

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY AND THE SOCIO-SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION (ANIMATION) OF THE WORLD IN THE LIGHT OF *GAUDIUM ET SPES* (GS) 43

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ABSTRACT

Despite the many scientific and technological advancements of humanity especially in the modern age, the world is still filled with anxieties, pains, turmoil, and miseries. The scientific and technological advancements include biotechnological interventions, reproductive technologies, the rise of artificial intelligence, the growth and rapid increase in information technology, agricultural advancement, etc. While not all that have been invented in the above domains are ethically acceptable, there is hope in the good aspects of the inventions. Human history and civilization should be guided by the spirit of God, the supreme being who created the world and loves the world. The role of the Church emanating from God and Christ is to be a pastor and moral guide to humanity as God leads people to heaven. This paper argues that the world needs to be transformed, animated, and renewed with the spirit of Christ and Christianity. The Catholic Church's document: *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World) provides a guide on this. The paper uses critical analytic and hermeneutic methods to unravel the issues at stake. The paper finds that the Church has a role to play in the earthly city (the world). The paper concludes that when the Church animates the world with the spirit of Christianity the world becomes a better earthly city and place.

Keywords: Christianity, Christ, social justice, socio-spiritual transformation, animation, the world, *Gaudium et Spes*.

INTRODUCTION

This research comes from a paper delivered at a Warri pastoral regional event which was organized by the Catholic Diocese of Warri as an aspect of the Catholic Church's Year of Prayer. A look through the world or the global community reveals that it is plagued by myriads of socio-economic, political, cultural, environmental, and many other problems. The problems in these various areas of life include terrorism, banditry, climate change, inept leadership, cyber fraud, human insecurities, modern-day slavery, wars and violence, violent struggles over natural resources, herdsman-farmers clashes, religious fundamentalism, intolerance, oppression and injustice, violation of human rights, broken homes and marriages, youth restiveness and unemployment, etc.

Specifically, you see these problems in different countries. In many African countries, there is massive underdevelopment and poor social infrastructure. A country like Nigeria is experiencing epileptic power supply, constant electoral violence, internet fraud, and rising cost of living. Boko Haram violence is raving Nigeria, and so also are killer herdsman. As this paper is being sent out Nigeria is experiencing protests over bad governance. The Democratic Republic of Congo has been embroiled in war and violence for many decades now. There is a civil war raging in Sudan. In the Middle East, there is an ongoing war between Israel and Hamas. Many nations in the Middle East and North African region are raved by poverty and lack of democratic values. Illegal Migration is a serious problem that is facing many regions of the world such as the Mexico-US border, the Mediterranean region, the English Channel, etc. There is a war going on in Ukraine. It

should be clear to all from a religio-spiritual perspective that these problems confronting human beings and the planet are not divine nor God's will. The divine will is that beings who are created excellent should flourish and live meaningful lives. The divine will is that human beings should have life, abundant life (cf. John 10:10). Jesus came into this world to ensure that abundant life as encapsulated in the message of the kingdom of God that Jesus preached is established on earth (cf. Matthew 6:9-15, Luke 4:18-19). The followers of Jesus on behalf of Jesus must take his spirit and message and use it to transform, animate, and make this world a better place.

The problems and troubles confronting the world, and various countries all show the need for it to be animated by Christian values that can help the world to heal. The world cannot heal itself. The institutions of the world cannot heal themselves. They need a higher power, such as the power of the Supreme Being and his Christ. It is through the followers of Christ, but not only them that God operates in the world, and by the power of his spirit that operates in the world. The task of this paper precisely is to argue that amid the myriads of problems confronting the world, it should be animated or transformed with the spirit of Christianity or the spirit of Christ. In examining the thesis of the paper it will be discussed from the perspective of the document of the Catholic Church coming from the Second Vatican Council called *Gaudium et Spes* (Joys and Hope).

TERMINOLOGIES AND CONCEPTUAL EXPLICATIONS

There are some terms or concepts that undergird this work. They are spirit, Christianity, socio-spiritual, transformation, animation, world, and *Gaudium et Spes* (*GS*). The word, "spirit" refers to the non-physical dimension of a being or thing. It is the pervading principle or what distinguishes a thing. The spirit is the unseen essence and invisible substance of which a thing or being is made. The Encyclopedia Britannica (2024) writes that a spirit is "the force within a person that is believed to give the body life, energy, and power....the inner quality or nature of a person." The spirit of a thing or person is the animating principle that guides, propels, and motivates the thing. A person, place, thing, entity, etc can be imbued with a spirit.

Having explained spirit, it is important to explain what Christianity is. Christianity is the religion that emanates from the life, ministry, and teaching of Christ. Benz et al (2024) write that:

Christianity, major religion stemming from the life, teachings, and death of Jesus of Nazareth (the Christ, or the Anointed One of God) in the 1st century CE (sic). It has become the largest of the world's religions and, geographically, the most widely diffused of all faiths. It has a constituency of more than two billion believers (p.1).

At the heart of Christianity is the message of the kingdom of God that Jesus preached. When Jesus gave his first homily at the synagogue in Nazareth he declared:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18-19, RSV).

To separate the message that Jesus preached from his life and ministry and the essence of Christianity does Christianity a great disservice. The life and ministry of Jesus are not to be separated from his death, resurrection, ascension, and second coming. All make the Christ Event. Macy (2007) writes that Christianity is a monotheistic faith tradition that affirms the role of Jesus in redemption with beliefs, customs, practices, and rituals centered on Jesus. Christians proclaim Jesus as the Jewish messiah that was prophesied and promised in the Old Testament. From Christianity has emerged the Christian faith, Christian religion, Christian institutions such as Christian education, Christian monasteries, Christian books, Christian libraries, etc.

Gaudium et Spes—the three words derived from the Latin: *Gaudium* (joy), *et* (and), and *spes* (hope)—is one of the documents of Vatican II that was released in 1965 by Pope Paul VI on behalf of the World Catholic Bishops. It was the last document presented by the Second Vatican Council on 7th December 1965. Nickoloff (2007) recognizes that the document aims to scrutinize or appraise the signs of the times in the light of the gospel and these signs include psychological, intellectual, moral, religious, and spiritual changes in the world. Nickoloff (2003) writes further that part 1 of the document concerns human existence and its meaning in a changing world, the role of Catholics and the church arising from the dignity of the human person, while part 2 looks at issues in family and marriage life, cultural development, politics, socio-economic life, and peace in the world.

Nickoloff (2007) is also clear that it is not a dogmatic document like *Dei Verbum*, or *Lumen Gentium* that defines doctrine, but it is authoritative when it comes to Catholic Social Teaching. This document has influenced the Catholic Social Teaching of the Popes and regional catholic bishops all over the world since its inception. From the document, it is now clear that Catholics must be socially, economically, politically, and environmentally engaged in the world. From this document, we learn that the Church is not a fortress apart from the city. The life of the sacristy and sanctuary must affect the streets. In this document, the ecumenical dimension of the Church is brought to the fore. Forell and Childs (2013) note that *Gaudium et Spes* recognizes the dignity of all humanity and the church is to be engaged with all humanity by showing love amidst the threatening changes in the world. The importance of GS lies also in what Mich (1999) helps us to see: that of the 16 documents of the Second Vatican Council, only this one, GS deals with the relationships of the church to the world(the first document from a church council addressed to the people of the world); the others deal with internal matters such as liturgy, the role of the laity, priestly formation, etc. Mich (1999) helps us to realize that the cry of Brazilian Bishop, Dom Helder Camara that we should not simply concern ourselves with internal church matters while the world is dying of hunger and underdeveloped was a similar concern shared by bishops such as Montini of Milan (later Pope Paul VI), Cardinal Suenens of Belgium, Leger of Montreal, and Lercaro of Bologna. GS is a warm and loving document with unconditional positive regard for humanity. In GS, Prusak (2004) writes that the Church acknowledged “a dynamic and more evolutionary concept of nature” and history moving away from a static one. Amid world problems and darkness in this world, there is hope. It acknowledged the freedom in the world, but freedom should be ethically moderated. The Church's mission is to be a leaven in society on behalf of Christ transforming it into the family of God” (GS 39). The role of the Church is to humanize. Prusak (2004) rightly interprets the Council saying: “To say that the Church was not given a mission in the political, economic, or social order does not mean that the Church has no function to fulfill in those areas”(p. 319).

Christians are to animate the world with the spirit of Christ or Christianity. What does animate or animation mean? To animate is to give or put life into a thing, person, or place. To animate is to fill with a principle or what makes a thing what it is. Spiritual animation is putting the spirit into a thing, person, or place. The word animation will be used here interchangeably with the word, transformation. Aniagwu (2011) writes that social transformation is to bring about desirable change in creating a good society, this is a society that serves the common good of all citizens by rendering social services for the people in terms of shelter, employment, security, freedoms and other social amenities of life. Socio-spiritual transformation as used in this paper ties the two concepts of spiritual animation and social transformation together. Both of them are interrelated and needed. They should not be separated. It implies that in this world, a spiritual transformation or animation is not enough. What is spiritually transformed should also have influence and impact on the society and earthly realms. The world is to be spiritually and socially transformed

with the spirit of Christ.

The final term that requires definition here is “world.” The term world is used to describe the physical planet called Earth, with all its peoples, cultures, politics, economies, ideologies, beliefs, etc. The world is the world inhabited by people and every other thing in existence. It is the world created by God, the Supreme Being. The world created by God was originally good but fallen. But it has been redeemed by Christ. The fruits of that redemption must be used to animate the world and that is one of the vital reasons why the Church has been left behind here and is still on earth.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIO-SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION (ANIMATION) OF THE WORLD

The spirit of Christianity is what makes Christianity what it is. It is an enlivening principle and essence that drives and motivates Christianity. If you remove the spirit from a thing or person, the person or thing is dead. According to Jesus, “It is the spirit that gives life” (John 6:63). Without the spirit of Christianity, Christianity is dead. Christianity is a “thoroughly” earthly religion based on heavenly hope and reality. One of the dangers that Christianity has faced throughout history is from those who want to domesticate and privatize Christianity as simply personal piety, personal salvation, and going to heaven. This myth that tries to privatize religion has been debunked throughout Church history, especially in the Social Teachings of the Church. The Lord Jesus in his life and ministry taught that his followers are “the light of the world” and “the salt of the earth” (Matthew 5:13-14). Believers are not simply the light of the church or the salt of the church. They are empowered sacramentally and liturgically in the church but their mission is also in the mundane world or secular city. This is why Christians make a big mistake when they cut themselves away from the life of the city. Earthly concerns must be the concerns of every believer. It is because the temporal order is so important, though not more important than the heavenly domain that there are commissions in the Catholic Church called: Justice, Development and Peace Commission; Family and Human Life; Education, etc all under Church and Society in Nigeria. In different countries, they may be called other names but there are always apostolates that relate to Christians' duties in the world.

Christianity does not exist for itself. And it does not just exist for people to go to heaven. It has a purpose in this world. What does the socio-spiritual transformation of the world involve? It means that Christians work for change in the temporary order, change that is in line with justice, peace, and authentic social development. The world needs to be animated because it is a fallen world. Though redeemed by Christ, the full effects and fruits of that redemption need to be spread and promoted. This is the function of animation. It is to fill the world with the spirit of Christ and the spirit of Christianity. In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the Church teaches that whenever we pray the Lord's Prayer and Listen to the Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, we are reminded of our duties.

What we pray for in one of the most beautiful Catholic prayers, “Come Holy Spirit,” and renew the face of the earth is what animation is all about. The prayer categorically states that the Holy Spirit comes to renew the earth. The work of renewal is what animation and transformation are all about. Think of the first work of the Holy Spirit in Genesis 1:1-13. It was by the power of the Holy Spirit that creation was brought into being. The Holy Spirit creates and renews. All through the Holy Bible, we see the power of the Holy Spirit in passages such as Ezekiel 37, 47, Isaiah 61, Acts 2, etc. To animate or transform is to make the world a better place. It is to spread the gospel message. Christ came into this world with a mission for both spiritual and social redemption.

THE CALL AND THE NEEDED RESPONSE TO *GAUDIUM ET SPES* 43

The Catholic Bishops (1965) enunciated: “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” (par 1). The beginning of anything matters. The statements with which *Gaudium et Spes* begins are crucially important. “The Church” in the above statement identifies with humanity. The church cannot ignore the plights and problems of humanity especially the poor, the marginalized, the vulnerable, etc. This identification with humanity did not begin with this document. The biblical tradition, teachings, and praxis of the church ground the call of *Gaudium et Spes*. In the Exodus event (Exodus 3 and 14), the exile and return, the ministry of deacons directed towards widows, the church's ministry to the poor, orphans, etc; God shows concern with people.

In the last century in which the Council took place, colonialism had wrought oppression and injustice, denied people their human and cultural rights, and exploited their natural resources. The 1960s were notable for the rise of the modern environmental movement. The plight that the earth was facing was coming into people's consciousness. The world was experiencing great technological and scientific advancement. Yet, the Church enunciates that amid this advancement, God should not be forgotten. California Catholic Conference (2015) writes that: “...in these transforming times, the Second Vatican Council sought to clarify the role of the church in the world by turning to Scripture in the Church's social teachings” as the Church mainstreams human dignity of people created in God's image and likeness; and human beings created with a rational soul are called to live in communion in the light of Christ's message of universal love. The Church has no earthly ambition but to carry forward the spirit of Christ in transforming the world (GS 3).

Gaudium et Spes must also be studied in light of the dynamics and turmoil that the world was facing in the 1960s. This was the time when many countries in Africa and colonized territories were gaining independence from their former rulers. *Gaudium et Spes* is a pastoral constitution of the church in the modern world. By itself, the designation “Pastoral” speaks of the work of a pastor or shepherd. The church is to play the role of a shepherd not only to her children, but to all humanity. All people are children of the church whether they acknowledge it or not. The Church is a mother to all humanity. McCaughey (2023) writes that the Church has a positive openness to the world, the world was created by God and God never abandons his world, and Jesus because of God's love came into this world to redeem and break the power of Satan and sin; we are to identify with the world in what is good while working to transform it.

Some of the basic things that we find in *Gaudium et Spes* 43 are the following:

- ❖ We are citizens of two cities (the earthly city and the heavenly city)
- ❖ We have duties in conscience towards the earthly city
- ❖ We should not neglect the duties to the earthly city because of heaven
- ❖ There are earthly responsibilities to be carried out.
- ❖ Our faith commits us to the earthly city (Faith without works is dead)
- ❖ Each person has its own proper vocation.
- ❖ Religion does not consist of acts of worship alone
- ❖ It is a serious error to split faith from daily life.
- ❖ The prophets of the Old Testament railed against this error (this scandal). Jesus also opposed this split.
- ❖ Social and professional life should be imbued with the spirit of the religious life.

- ❖ To neglect one's temporal duties sins against neighbour and God and endangers his/her eternal salvation
- ❖ We must see the noble example of Jesus who worked as a carpenter.
- ❖ The world should be animated with the spirit of Christ
- ❖ Secular duties belong to lay people though not exclusively
- ❖ Lay people should ensure divine law, the spirit of Christianity pervades the earthly city.
- ❖ Priests have to form laypeople with a strong Christian conscience able to operate in the Christian city.
- ❖ The role of laypeople is crucial in animating and transforming the earthly city.
- ❖ In participating in earthly affairs, the opinions and positions of the Christians should not be equated with the gospel message or the teaching of the church
- ❖ Laypeople should engage in honest discussion, foster Christian charity, and promote the common good.
- ❖ Lay persons are to witness to Christ in all areas and things in this world.
- ❖ Pastors of souls should ensure the face of Christ is seen in this world by their presence, their speeches, and daily conduct and exercise of their gifts.
- ❖ Dialogue with the world is necessary. Foster unity among people. We must respect even those who are different from us in political religious, economic, social, and cultural matters (GS 28). We must not be indifferent to truth and error should be repudiated (GS 28).
- ❖ We must struggle against failings and defects that have happened in the church in history.
- ❖ We should be open to the Holy Spirit in this mission of spiritual renewal of the world.
- ❖ Though not in number 43, it is important to remark that in engaging in the world all that opposes human dignity is to be shunned such as deportation, slavery, prostitution, subhuman living conditions, human trafficking, unjust working conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, etc.

We are called to serve God in this life. The fundamental vocation of the human person remains. The Holy See (1994) in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), no 1721 states that: “God puts us in this world to know, love and to serve him, and so come to paradise” (p. 428). Knowing, loving, and serving God remains our primary vocation. Serving Him entails not just religious worship and rituals in church, but also what we do towards our neighbour and living ethical lives amid secular or earthly vocations. Our engagement in political, economic, and cultural activities should be taken more seriously than ever before. *Gaudium et Spes* gives impetus to do this. Jesus refuses to see loving God as the only commandment that matters. To the scribe who asked him which is the greatest commandment, he answers love your neighbour also. We should see our engagement in the daily business activities of life such as working in supermarkets, serving as teachers in school, being civil servants, transporters, etc as aspects of building the kingdom of God on the earth and spreading God's love. The Apostle Saint Paul admonishes that in all we do we should see it as working for Christ (Colossians 3:17). The spirit of *Gaudium et Spes* is the spirit of Christianity. The temporal order is not evil or sinful. Christians must participate in it with zeal and allow the values of the kingdom to rule it. In the Lord's Prayer, the Lord Jesus taught believers to always pray for God's will to be done on earth and for God's kingdom to come here on earth. Earthly activities done morally—even when geared towards profit—are inscribed with the

spirit of Christ. We should not cede the earthly plain to the devil or the power of evil, if not the ministry of Christ becomes useless. The Holy See (1994) in CCC, numbers 1887-1942 is very clear on the need for Christians to participate in the temporal plane. This call comes from the vision of *Gaudium et Spes* and other social ecclesial documents. In the above sections of the CCC, the Holy See (1994) teaches that human beings are social by nature and are called to exchange, serve, and dialogue with one another. Human beings are to participate in social life. Participation in social life requires working for the common good of society, political participation, promotion of social justice, and exercising the virtue of solidarity. For the Christian, all these should be done to bring the spirit of Christ Jesus, the liberator, and saviour of the human race to bear on all of them. The world is to be animated or transformed with the spirit and values of the gospel such as the Beatitudes, the Sermon on the Mount, the message of love and forgiveness, the message of generosity and charity, and carrying out the corporal works of mercy. It is in imitating Jesus and following his mission that we are truly his followers. Ewherido (2013) rightly notes that:

As far as love and justice are concerned, and indeed, in every aspect of our lives, Jesus remains the paradigm for the church amidst our struggles with the ugly realities of social injustice and multiple crimes against humanity. It is in the imitation of Christ that the Church continues Jesus' mission: seeking out those lost and offering them salvation (p. 95).

In the previous quotation, Ewherido (2013) cites some ideas from Hays's *Moral Vision*. The point to be made is that for the Christian to truly animate the world that is bedevilled by darkness and ugliness, the Christian should follow the benevolent love of Jesus that emancipated the poor, the vulnerable, the marginalized, and traumatized. Christianity is not just about going to heaven. It is inundating and flooding this world with gospel values and the light of Christ. *Living and engaging in social and political affairs for the good of society is part of being Christian. It is not an extra-curricular activity. It is essential to Christianity.* Lebechi (2014) writes that in GS the Church enunciates that "...the Church must be in alliance with suffering humanity. It could not stay aloof but should be engaged in dialogue with the social life of people in order to be able to serve humanity in love" and the Church is to spread the message of Christ to console and repair agonizing and suffering humanity (p.24).

Human beings in a special way are co-creators with God. Not just in giving birth to offspring, but also in participating in human labour. In the Garden of Eden, it was God who first laboured and worked in creating human beings and planting a garden. Through economic activities and human work, human beings prolong and continue the work of creation in "subduing" the earth (CCC 2427). *Gaudium et Spes* is cited by the CCC in number 2426 to affirm that economic activities should be done within the limits of the moral order and in line with just social principles. Work is so crucial to human existence. Without work, there can be no human civilization. The Holy See (1994) teaches rightly that work is a duty, work honours God and enables humans to exercise their talents; through work, we carry our daily crosses and the hardships and burden of work are to be received joyfully, work is redemptive and in a unique way: "Work can be a means of sanctification and a way of animating earthly realities with the Spirit of Christ" (p. 583). Linking our religious spirituality to our daily work and business is one of the vital lessons we derive from GS. Participation in the social, cultural, economic, and political life of the earthly city is divine and holy. Politics is not a dirty game and Christians should actively participate in it no matter the risks and permeate it with the spirit of the Christian gospel. Christ lived in this world and participated in human activities. He did not cut himself away from people. He attended a wedding feast in Cana. He sat down and drank wine with people. He enjoyed celebrating with people. He critiqued the false economic system that turned the temple into a market. He was not angry with

buying and selling but with the injustice in the system. Jesus had a treasurer of the Jesus movement indicating that they did financial exchange with others. Christians on behalf of Christ are to make the world holy, not by cutting themselves from the world but by shining the light of Christ. Jesus told his disciples clearly: “You do not belong to the world, but you are in the world.” Jesus did not pray for his disciples to be taken out of the world but for their protection. They have work to do in the world.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the call and mandate that GS provides, this paper makes the following recommendations. To concretize how priests and lay people in the church are to respond to GS, we spell out our recommendations in seven ways:

(1) **There is a need to re-write some so-called Christian songs** for they can make us ignore our duties on earth. The song, “This world is not my own, I am just passing through...” It can give the impression of not bordering on working for the good of the earthly city. While bother to work for its good when we are just passing through? It can also make us fail in our environmental duties. We all especially pastors of souls have a duty to critically and analytically look at songs that are sung in liturgy or church gatherings. The melody and sweetness of the song are not enough. The social message that the song passes should also be studied. Does the song make us better Christians who are earthly-wise and heavily conscious or does it make us abdicate our responsibilities in this world? An author may have written a song with good intentions, but it may have a different influence on people.

(2) **Social teaching and justice education:** There is a need to do more on this. Not only is Catholic Social Teaching the best-kept secret of the Catholic Church, but many Catholics lack a sound knowledge of Catholic Social Teaching (CST). Aniagwu (2011) shares this view also when he states that: “The Social Teaching of the Catholic Church has been described as 'the Church's best kept secret.' this is because it is little known to the generality of the public, even within the Catholic Church herself” (p.270). Since many Catholics before receiving the sacraments go through catechism classes, Catechists, Seminarians, future priests, and sisters must have many more courses in CST. I acknowledge that having more courses is not enough. These teachings should be mainstreamed in Catholic education. It was John Chrysostom who said the worship of the body and blood of Christ should be connected to helping the poor. The Church's mission and identity cannot be separated from the prophetic tradition of the Holy Bible and the promotion of justice. Howson (2011), Ehusani (1996), Ukwuegbu (1995), Byrne (1988), Kamoga (2017) and Ugwu (2017) all corroborate this trend. Here we cannot forget the constant social teaching of the Nigerian Bishops brought to us most often in their communiqués after their meetings.

(3) **The relationship between liturgy, sacrament, and justice needs to be more talked about.** A liturgy that does not promote faithful citizenship leaves much to be desired. Catholics should make themselves actively engaged in social justice issues, work ethics, voter education, etc. In the parable of the Last Judgement in Matthew 25, Jesus enunciated, “As long as you did it to one of the least of my brothers and sisters, you did it to me”(Matthew 25:40). The items that Jesus mentions include feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, sheltering the homeless. This is not just about charity but asking critical questions about why these conditions prevail in human society. Beyond love and charity, Christians must work for social justice and the social transformation of the human condition. Structures that perpetuate injustice need to be confronted and destroyed. Anagwo (2013) writes that the Mass leads us to the mission, a mission that helps us to create a just society in a hopeless and darkened world, a world in which people are reconciled, live in love, where workers are paid

just wages, and there are harmonious human relationships.

(4) **Let us be attentive to the Prayer of the Faithful on Sundays and weekdays** which often spells out our earthly and civic duties. There is hardly any prayer of the faithful in the church that does not mention the transformation of the earthly city. In general, outside the prayer of the faithful, the entire liturgy is a place for formation in life, social justice, and participation in the temporary affairs of the world. Koester (2002) writes that from June 18 to 21 2001, the 29th annual liturgy conference of the Notre Dame Center for Pastoral Liturgy demonstrated that "...gathering to worship and striving for justice are not separate compartments or unrelated endeavors in the Christian life; rather, liturgy and justice together are constitutive of and expressive of the Church itself" (p. ix). The compartmentalization of liturgy as separate from the other realms of daily life is common among many Catholics. They rarely see any relationship between the daily masses they attend and their daily tasks, yet painfully they pray about these tasks in their prayers.

(5) **Pray over your earthly duties and work.** There is a special Mass for human labour in the Catholic Missal. This mass should not just be there in the missal, it should be celebrated often. Whenever this mass is celebrated it should provide an important moment for the priest to lay out the purpose of GS, the importance of the earthly terrain, the need to bring holiness to bear in the world, etc. There is also a Mass for Justice and Peace that we should emphasize here. It should be celebrated often. It provides an opportunity to educate people on justice and peace issues

(6) **The importance of our daily work in economic and business life should be highlighted more than ever before.** Some people tend to see daily work as a burden and something to be ignored and neglected. Enterprise and entrepreneurship are crucial to fulfilling our Christian vocation in this work. We must find joy in our work no matter how challenging it is. *Gaudium et Spes* calls for a new attitude towards human work and labour. Work is not cursed. It has been redeemed in Christ who laboured as an artisan. This is one of the reasons why praying over our work is very important. At every prayer of the faithful at Sunday and daily mass, an intention for our labours and enterprise should not be forgotten. It is becoming common nowadays in parishes to especially pray for the work of the week at morning masses on Mondays. This is good and should be continued.

(7) It is true that admonition and precepts are not enough. **Fellow Christians should help people find work.** Help encourage one another to participate in the temporal domain.

(8) **Stewards of creation.** God the creator has entrusted this world to his children (humanity) to care for and protect. After all, the original command in the second story of creation in Genesis 2 is "to till and cultivate the garden."

(9) **We are our brothers and sisters' keepers.** We cannot be silent in the midst of the pain and plights that our people are going through. We must challenge injustice and oppression. We must speak up in the faces of the structures that intimidate and silence our people.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing shows vividly that there is no doubt that priests and laypeople have a role to play in making this world a better place by animating it with the spirit of Christianity and the values of the gospel. The paper was written from the perspective of *Gaudium et Spes* (The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World). GS as the paper showed was the final document of the Second Vatican Council written amidst the turmoil and changes in the world of the 1960s. Amid these changes, the Catholic Church affirmed the value of human dignity and the common humanity of all people. She affirms human beings as social by nature and created by God. In human joys, hopes, and griefs, the Church identifies with humanity and carries the light of Christ to all humanity. In the truest sense, the Church is a pastor or shepherd to the world and

this is one reason why the Church addresses the document to all humanity and people of goodwill. Catholics and indeed all Christians should see their faith inspired by the prophetic social justice tradition of scripture and the liberatory message of Jesus as an impetus to engage in the temporal or earthly realms. They are not to set themselves apart from the world in terms of demarcating themselves into the sacristy but are to permeate the earthly realm with the spirit that comes from the sanctuary. Imbued by the Holy Spirit, the animating power of Christ, they should fill the world with the values of the gospel, thus they will act to transform or animate this world to become a better place, while on their pathway to the fullness of the kingdom to come.

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