Alasdair MacIntyre, and the *Communio* school of theology, Rowland's work seeks to remedy the Thomistic tradition's inadequate grasp of the significance of culture for moral formation. A key feature of such a remedy—which she terms "post-modern Augustinian Thomism"—is the insistence that any theological dialogue with modernity must derive from specifically Christian narratives and practices, such as compelling, beautiful worship.

Alongside this commendable exhortation, however, is the wholesale rejection of the culture of modernity. As such, Rowland's work is symptomatic of an undiscriminating trend in a certain contemporary theology. If one does not share this global rejection of modern culture and instead holds that there is something positive to learn from it (following the arguments of thinkers like Taylor and Boyle), then one will be more receptive to the possibility, even desirability, of change in some aspects of Christian social practices and the time-bound framings of its narrative.

The ability to handle such changes, however, entails the modification of Rowland's "Augustinian" reading of hope. It is important to analyze her discussion of hope, for those speculative and conceptual explorations of hope are in fact a proxy battleground for issues of ecclesial identity—in particular for how the Church deals with the traumatic changes of modernity that have eroded previously stable patterns of Christian corporate life. So what does Rowland say about hope? She correlates it to the faculty of memory and, more tenuously, to the transcendental property of beauty.[26] No doubt this correlation offers suggestive avenues for thinking about hope in the culturally significant terms of narrative (because it accents memory) and worship (because it accents beauty). But this inchoate attempt to synthesize the Augustinian and Thomist traditions on hope suffers from a serious omission. For what was central to Aquinas's doctrine of hope—difficulty and change—Rowland silently passes over. By correlating hope

[26] Tracey Rowland, *Culture and the Thomist Tradition: After Vatican II* (New York: Routledge, 2003) 80–82. The correlations of the other two theological virtues echo Aquinas more closely: faith is correlated to intellect and truth, and charity to will and the good.

with memory, she recasts this virtue along the lines of her antimodern sensibility that presumably would revive memories of Christendom in order to conteract the "nihilism" of modernity. Furthermore, by correlating hope with beauty, she uncomfortably fits hope into a notion of esthetic harmony that overlooks conflict and struggle.[27] But without some notion of hope as pertaining to change and difficulty, it is hard to see how Rowland's own prescription for the Thomist tradition—to take the drama of history more seriously—can succeed. For how can there be any drama, or for that matter any narrative at all, without the realities of change and difficulty that Aquinas believes hope engages? Thus, if one wants to graft cultural specificity onto the Thomist tradition, and if that grafting is to take hold, then it would help to give a closer reading of what Thomas actually taught, along with a more nuanced evaluation of what modernity can positively offer.

Because Taylor and Boyle offer a more nuanced and cautiously hopeful evaluation of modernity, I believe their cultural reflections carry more weight. But I would register a limitation of Taylor's contribution, namely, an inadequate sense of ecclesiology. Peter Steinfels made the criticism well: Taylor's concern "seems to be more about the exertions of religious virtuosi than about the ordinary work of institutional leadership."[28] Perhaps it is this deinstitutionalized approach of Taylor's work that prompted the editor of Harvard University Press, which published *A Secular Age*, to praise his work as "sexy Catholicism."[29] Although it is not entirely clear what this means, it probably has something to do with presenting Catholicism without its decidedly "unsexy" features, such as commitment to parish life, the acceptance of what Brian Hehir calls the "the blessing and the burden" of the institutional presence of the Church, and so on. The question for Taylor, then, is whether "belief without belonging"—Grace Davie's phrase, which Taylor frequently references—in the end becomes functional unbelief?[30] For a belief that does not belong anyway may as well not exist. It has

[27] See, e.g., her contrast between the "Aristocratic Liberal" or "neo-pagan" version of self-cultivation (e.g., Alexander von Humboldt and Friedrich Nietzsche), in which "antagonism was necessary for human achievement and progress," and the "Christian notion of original peace" (Rowland, *Culture and Thomist Tradition* 74). Contrast Paul: "Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope" (Rom 5:3–4).

[28] Peter Steinfels, "Modernity and Belief: Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*," *Commonweal* 135.9 (May 9, 2008) 14–21, at 21.

[29] This comment was made during the question-and-answer session of a panel discussion entitled "Michael Sandel and Charles Taylor on 'The Persistence of the Sacred in a Secular Age,'" at Harvard University's Humanities Center, March 31, 2009.

[30] For Taylor's citations of Davie, see *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 2007) 514, 520, referencing Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994).

no traction and leaves no mark on society, for it has no real—that is, socially and institutionally effective—presence.

Since Taylor fails to register the importance of the social, institutional base for the nurturing and expression of faith, he correspondingly underestimates the loss associated with the erosion of that base. And so for all the praise Taylor receives as a public intellectual, there must be a critical moment before his work is accepted as that of an ecclesial intellectual. I offer two examples to substantiate this cautionary note, during the course of which I draw upon Boyle's work to provide more ecclesiological depth.

The first example of Taylor's limitations as an ecclesial intellectual comes from his assessment of one of the founding intellectual figures of the 20th century, Martin Heidegger, a figure who decisively renounced his Catholic identity as he sought to understand the significance of modernity for post-WWI Germany. Taylor draws extensively on Heidegger's reflections on how our mode of being-in-the-world is always mediated by language. He notes in passing, however, that Heidegger failed to consider the negative aspect of language.[31] Consequently, he "had no place for the retrieval of evil in his system . . . [and] that is part of the reason why Hitler could blindside him, and why he could never get a moral grasp on the significance of what happened between 1933 and 1945."[32] Most surprisingly, about Heidegger's infamous silence on those events, Taylor is himself silent.

For Boyle, Heidegger's fault cuts deeper than merely allowing himself to be "blindsided" and is, in the end, inseparable from his departure from the Church. His "most unequivocally fascist act, his clearest betrayal of his people and his mind, was his public declaration of support for Hitler in the plebiscite on a one-party Reichstag and withdrawal from the League of Nations."[33] Even after the catastrophe, he had "nothing to say of the most plainly psychotic act of the regime that he had in his own small way helped to power, the bodily destruction of six million of his Jewish fellow human beings."[34] Instead, he kept his silence. But "behind the mask of the modest functionary, the humbled mystic . . . who delineates a world gone mad and fallen prey to . . . forgetfulness of Being . . . , there is a hugely arrogant claim: to be exempt, to have clean hands, to be the one just man in Sodom, alone capable of intellectual coherency."[35] But even on that final count Heidegger fell short. "Instead of seeking to explain and assist in Germany's

[31] For example, Taylor argues (not altogether clearly) that Heidegger's attention to the "power of words that enframing theories can make no sense" overlooked the potential for evil in language. Taylor, "Heidegger, Language, Ecology," in *Philosophical Arguments* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1995) 100–126, at 125.

[32] Ibid..

[33] Boyle, *Who Are We Now?* 235.

[34] Ibid. 227

[35] Ibid.

transition to a post-bourgeois society under a republican constitution,"[36] he took refuge in a "battery of non-economic explanations" for the plight of Germany's obsolete bureaucratic academy, "showing no insight into the material, commercial, and international nature of the new order."[37] Heidegger's failings, both as a philosopher and as a person, owe not a little to his renunciation of Catholicism—a renunciation seemingly prompted by his ambition to advance in an academy hostile to Catholics. But the Church's internationalism and philosophical realism, according to Boyle, might well have mitigated Heidegger's drift to German fascism and his increasingly obscurantist speculation.

The validity of these interpretations of Heidegger—a complicated issue—need not be settled here. I offer them simply to convey the differing sensibilities of Taylor's and Boyle's evaluations of a key intellectual at a critical moment in European history and in light of his critical decision to renounce his ecclesial identity. They reveal an important difference between Taylor and Boyle: while Taylor gives an interpretative account of philosophical and literary texts, he does not dwell on "the great changes in political structures, economic practices, and . . . bureaucratic organization."[38] As he readily concedes, "the really large-scale issue [in the question of historical causation] concerns the relation of this whole moral culture to its economic and social 'base'. I wish I could say something insightful and valid on this score, but it is beyond my capacity, and well beyond the scope of this work [*Sources of the Self*]."[39] Boyle, however, has plenty to say on these issues. His account of modern identity examines the underlying socioeconomic arrangements from which any philosophical or literary discourse must emerge.[40] He can therefore more accurately critique the personal and social identities expressed in these discourses. Moreover, because he directly attempts to understand "the great *changes* in political structures [and] economic practices"[41]—which Taylor passes over—he is better placed to suggest a more appropriate Christian response.

Something of the advantages of this response can be seen in Boyle's and Taylor's contrasting assessments of another leading German intellectual, Joseph Ratzinger. One of Taylor's few mentions of Ratzinger comes in *Sources of the Self*, where he is offered, alongside "much evangelical religion today," as an example of a religious antihumanism that sees "nothing but presumptuous illusion in modern talk of the dignity of

[36] Ibid. 231. [37] Ibid. 243.

[38] Taylor, *Sources of the Self* 199.

[39] Ibid. 306.

[40] Boyle's position, it should be noted, is by no means reductionist. The essays are "attempts not so much as to discover facts as to change ideas" (Boyle, *Who Are We Now?* 8).

[41] Taylor, *Sources of the Self* 129, emphasis added.

man."[42] Recently, however, Taylor gave a more nuanced evaluation of Ratzinger. He questions the "common perception that thinkers like Cardinal Ratzinger oppose [modern secular culture] root and branch and are inclined to denounce it as a 'culture of death' or a 'dictatorship of relativism,'"[43] and admires him as a "man of luminous intelligence and deep spiritual life."[44] The reasons for this striking reassessment come from Taylor's recognition of the transition in Ratzinger's role from theologian to pastor, for "it is one thing to offer theoretical solutions as a cardinal, another to decide matters as a pope."[45] Taylor's greater recognition of the ecclesial task of the intellectual leaves the question open, for now "the theologian will have to listen to the pastors. Will he understand them? How will he react to them? The church, and the world, are waiting with bated breath for the answer."[46] It is in Taylor's more ecclesially aware moments that his initially unfair dismissals of Ratzinger are tempered by a more genuine openness.

But how can one answer Taylor's questions? He leaves them hanging in the air, offering no hint of a response. Again, Boyle's more socially aware and historically specific reflections suggest a plausible answer. Placing Pope Benedict's formative experience in the context of his local church in rural Bavaria, Boyle offers the following response to the questions Taylor raises. Secluded from urban, commercial life, Benedict shared in the not uncommon German intellectual suspicions of Anglo-driven global capitalism. But this suspicion, contrary to its proponents' explicit justification, does "not derive from some privileged understanding of the timeless value of beauty, art and rural existence, nor even from some Lutheran, or Augustinian, insight into the inadequacies of sinful human nature." Rather, it comes from less ideational sources, deriving instead "from the survival of obsolete monarchical and other despotic structures in German-speaking central Europe down to 1918." For Boyle, the consequences of these misplaced suspicions are telling. "To cling to authoritarian monarchy or bureaucracy in the face of the centuries-long advance of the global market was a flight from reality. In Benedict XVI's . . . Church the flight from reality continues."[47] A harsh judgment, perhaps, and certainly debatable. At least it has the benefit of giving an answer based on the concrete circumstances of Benedict's early context, rather than a knee-jerk response of liberal academia.

[42] Ibid. 318.

[43] Charles Taylor, "Benedict XVI," *Public Culture* 18 (2006) 7–10, at 7.

[44] Ibid. 9.

[45] Ibid. 10.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Nicholas Boyle, "Made in Bavaria," *Tablet* 264.8851 (July 3, 2010) 8–10, at 10. Although for a more optimistic view of Benedict's papacy, see Boyle's earlier article "The New Spirit of Germany," *Tablet* 259.8587 (May 7, 2005) 4–5.

Whatever the value of these speculations, the point remains that they show something of the difference between the foci of an ecclesial and a public intellectual. In particular, they affirm the need for any Catholic ecclesial intellectual to give a robust account of the structural, corporate dimensions of Christian life in the modern world. It is to the local manifestation of this structured belonging that the final section of this article turns, for, as Taylor and others have pointed out, there are "multiple modernities" and many different, local social imaginaries.[48] Any adequate response to the trauma of modernity must therefore recognize and take into account the diversity of local churches.

HOPE AND THE LOCAL CHURCH

Up to this point, I have argued for the significance of the virtue of hope *ad intra* for reforming the Church and *ad extra* for engaging with modernity. That engagement, however, cannot be limited to general comments about an individual Christian's hope. To the contrary, it must deal with the social contexts in which the Church exists and the institutional forms by which it lives. How, specifically, does the virtue of hope speak to this last concern of the structure of Catholic Church, especially in light of Boyle's charge that it has failed to rid itself of monarchical, bureaucratic authoritarianism, as indicated by Eamon Duffy's description of its administrative center as "the last imperial court in Europe" and thus typifying the lack of transparency and accountability that underlies the deplorable way abuse cases were handled?

My basic point rests on a loose analogy between the dynamics of hope (as interpreted by some modern Thomists) and a recent trend in ecclesiology: the relevant dynamic of hope is its focus upon the particular, and the recent trend in ecclesiology is the focus upon the local church. I will first unpack the particularizing dynamic of hope and then show its relevance for ecclesiology's interest in the local, particular manifestations of the Church.

Whereas faith regards the universal belief of the Church, hope regards its acceptance and realization in particular circumstances. The correlation between, on the one hand, faith and universality and, on the other, hope and particularity has been developed by Karl Rahner and, following him, Roger Haight.[49] In his essay "On the Theology of Hope" Rahner argues that the distinction between faith and hope rests on the difference between

[48] For an overview of the idea of multiple modernities, see Christian Smith, "On Multiple Modernities: Shifting the Modernity Paradigm," unpublished paper, University of Notre Dame, 2006, http://www.nd.edu/~csmith22/documents/Multiple Modernities.pdf.

[49] This idea finds its basis in Aquinas's claim that whereas faith accepts the general possibility of eternal salvation, hope personally appropriates that shared belief as something that is possible for me in particular. See *ST*, 2–2, q. 20, a. 2,

> [on the one hand] God's universal promise and [on the other] the concrete and particular promise which intends and brings about the salvation of me as a concrete individual. . . . [Faith] only realizes its authentic nature . . . when it is subsumed and transcended, when the theoretical promise which is proper to it is transformed into the specific and particular promise in which it is applied to the individual. But this takes place precisely in virtue of the fact that faith is transformed into hope.[50]

Roger Haight develops this point, arguing that faith and hope differ not so much in terms of intellect and will (as they did for Aquinas), but rather in terms of general and particular. Hope, for Haight, is simply the process whereby the universal claims of faith find expression in a specific time and place. "As the theology of faith is adjusted to the framework of historical consciousness, it becomes more and more difficult really to distinguish faith and hope. Indeed, hope can be considered as faith within an historical context."[51] The virtue of hope, then, brings the general, universal claims of faith to bear upon specific times and places. To adapt Grace Davie's phrase, hope gives belonging to believing.

If this is the case, then the particularizing function of hope can support the recent emphasis in ecclesiology on the importance of the local church, that is, on the concrete ways Christian faith is lived out amid the difficulties and opportunities of particular cultures, and, following from that, how the truth and authority found in those various locales relate to the proclamation and defense of the truth in the authoritative center of the church universal.

My point here is simply that if we readily accept, at a personal level, the significance of allowing a universally shared faith, to (in Rahner's words) "be transformed" in its encounter with the particular and individual, then can we not analogously accept, or at least be open to, a similar transformation in ecclesial structures if they be appropriately devolved from universal to local levels? This suggestion of a loose analogy between personal faith development and ecclesial devolution of authority carries strategic significance. For if someone readily sees the uncontroversial truth of the personal dimension of this analogy, then, to the extent that the analogy holds, he or she will more readily be able to entertain the more contentious institutional dimension.

Beyond suggestive parallels, one can forward more direct arguments, as Boyle does, that such a move is appropriate for our times. For if, in the age

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which likens faith to the "universal estimate" and hope to the "particular estimate." See also *ST*, 2–2, q. 17, a. 3, which argues for the self-referential nature of hope, as primarily the desire for one's own salvation, as distinct from the intellectual assent to the possibility of salvation in general.

[50] Kark Rahner, "On the Theology of Hope," in *Theological Investigations* 10 (London: Darton, Longman, & Todd, 1973) 242–59, at 253.

[51] Roger Haight, *Dynamics of Theology* (New York: Paulist, 1990) 21.

of nation states, the 19th-century centralization of authority in a transnational papacy allowed the Church to give prophetic witness to the international nature of Christian identity, then, in the age of the global market today, the devolution of power to the local churches can help defend the particular identities that globalization threatens to dissolve. My appeal to an analogy between the personal and the ecclesial finds force in Boyle's claim that today the moral voice of the Catholic Church is not exhausted by the papacy, but must also come from a vigorous college of bishops that speaks from the experiences of the local churches.

> The Church of the future will need to draw its moral strength not from its international presence but from its claim to represent people as they are locally and distinct from the worldwide ramifications of their existence as participants in the global market. . . . The moral authority of the Church in future will lie, as the Second Vatican Council foresaw, with the College of bishops. It will be the bishops, rather than specifically the papacy, which will challenge the claim of the global market to express and exhaust the human world. . . . Grand narrative continues . . . . But the little narratives of the victims of the grand process . . . will be told at diocesan, parochial, or base-community level.[52]

To take the local church more seriously and to break from what Ghislain Lafont calls the "Gregorian form"[53] of the Church thus entails the following change of focus: *from* the papacy as the central originator of unity ("vicar of Christ") who appoints leaders in local church dioceses ("vicars of Peter"), who then ratify and repeat central decisions; *to* the bishop of Rome as the organ of church unity who listens to and coordinates (and, where necessary, adjudicates disagreements between and even disciplines) the accountable leaders and representatives of devolved centers of the Church who express how the shared faith is lived out amid the concrete difficulties and opportunities of particular times and places.

Of course, the relationship between local and universal is a complicated issue, both in terms of institutional detail and theological justification: the former treats a plethora of juridical topics, such as the power of synods and the process of (s)electing bishops; while the latter debates the status of the church at Pentecost, the significance of its preexistence in God before creation, the merits of trinitarian *perichoresis* as a model for the simultaneity between local and universal, and so on. Reading these sometimes strained theological debates, one suspects that, on occasion, theological reasons are being found and employed to justify prior ecclesial commitments. Is it really the case, for example, that Joseph Ratzinger and Walter Kasper first disagree on the abstract question of whether Pentecost

[52] Boyle, *Who Are We Now?* 91–92.

[53] Ghislain Lafont, *Imagining the Catholic Church: Structured Communion in the Spirit* (Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical, 2000), chap. 2 entitled "The Gregorian Form of the Church."

involves primarily the universal or a local church, and then subsequently come to hold differing assessments of the ecclesiopolitical issues of Roman centralization? Or, as seems more likely, do they hold prior and different convictions about the administration of some institutional aspects of the Church that then get played out in very subtle, somewhat displaced, and possibly unanswerable, theological debates?[54]

To cut through the complicated use of theological topics in relation to the question of the priority of universal or local church, and to ground helpful yet idealized appeals to trinitarian *perichoresis* as a model for their simultaneity, I propose the following use of the theological virtues as a way to think about this ecclesial debate in (simultaneously!) theological and ecclesiopolitical terms. For it is better first to come clean with one's ecclesiopolitical stand, and then subsequently to offer theological justification—not as a timelessly valid and therefore universally applicable solution, but rather simply as a fitting (*conveniens*) response to the situation in which the Church finds itself today. Specifically, I will propose that the unfolding of the three theological virtues suggests a template or loose analogy for understanding and guiding the historic changes that the Church faces in coming to grips with the reality and significance of the local churches.

As mentioned, faith pertains to the universal, to beliefs held across time and space by Christians, most obviously in shared creeds. It is traditionally understood as that divinely infused virtue whereby the intellect assents to truths necessary for salvation.[55] For Aquinas, the proposing of these truths ultimately comes from the pope,[56] and, once accepted, their heretical denial merits exclusion: ecclesiastically, through excommunication; and politically, through execution.[57] It is not hard to see the institutional expression of this virtue in Lafont's "Gregorian form" of the church, which he sees as extending before Gregory VII's reign (1073–1085), from which it derived its name, through its consolidations in the 13th century and 16th centuries, and officially up until Vatican II.[58] Lafont characterizes two features of this interlocking system of ideology and institution as follows:

[54] For a summary of the debate between Kasper and Ratzinger, see Killian McDonnell, O.S.B., "The Ratzinger/Kasper Debate: The Universal Church and Local Churches," *Theological Studies* 63 (2002) 227–50.

[55] Adapting Hebrews 11:1 ("Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not"), Aquinas defines faith as "a habit of the mind, whereby eternal life is begun in us, making the intellect assent to what is not seen" (*ST* 2–2, q. 4, a. 1).

[56] *ST* 2–2, q. 1, a. 10: "Whether it pertains to the sovereign pontiff to ordain a symbol of faith."

[57] *ST* 2–2, q. 11, a. 3: "Whether heretics should be tolerated."

[58] Lafont, *Imaging the Catholic Church* 37.

> The first, and unquestionably the most important . . . is the keen awareness of what might be called the *primacy of the truth* as it relates to salvation. Next, there must also be an institution for the proclamation and the defense of the truth. The *primacy of the pope* is central from this perspective and will continue to grow in importance with the passing of time, eventually weakening the other institutions.[59]

The virtue of faith has paradigmatic status for Christian identity in (to adapt Taylor's phrase) this "ecclesial imaginary" of the Gregorian form.[60]

In the development of Christian life from faith to hope, discussed above, the believer comes face to face with the realities of change, as what is universally believed must now be personally appropriated in the concrete and often difficult circumstances of one's particular life and local context. Hope thus prompts real assent to the belief that God can bring new life out of suffering and difficulty. Because it directly registers change, this virtue can lead the Church through, and help it to imagine what comes after, the transition to a post-Gregorian form of church.[61] And because hope squarely faces the all-too-local realities in which our difficulties come, it fosters an ecclesial mindset that is more attentive to local churches and that can meet with courage the difficulties that attend these historic changes.

Finally, in the life of the individual believer, charity emerges out of the particularizing dynamics of hope, when one experiences concrete instances of good coming from evil, of receiving and sharing in redemption, and of finding and cultivating love of God and of others who have shared in different yet similar passages of redemption. In fact, part of the very joy of that friendship comes from sharing our faith stories of different yet similar experiences of the cruciform passages of hope, and realizing that they ultimately share in—and are grounded by—the divine love shown in Christ's paschal mystery.

[59] Ibid. 37–38, emphases original.

[60] "By social imaginary, I mean something much broader and deeper than the intellectual schemes people may entertain when they think about social reality in a disengaged mode. I am thinking, rather, of the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations" (Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* [Durham, N.C.: Duke University, 2004] 23).

[61] It should be noted that change need not necessarily be toward something new. It could also involve restoring ancient practices, such as giving the laity a voice in the selection of bishops, or retrieving the prohibition on moving bishops between sees, thereby shifting a bishop's allegiance from the central agency that appoints him to the local church he serves. On this, see Michael J. Buckley, S.J., "Resources for Reform from the First Millennium," in *Common Calling: The Laity and Governance of the Catholic Church*, ed. Stephen J. Pope (Washington: Georgetown University, 2004) 71–86.

The personal unfolding of the theological virtues, then, has an ecclesial parallel. A centralized, papal-dominated Church, sometimes enforcing faith as a social boundary rather than nurturing it as a theological virtue, faces acute difficulties and needs to change. In drawing upon the resources of hope—the desire for a future, difficult, yet possible good—it can face those changes, not least by paying greater attention to the particular experiences of the diverse local churches where ultimately the difficulties are experienced and where, one hopes, strategies for renewal can come. Finally, in sharing the very different yet similar experiences of what it means to live and grow as a Christian church in various times and places, there emerges a deeper and more genuine union based on an ecclesial version of what Aristotle calls civic friendship, a recognition of analogously similar yet richly diverse experiences based on the shared love of the same object, in this case, of coming to new life in the Spirit that is patterned on the ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ.

This deeper union of friendship comes only through the particularizing moment of hope, in which the local receives its due. Reflecting on the ecclesial significance of hope marks a path for change. It shows how deeper union in the Church will come not from rigid insistence on a uniform faith-as-identity-marker but, paradoxically, from a certain letting go of centralized attempts at control and granting instead genuine devolution to, and trust in, the wisdom and particular experiences of local churches. Out of the meeting and cooperation of these devolved centers may emerge a deeper union and thus more authentic catholicity.

CONCLUSION

The virtue of hope offers important and creative theological resources from which to construct a post-traumatic ecclesiology. I have outlined three ways in which this pivotal virtue, often regarded in terms of the individual believer, in fact carries significant ecclesial value. First, the account of its dialectic interaction with faith provides the vocabulary and conceptual distinctions that create the conditions for a forward-looking yet realistic mindset that is open to genuine reform. Second, it directs the ecclesial intellectual to a certain openness to and engagement with modern culture. It thus avoids the not uncommon rejection of modernity that, on the basis of that rejection, excuses itself from entertaining reform and, by a preemptive *fiat*, sees only continuity in the Catholic tradition. Third, it suggests a loose analogy for considering one key area in need of reform, namely, giving greater attention and weight to the voices of local churches.

After a fashion, the threefold structure of this article reflects the unfolding dynamic of the theological virtues outlined above. The first part explored how faith is dialectically transformed by the onset of hope; the

second treated hope itself, arguing that its central focus on the good grounds a responsible engagement with the modern world, in which there is much goodness; and the third argued that the ecclesial parallel to hope's attention to the particular—a greater attention to the local church—increases the prospects for a deeper union of charity within the Church. It may seem paradoxical, even surprising, that letting go of control may lead to closer union, but then it is the nature of love to surprise. And just as pondering our loves itself causes delight that increases love, so thinking about hope, especially in a post-traumatic Church, articulates reasons that themselves give hope.