

# **“GRATIALOLOGY”: TOWARDS AN EXISTENTIAL THEORY OF GRATITUDE ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SEMINARY FORMATION**

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## **Abstract**

*Gratialogy, is the discourse on gratitude, expresses greatly, the pertinence of the attitude of gratitude. This is quite apt, given the fact that in our world today, there is an increasing depreciation in the expression of gratitude among people. It is important to note that gratitude to God should not only be rendered in good times, but in bad times alike. St. Paul says in 1 Thess. 5:18 that “In all things, give thanks.” The idea of Gratialogy, therefore, introduces us to the undying importance of Gratitude in Seminary formation. We shall in this paper, apply it to humanity and the four areas of formation or as I like to call it, the Tetra-Inseparable Formative Process, which is the Human, the Spiritual, the Intellectual, and the Pastoral areas of Seminary formation. We shall learn through this paper how gratitude gives birth to people who are able to build good relationship with others, and with God. We will also be introduced to how gratitude equips one with good intellectual implements to ward off ignorance and build a stronger faith. This seeks to critically expose the human person in general and seminarians in particular on the need to be thankful at all times. The goal of this theological enterprise will be facilitated through the use of the expository method.*

**Key Words:** Implications, Gratitude, Thanksgiving, Seminary, Formation.

## A. INTRODUCTION

Experiences in human behaviours have shown that humans do not appreciate their values until they suffer the loss of any of them. A lot of studies and discussions have been done on several aspects of human life and behaviour with no favourable impact on the aspect of gratitude which has seemingly deteriorated in the contemporary times. The sad situation is that ingratitude is rearing its ugly head in a variety of ways, both overtly and covertly. The human person has been viewed and studied from several perspectives and across various disciplines. But here my aim is to bring to light an aspect that calls for attention and needs to be addressed. The context of our concern is about human values of Appreciation, Thanksgiving and Gratitude. This work attempts to examine and study elements of gratitude, appreciation and thankfulness.

The theory of Gratialogy is an attempt to view the human person from the perspective of thankfulness, appreciation and gratitude.

That is, examining the human person as an *appreciating being* or as beings that *appreciate*. Paul O'Callaghan beautifully describes this appreciative side of the human person in the book titled Eschatology as follows:

*Humans instinctively seek recognition, appreciation, acceptance, admiration, fame, love. They wish to be remembered, if possible, forever, by the people they lived with and loved, and even by those whom they never knew or met. Humans wish to be appreciated: they wish to be famous, albeit on a limited scale, although some are happy enough with being infamous, perhaps on a larger one. But nobody is willingly prepared to be neglected or forgotten. People wish to leave a mark in the memory of gods or humans for greater or lesser deeds and noble accomplishments they were responsible for.<sup>1</sup>*

Paul O'Callaghan, in the above, gives the better picture of the inherent drive or yearning for appreciation of the human person. It is in recognition of this inherent desire of the human person to be appreciated and extend the value of appreciation, that we propose the theory of Gratialogy in which we seek to expose and recommend the

value of the expression of this capacity of the human person to seek to be appreciated and to show appreciation as it will be expressed, here below:

### CONCEPTUAL ELUCIDATION

- **Thanks:** The word thank is a verb, to express gratitude or appreciation to someone.<sup>2</sup> While “thanks” is used not formally as an expression of appreciation or gratitude or an acknowledgment of services or favours given.<sup>3</sup>
- **Appreciation:** A feeling or expression of admiration, [approval](#), or gratitude.<sup>4</sup>
- **Gratitude:** Is a feeling of being thankful and appreciative, a feeling of thankful appreciation for favours or benefits received; thankfulness.<sup>5</sup>
- **Thanksgiving:** It is the expression of gratitude, especially to God. 'He offered prayers in thanksgiving for his safe arrival.'<sup>6</sup> From the above, it is clear that gratitude, appreciation and thanks are closely related and when it comes to thanksgiving it is offered most especially to God. However, we appreciate things and actions but you thank persons for their actions, you show appreciation for people's actions (to appreciate means to assess the value of something and state it, for example, I appreciate the fact that you came and I thank you for coming.<sup>7</sup>

### B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Gratitude convokes a high sense of emotions but sadly it is often neglected as this paper will further establish. It is neglected because it is often ignored and less attention is paid towards it. Psychologists offer little in this regard as even scholars in this field have not explored it in depths. The term *gratitude rarely* appears in the emotion lexicon. However, gratitude is a pleasant feeling about the favour received.<sup>8</sup>

In the Book, *Psychology of Gratitude* by Robert Emmons he traces the historical analysis of the idea of gratitude stating that as an idea gratitude has a long life span but relatively short when seen from its psychological perspective. While it has been appraised by Religious writers, very low attention have been paid to its emotional nature. It has been described as the most passionate transformative

force in the cosmos, the key that opens all doors, the quality that makes us and keeps us young. Breathnach opines that “whatever we are waiting for peace of mind, contentment, grace . . . it will surely come to us, but only when we are ready to receive it with an open and grateful heart.”<sup>9</sup>

Though there have been concerns about its status of emotion unlike anger, fear, or disgust, gratitude does not seem to qualify as a basic emotion. There is unlikely to be a biologically based universal facial expression for it or a unique physiology underlying it. Hence, when gratitude is not showed for favour received, especially on human level, there is usually a feeling of animosity that may follow from the giver of such favour.

Two scholars Bertocci & Millard, in their holds that Gratitude is an emotion, the core of which is pleasant feelings about the benefit received. At the heart of gratitude stands the idea of *undeserved merit*. The grateful person recognizes that he or she did nothing to deserve the gift or benefit; it was freely bestowed. This point is clearly reflected in one definition of gratitude as “the willingness to recognize the unearned increments of value in one's experience.”<sup>10</sup> Similarly, they both opine that the virtue of gratitude is the willingness to recognize that one has been the beneficiary of someone's kindness, whether the emotional response is present or not. They thus conceived of it as a “moral virtue-trait,” that leads a person to seek situations in which to express this appreciation and thankfulness.

Fitzgerald identifies three components of gratitude: (1) a warm sense of appreciation for somebody or something, (2) a sense of goodwill towards that person or thing, and (3) a disposition to act that flows from appreciation and goodwill. This shows that authentic gratitude flows from the heart that spurs the receiver of a favour to show appreciation for the good that has been received.<sup>11</sup>

In a Similar manner, Fritz Heider a social psychologist argued that people feel grateful when they have received a benefit from someone who (the beneficiary believes) intended to benefit them. This shows the nature of intentionality of the benefit received. Hence, Heider posited that the perceived intentionality of the benefit was the most important factor in determining whether someone felt grateful after receiving a benefit. He also predicted that situations in which a

benefactor calls on the beneficiary's *duty* to be grateful would produce the opposite effect. Moreover, Heider noted that beneficiaries prefer to have their gratitude attributed to internal motivations rather than extrinsic ones (for example, duty or social norm).<sup>12</sup> These expose us to the profundity of the virtue of gratitude.

### C. CONCEPT OF “GRATIALOGY”

The word 'Gratialogy' is a coinage from the Latin word 'gratias' and English suffix 'logy'. The word 'gratias' means thanks. The word 'gratias' is declined<sup>13</sup> in Latin gratia-ae (feminine) which in plural term means gratitude or the act of being thankful. It must be noted that the Latin word 'gratias' is translated as “thanks”<sup>14</sup> while 'gratia' is grace.<sup>15</sup> Gratitude, which rhymes with 'attitude', comes from the Latin word *gratus*, which means 'thankful, pleasing.' When you feel gratitude, you are pleased by what someone did for you and also pleased by the results.<sup>16</sup>

The English suffix “Logy” however, is from the Greek word 'λογος' (*logos*) which is derived from the verb 'λεγω' (*lego*) which means 'I say'. The word 'λογος' (*logos*) is a Greek word, a noun with numerous meanings. It could mean; thing, word, mind, wisdom, science, study, sayings or discourse. However, 'logy' means the science or study of any concept.<sup>17</sup> Can we then not have 'logy of gratia' that is, the study of gratitude, thankfulness and appreciation in order to rediscover the beauty of being grateful to God, mankind and all creatures? It is therefore pertinent to inquire into the nature of 'Gratialogy' that is, the study of gratitude. It is important to note that 'Gratialogy' is an exclusive coinage by the author generated from amalgamation of two words namely: “*gratias*” and “*logy*”.

Gratialogy, therefore, is the theory, discourse or study of gratitude, thanks or appreciation. In other words, it is a systematic study of gratitude, thanks and appreciation. In this way, words that shall be applied in this work are: thanks, gratitude and appreciation as they point to the human person as a being of gratitude; a grateful being, and an appreciative being. However, this work shall be expository and will draw strength from different disciplines to bring out the appreciating dimension of the human person. To this end, this work shall be using the following concepts: thanks or gratitude *Gratias*, Human Gratitude/Gratitude of the Human person

**Hominisgratias**, Thanks be to God **Deo Gratias**, the gratitude of the Church or Church's gratitude **Ecclesiae Gratias**, Gratitude by all **Gratiasab Omnibus** and The last gratitude or gratitude towards the end of time **Eschatological Gratias/gratias ad finem temporis**

## TYPES OF GRATITUDE

### 1. Man's Gratitude /Gratitude of the Human Person (*Hominis Gratias*<sup>18</sup>)

This is the gratitude of the human person. This is a kind of gratitude between human beings; thus, it is a courtesy and it is based on the nature of the human Person. It has to do with the tendency of the human person to seek to be appreciated and to offer appreciation for a kind deed done to him invariably by another human person. Just as the human person wants to be appreciated, so also, he should allow the desire in him from within to offer and share appreciation for being the beneficiary of the good deeds done to him by another. Any attempt not to reciprocate human good deeds in gratitude, is seen as a wrongdoing against humanity.

An example of human gratitude is what we have in the Bible when Adam saw Eve, he instantly exclaimed: “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man” (cf. Genesis 2:23). This means that Adam valued Eve as the bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh and he expressed his grateful heart in “...this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh...”. This in a sense, from the biblical point of view, could be called the *PRIMUS HOMINISGRATIAS*, the first gratitude of a human being. In our world today, what do we experience? Lack of gratitude! I will give some examples here to drive home my point of view.

**a. Family:** What do we experience in some families? Husbands killing wives and wives killing their husbands at an alarming rate, Children are not left out; some Children are using their parents for money! If the husband appreciates the wife with human gratitude this would not have surfaced in the first place.

**b. Places of work:** Even though, fingers are not equal, an employee deserves respect and needs to be appreciated by the employer. This will greatly increase the productivity of the individual and in turn, the firm or organization. There is no doubt that if men and women of our

age accept and practice the principle of human gratitude, there will be decrease in racism, tribalism, sectionalism, suicide and lack of respect for human dignity. This means that, the human gratitude has psychological, sociological, economic and even political effect on the human person.

**c. Political Office Holder:** In the political domain, if the elected is grateful to their electorate, they will definitely put their people at heart, not minding their own political agenda. Leaders elected to various positions ought to be up to the task and be responsible. This indicates that they appreciate their people whom they serve at various levels. This is why human gratitude is very important. Also, an aspect of great importance in this regard as far as women participation in politics is concerned, globally, women are under represented in politics and it is more pronounced in Nigeria.<sup>19</sup> This is a gender issue, and if Gratiology is applied to it, it would mean gender ungratefulness by which women are not given equal opportunity as their male folks. It is another form of ingratitude that needs to be addressed in the political arena. Still on the political ground, because of political instability in our world, migration has been in recent time inevitable. Even though migration is a ubiquitous reality, people move to another environment base on the place, utility and duration dependence because human beings constantly evaluate their ability to survive and thrive in specific environments.<sup>20</sup> To this effect, migration is greatly influenced through ingratitude, when one is not appreciated in a given environment, the person migrates to another place. This is to tell us how powerful the virtue of gratitude is.

## **2. Gratitude by All (*Gratiasab Omnibus*)**

This type of gratitude encompasses all living and non-living creatures. For instance, a dog is always appreciative of its owner who takes care of it. The dog appreciates its owner that gives food to it. On the other hand, all creatures can give thanks (both animate and inanimate) to God. This means that appreciation is not exclusive to men and women alone, some other creatures also have this power to appreciate. No wonder Mark Twain says, “if you pick up a starving dog and make it prosperous, it will not bite you. This is the principal difference between a dog and a human.”<sup>21</sup> This gratitude is seen in all creatures as they extend it towards God in all ramifications cf. Ps

148:1ff. The creatures daily extend their gratitude to God every morning as a cock will wake with a crow as early as 4:00am. The leaves will dance in thanksgiving to God with the early morning breeze. The birds will sing in whistles and we can observe the dog also wake to stretch in the morning as a respect to the creator of all things. These are expressions of Gratitude in various forms either from an animal to the human person or from the human person to creatures that are not rational beings. Human gratitude is also part of all gratitude but the dividing line is that human gratitude is particularly human while all gratitude is in different dimensions of thankfulness expressed by various categories of being.

### **3. Thanks be to God (*Deo Gratias*<sup>22</sup>)**

This simply means thanks be to God. It is an expression of gratitude to God for His providence, intervention and mercy. Interestingly, its expression is not restricted to human persons; the rational being. It is rather the one all creatures extend to God almighty. This is the highest form of gratitude in this world, because it is the unity of both Human gratitude and all gratitude. It is based on the fact that we consider God as our origin that is why the question of whether God exists or not is not a matter of debate in Gratialogy, because Gratialogy verifies the notion that God exists based on the fact that we believe in Him and our belief is strong. It is popularly said that without dreams we reach nothing, without love we feel nothing, without God we are nothing or we do not achieve the fulness of our being. The aim of Gratialogy is to cultivate authentic gratitude to God, fellow human beings and all creatures, St. Leo the Great deepens our understanding of thanks to be God by all creatures and tells us how the Creator must be thanked in a special way by the intelligent creation when he says:

*...Dear friends, at every moment the earth is full of the mercy of God, and nature itself is a lesson for all the faithful in the worship of God. The heavens, the sea and all that is in them bear witness to the goodness and omnipotence of their Creator; and the marvelous beauty of the elements as they obey him demands from the intelligent creation a fitting expression of its gratitude...*<sup>23</sup>

In this light, we call “*Deo gratias*” the highest gratitude. In an attempt to give unceasing thanks to God, there comes the Church's gratitude *Ecclesiae Gratias* or the gratitude of the Church because this gratitude is directed towards God. In the light of this, Gratialogy brings to the general; public men and women who had appreciated and are still thanking God in their lives and exposes the way the Church gives thanks to God also.

4. The Last gratitude (*Eschatological Gratias*), *Gratias ad finem temporis*<sup>24</sup>

Gratitude at the end of time: According to Daley Brian, Eschatology is a word with different meanings. Essentially as religious doctrine, about “last things” an ordered doctrine of the “last things” such as personal expectation of final justice and retribution; a person longing for rest and satisfaction in a new life that will begin at death.<sup>25</sup>

One of these mutual self-giving between creator and creature is this type of this gratitude, *eschatological gratias*. The basic fact about eschatology is the fact that it is the hope which lies ahead. Applying it to Gratialogy, it is the gratitude that lies ahead. Christian life is always eschatological and of course, human life is always in hope of something to come. To this effect, Karl Barth says: “Christianity that is not entirely and altogether Eschatological has entirely nothing to do with Christ.”<sup>26</sup> Eschatology is the final state of Christology as Daley Brian noted.<sup>27</sup> J. Moltmann makes us to understand how eschatological outlook is characteristic of Christian faith when he said:

*The eschatological is not one element of Christianity, but it is the medium of Christian faith... Hence, eschatology cannot really be only a part of Christian doctrine. Rather, the eschatological outlook is characteristic of Christian proclamation, of every Christian existence and of the whole Church.*<sup>28</sup>

Naturally, if a gift is given to a person and that person uses it judiciously, what do you think that the owner will do? Will he not say bravo!? God is not an ingrate, and if life is a gift from God, and it is used for the purpose of which God created it, God will definitely thank the person. This is the first form of *eschatological gratias* on

the part of God. In fact, one could say it is an indispensable work of God at the end of time. The scripture gives us a clearer view of the first part of *eschatological gratias* in the parable of the talents in the Gospel of Matthew 25:14 -30; where those who used the talents were told well done. From the passage, it is clear that God will thank us first at the end of our lives, if we have lived a life that is in accordance with the purpose for which he created us. The appreciative word used in the passage above in Greek is *εὖ* an adverb which means “**Well done**” which could be used for do good, show kindness, do well, act rightly.<sup>29</sup> “Well Done” is used as a way of praising someone and saying that you are pleased about and approve of something they have *done*. It is used to express congratulations or approval. “Well done—you have worked very hard!” In fact, we see this clearly in Jesus Christ, as man, he thanked the Father (cf. Mt 11:25, Lk: 19:17)

#### **HOW TO BE GRATEFUL**

A wise man once said, “the greatest problem of an atheist is, who to give thanks to.” This is because they experience and enjoys the daily miracles of life, and other events which they know, could not have been done by a force not higher than themselves. But because they have conditioned themselves to not believe in the ultimate force (God) they condition themselves also not to give thanks to that force, as a corollary effect of their unbelief. Indeed, what a torture! The problem of who to give thanks to sometimes leaves the way for the problem of how to give thanks. As a guide through the second problem, we shall be examining three ways from these five ways in which we could be grateful.

1. By Words
2. By Usage of the Received Gift
3. By Being content with the Received Gift
4. By giving gift also
5. By rendering Assistance

#### **THE AIM AND NEED FOR GRATITUDE AS A WAY OF LIFE**

The aim of Gratialogy is to give a study of the human person in relation to God “anthropo-theological” analysis of the nature of men and women as an appreciative being. Consequently, it will 'appreciate' appreciation in the attempt to expose the human person as

a being that gives thanks. To this effect, Gratialogy shall teach humanity to say “Thank you” in an authentic way. However, it must be noted that authentic gratitude is not only based on the presupposition of 'Thank You, Ma or Sir', it goes beyond that.

Attitude of gratitude, as a problem-solving tool, avails the human person the opportunity to resolve some existential problems of the human person that makes him to reject himself, others or things around him. For instance, low self-esteem, suicide, abortion, enthronement of relativism, colonialism, racism, oppression of the weak and so on, in human existence. If we live in this authentic relationship of gratitude with one another there is no doubt that our perception will change for better in our personal and interpersonal relationships and with ecology, we will benefit from gratitude. If we appreciate nature and the environment, there is no doubt that nature too would be nice to humanity. This is why the attitude of gratitude is a must in this life.

### **A PRACTICAL DIMENSION OF GRATIALOLOGY: GRATIALOLOGY AS SOLUTION TO SOME HUMAN PROBLEMS**

When we live a life of gratitude, we will come to understand gratitude in itself as a tool to solving fundamental human problems in our contemporary society some of which include:

**1. Suicide:** Gratialogy takes into consideration the pitiable condition of suicide that is on the increase in our world. From statistics, an estimated one million people in the world die by suicide every year.

Globally, suicide ranks among the three leading causes of death among those aged fifteen to forty-four years (15-44years). However, incidence of suicide in a society depends on a range of factors, clinical depression, substance abuse, gender differences, religion(atheist), race and sexual orientation, social factors (unemployed, poverty, divorced, the childless), season (during the winter holidays) trends health (depression, substance abuse, obese persons) and suicide attempts are up to 20 times more frequently than suicides.<sup>30</sup> According to WHO account of suicide on 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2021 records: more than 700, 000 people die due to suicide every year, for

every suicide there are many more people who attempt suicide. A prior suicide attempt is the single most important risk factor for suicide in the general population. Ingestion of pesticide, hanging and firearms are among the most common methods of suicide globally.<sup>31</sup> Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Okami's article on suicide 13<sup>th</sup> January 2019 gives the following insight and solution to suicide:

- I. *Everyone is going through one crisis or the other. Fr Emmanuel is also facing his own storms. So, you are not alone please. Life is a blend of joyful and sorrowful mysteries*
- II. *When there is life there is hope. If anyone is justified to commit suicide, I think the biblical Joseph son of Jacob should. He was hated by brothers, sold, worked as a slave, when things seemed to be taking shape, then the Potipher's wife saga came and then prison followed, but all along he didn't drink poison and thank God he didn't...*
- III. *Learn to share your storms with people who can help you, don't bottle up, open up to people with faith, right reason and wisdom.*
- IV. *Suicide is selfishness: consider your parents, family, friends and the sorrow your departure will bring. Consider those who might benefit from your life later on.*
- V. *To terminate one's life doesn't put an end to misery, it "most likely" opens an eternal chapter of endless misery. You can't take a life you didn't create and expect the giver of life to welcome you peacefully at a time He isn't even expecting you. You can't ruin God's plan for you and be "confident" that your soul will find rest with God.<sup>32</sup>*

This is the reason why we must not despair because the life that offers

difficulties in one way or the other also offers hope because when there is life there is hope. As Roger Scruton's noted "happiness is directed, in the sense that one's life and circumstances provide the reason and not just the cause of one's state".<sup>33</sup> In other words, for the fact that one exists is enough reason to be grateful and happy in respective of one's situation. Hence, no need for suicide in any situation!

**2. Racism:** Racism is a very deadly virus which is affecting the human race, a situation whereby people see others as inferior, and this is eating us up gradually. Considering the psychological implications of racism in our contemporary world, it is clear that racism is a problem of humanity. For examples, the famous speech of Martin Luther King Jr. "I have a dream" gives us the reality that racism needs to be addressed. Martin Luther King Jr says:

...I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream...I have a dream that one day in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today...I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low. The rough places will be made plain; all the crooked places will be made straight. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together...<sup>34</sup>

Racism is a global issue which is evident in different areas of life.

In History, racism has been demonstrated with a lot of ill-treatments from races who thought of being superior to another race(s). The reason why Gratialogy is coming in to address this inhuman act is to see how the human person can be appreciated with deep gratitude irrespective of their: gender, colour, tribe or race. In acknowledging this, we can see from the lens of Dr Martin Luther

King Jr. of his dream where our world can live in harmony, love and peace. To this effect, this expresses the sociological dimension of Gratialogy and we can now have a world that appreciates.

**3. Psychological Challenges:** There are lots of psychological challenges that can give us enough reasons to give thanks and understand that nothing of this world is permanent. Particularly, when we come to understand the hand of the good God in such situations, we can then say we have accepted the situation which brings inner joy and peace.

**Self-Acceptance:** I saw some comments on the Facebook concerning the beauty industry about how women beautify themselves with artificial features with an application called “selfie editor, Photo filter, Beauty Camera and face tune's Post”. So, a lady commented “the heart goes out the window now in our days. It is not enough to just be a good woman. You must have a big bootie, big boobs, curves, and perfect face. The whole package”. Another lady commented I am fearfully and wonderfully made and I thank God for that... loving myself the way I am I will never do such. Another lady commented: I'm grateful for the way I am, I don't need fillers or implants to enhance my body parts, I love myself way too much to have complications later on in life trying to appeal to and please others, foreign objects do not define me I do....”. Human being needs to understand that self-acceptance is equal to self-appreciation.

**4. Family Challenges:** There are lots of problems facing the family. The fact is that there is no perfect family. There is no gainsaying that every family has one or two challenges to face. Challenges can either be from the father, the mother, the children, the extended family or even the neighbourhood. But then, if the husband and the wife extend an appreciative way of life and an acceptance of others with a firm foundation on love, the family can weather the storms of life. It is very sad to realize that husband and wife cannot live together in unity, accept individual differences and weaknesses as well. In the area of unfaithfulness to marital vows, there is a danger of murder from either party of the spouses. When this kind of reality sets in, murder is not the solution but forgiveness is necessary and separation is

inevitable so to avoid murder. Spouses who result to poisoning, or stabbing to death either of the spouses have not given a prudent and courageous judgement of the situation. Murder, poisoning and stabbing are not the solutions to violations of marital vows. Respect of the life of the unfaithful spouse ought to be top priority. Thus, appreciating the spouse's life and hoping on action of Grace that can change the unfaithful to a faithful person. Today's Saul can be changed to tomorrow's Paul. Today's Peter who denies can cry for the three-fold denial. Murder therefore is not and can never be the solution.<sup>35</sup> Having exposed the aim purpose of Gratialogy, let us examine its relevance to Seminary formation.

#### **D. “GRATIALOGY”: TOWARDS AN EXISTENTIAL THEORY OF GRATITUDE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SEMINARY FORMATION**

##### **Priestly Vocation**

The word vocation is from the Latin word *Vocare* which means 'to call'. This meaning is the one that calls one to the state of discipleship. In this case, one is called to become another Christ. This call has to be answered within a context and space. To this effect, St. Pope John Paul II in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* stated that “seminary in its different forms and analogously the house of formation for religious priests, more than a place, a material space, should be a way of life, an atmosphere that fosters and ensures a process of formation...” he went further to state that “...so that the person who is called to the priesthood by God may become with the sacrament of Orders, a living image of Jesus, the Head and Shepherd of the Church.”<sup>36</sup> Following from the statement of Pope John Paul II, one is able to know that the seminary is where the vocation to the priesthood is nurtured to maturity, so that the one called may fully become another Christ and imitate Him in the life of those who are placed under his care.

##### **Seminary Formation**

The seminary is the consequence of the Council of Trent. Seminary, just as seen above, is where those who felt the call to live the life of the celibate priesthood are nurtured to maturity.<sup>37</sup> A theological seminary (*grand séminaire*) provides courses in Holy Scripture, philosophy,

theology and so on to give young men the needed qualities and requirement in preparation for priestly ministry.<sup>38</sup> In a nutshell, the seminary formation focus on the training of future priests in four core areas; Human, Spiritual Intellectual and Pastoral what I have described as “tetra-inseparable formative process.” These areas of formation are indeed good and useful for forming candidates for the priesthood in its synthesis and none of these parts should be neglected as if it were unimportant.

And in *Pastores Dabo Vobis* of Pope John Paul II numbers 42 to 59 the four areas of Priestly Formation as follows: (1) Human Formation, the Basis of All Priestly Formation, (2) Spiritual Formation, in communion with God and Search of Christ, (3) Intellectual Formation, Understanding the Faith, and (4) Pastoral Formation, Communion with the charity of Jesus Christ the Good Shepherd.<sup>39</sup> Let us now look at the implication of Gratialogy for each part of seminary formation.

From the perspective of human formation, the importance of gratitude in our relationship with others and the environment gave rise to the discipline called psychology of gratitude, a discipline in positive psychology which deals with the examination of the necessity of the expression of gratitude and the need to continuously avoid acts which obstructs gratitude. This form of appreciation seeks not to exploit gifts or the giver's desire to give, but appreciates it. In human formation, gratitude is important because one who is properly humanly formed expresses gratitude to God for his life and the grace to be called by God. This appreciation helps seminarians to accept other persons in seminary as gifts to him in the journey to be formed properly. Hence, gratitude in human formation helps to improve community spirit, fraternity, solidarity and so on. To this effect, human formation will be enhanced through gratitude

Spiritually, gratitude is horizontal and vertical. In the vertical dimension, it is '*nothing* theocentric' that is God's center. At this point, we must always bear in mind that human person is nothing and has nothing without God. In the words of John the Apostle, “*a man can receive unless given him from heaven*” (*John 3:27*). Gratitude in Spiritual formation seeks to make interesting and lively, the relationship of the Seminarian with God. Here we are asked questions such as: What is seminarian's disposition to prayers? What is his

attitude to Spiritual Direction? How often does he visit the Confessional? Does he pray outside the compulsory prayer times? What is his disposition to our pious society or societies?

In a nutshell, this is the appreciation of the spiritual aspect of the human person which is very important in the life of a seminarian who will later become a man of God. A priest is a Man of God. A man of God, who does not know God, knows neither himself nor God who he claims to serve. We must also be reminded of those sublime words of St. Jerome “ignorance of the Scripture is ignorance of Christ.” Applying gratitude to spiritual formation give rise to appreciation of things concerning God by the seminarian. In fact, for a spiritual seminarian, in activating his spirituality all activities carried out is always in communion and encounter with God.

Intellectually, It is also the character of a grateful person to explore the gifts given. Intelligence, retentive memory, rationality, wisdom and so on are all gifts of God to humanity by which we secure the ability to make meaning out of our environment. A rejection of the desire to read, to acquire reasonable knowledge, is in itself a rejection of these gifts which is equal to ingratitude.

The priest is entrusted with a lot of trust. His words are seen as the word of God. He must therefore read enough to be on the godlike level of intelligence. He must be well grounded with philosophical and theological knowledge, so that through his speeches and homilies, people may come to a clearer understanding of God. This can never be over-emphasized since a seminarian will eventually one day by God's grace become a priest, he needs to be well informed intellectually.

Seminarians must learn to appreciate their various gifts with regards to intellect. It is not just enough to read to understand or 'cram', write and pass examinations for seminarians. They must go further to teach others, to break down the jargons of specific courses that others may understand and to assist that brother who they know needs your help. 'Publish or perish' says Rev. Fr. Prof. Pantaleon Iroegbu. A seminarian must pick up the attitude of writing. So many great theologians and philosophers of our time fail to publish hence their intellectual eloquence are only experienced when they speak. Seminarians must learn to make good records of their intellectual gifts that through it God may speak to generations hundreds of years to come.

In the area pastoral formation, the virtue of gratitude has a lot to offer in the pastoral formation of the seminarians. Since they will become pastors in the future they need to be well graded in pastoral activity. The pastoral dimension of formation is the care for souls according to the Heart of Jesus and Church's mind. In this, the Seminarians reach out to souls through visiting the sick, feeding other seminarians that are less privilege and so on.

In conclusion, judging from the above, it is clear enough that the virtue of gratitude is very important in priestly formation. One cannot underrate the positive impacts of gratitude in formation. To this end, Gratialogy has a lot to offer in priestly formation by which a seminarian can become truly human, authentically spiritual, intellectually sound and pastorally minded through the daily cultivation of the virtue of gratitude.

#### ENDNOTES

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- 3 'Thanks' accessed September 15, 2021, Thesaurus.com <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/thank>
- 4 'Appreciation' accessed September 15, 2021 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/appreciation>
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- 6 'Thanksgiving' accessed September, 15, 2021 <https://www.google.com/search?q=Thanksgiving+meaning+&client=opera&hs=XuF&sxsrf=ALeKk03eXVJV67K>
- 7 Cf. Bishop Godfrey I Onah, “*the Word, Appreciate*” explaining the difference between thanking and appreciating. May 14<sup>th</sup> 2021.
8. Robert Emmons & Michael McCulloch, (eds), *The Psychology of Gratitude*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 12
- 9 S.B, Breathnach, *The Simple abundance Journal of Gratitude*, (New York: Warner, 1996), 28
- 10 Bertocci, P.A., & Millard, R. M., *Personality and the good: Psychological and ethical perspectives*. (New York: David McKay, 1963, 389).

- 11 Fitzgerald, P. Gratitude and justice. *Ethics* 1998, 109, 119–153.
- 12 Heider, F., *The psychology of interpersonal relations*. (New York: Wiley, 1998) 35.
- 13 In the grammar of Latin, Greek and certain other languages the variation of the form of a noun, pronoun or adjective, by which its grammatical case, Number and gender are identified is called declension
- 14 Cora Carrooll Scanlon and Charles L. Scanlon, *Second Latin: for the Reading of Philosophy, Theology and Canon Law* (Rockford, TAN Books Publishers, 1976), 247. (The Latin course explains further that *gratia*, feminine is grace, thankfulness: *gratis*, Free; *gratiarumactio*, thanksgiving; *gratias agree*, to give thanks)
- 15 Cora Carrooll Scanlon and Charles L. Scanlon, *Latin Grammar*, 250.
- 16 What is the Latin Word of gratitude? accessed September, 13, 2021, <https://www.google.com/search?client=opera&q=what+is+the+latin+vocabulary+for+gratitude&sourceid=opera&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>  
<https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/gratitude>
- 17 Walked, *The New International Webster's*, 749.
- 18 The literary translation of *hominisgratias* is Man's gratitude
- 19 Gregory EbaluOgbenika and Mordecai Aleoghena, “*Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti And women Political Participation in Nigeria*” An African Philosophical Inquiry: An Independent Forum for the Exchange of Ideas in Philosophy and Allied Areas, (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 2020), 1.
- 20 Eric Trinka, “If you will only Remain in this land: Migration Decision making and Jeremiah as a Religiously Motivated Nonmover”: The Catholic Biblical Quarterly (Vol. 80, No.4/October, Washington, Dc: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2018) 583.
- 21 Robert a. Emmons, Michael e. Mccullough, ed, *Psychology of Gratitude*, Oxford University Press, 2004, 214.
- 22 The literary translation of Deogratias is “I give thanks to God” and in fact, in Classical Latin, the word *gratias* connotes I do thanks. Let us do thanks “*gratiasagamus*”, “*gratiasagimustibi*” we give you thanks. And *gratias dare* means to give thanks.

#### **A Further Historical Background on DeoGratias**

Deogratias is used in answer to the [Ite, missaest](#) (*Go forth the Mass is Ended*) and the [Benedicamus Domino](#) (*Let us bless the Lord*), in thanksgiving for the graces received at Mass. The formula *Deogratias* was used in extra-liturgical prayers and customs by the Christians of all ages. The [rule of St. Benedict](#) prescribes that the doorkeeper shall say

*Deogratias*, as often as a stranger knock at the door or a beggar asks for assistance. When [St. Augustine](#) announced to the people the election of his coadjutor and successor [Evodius](#), they called out *Deogratias* thirty-six times.

- 23 In [Africa](#) it was the salutation used by the Catholics to distinguish themselves from the [Donatists](#) who said *Deolaudes* (Praise God) instead. Therefore, in Africa, *Deogratias* was used as a Catholic given name. For example, [St. Deogratias](#), Bishop of Carthage (r. 453–456), the name of the deacon for whom St. Augustine wrote his treatise *De catechizandis rudibus* was also called *Deogratias*. Also, [Felix of Cantalice](#) (1515–1587) used this interjection so often that the people called him "Brother *Deogratias*".
- 24 *Deo gratias* is Latin for "thanks be to God". It is a [response](#) in the [Latin Mass](#), derived from the [Vulgate](#) text of [1 Corinthians 15:57](#) and [2 Corinthians 2:14](#). cf. “*Deogratias*” accessed September 30, 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deo\\_gratias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deo_gratias)
- 25 Cf. Office of Readings Sermon by Saint, Leo the Great Pope: “Purification of Spirit through Fasting and Almsgiving”
- 26 *Gratias ad finem temporis* literary means Gratitude towards the end of time.
- 27 Daley Brian, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology*. (Peabody, Michigan: Baker Academy, 2010,) 1.
- 28 K. Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, (London: Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989), 314. Cited in Joseph Komonchak (et.al), *The New Dictionary of Theology*, USA: Gill and Macmillan Publication, 1987), 329.
- 29 Brian, *The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology*, 2.
- 30 J Moltmann, *The Theology of Hope*, (London: S.C.M Press, 1967,) 16. Cited in Joseph Komonchak (et.al), *The New Dictionary of Theology*, (USA: Gill and Macmillan Publication, 1987), 329.
- 31 Cf. BibleWorks8 ε adverb; *fine, well, good*; (1) absolutely *well done! excellent!* (MT 25.21); (2) ε πρ σσειν *do well, act correctly* (Acts 15.29); (3) ε ποιε v *benefit, help, do good* (MK 14.7)
- 32 “How many persons commit suicide annually” accessed May 25, 2020, <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki>
- 33 “World health Organization Detail of Suicide 17 June 2021” accessed June 17, 2021 <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/suicide>
- 24 Emmanuel Okami, Reflection on suicide, “*I want to commit suicide*”,

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- 25 Scruton, "Happiness", Cited in Tom, Angier. "Happiness Overcoming the Skill Mode", *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 55, No.1 (USA: International Philosophical Quarterly, 2015): 15.
  - 26 "Martin Luther King, Jr.: I Have a Dream" in Washington DC 1963, accessed May 28, 2020, [https://www.google.com/search?q=i+ahve+a+dream&oq=i+ahve+a+dream+&aqs=chrome.69i57j0l5.5578j0j7&sourceid=chrome&es\\_sm=93&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=i+ahve+a+dream&oq=i+ahve+a+dream+&aqs=chrome.69i57j0l5.5578j0j7&sourceid=chrome&es_sm=93&ie=UTF-8)
  - 27 Cf. Peter Ajayi Wojuaye, *Gratialogy: Towards an Existential Theory of Gratitude*, (Benin City: Floreat Systems, 2021) 1-33.
  - 28 Pope John Paul II, *Apostolic Exhortation 'PastoresDaboVobis' I Will Give you shepherd*, (Vatican: St Paul Publications Africa, 1992) No. 42.
  - 29 Viéban, A. (1912). Ecclesiastical Seminary. In The Catholic Encyclopedia. New York: Robert Appleton Company. Retrieved April 26, 2010 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13694a.htm>.
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