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Using the Methodology of Liberation Theology, "See, Judge, And Act," to Analyze the Effects of Domestic Violence on Women in India, Recognize the Holy Spirit's Presence in Victims, and Use Liturgy to Enable the Holy Spirit to Stir the Hearts of the Faithful, Prompting them to Respond to the Domestic Abuse Crisis.

Velenson Gomes

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A Thesis by

Velenson Gomes

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Paul Janowiak, S.J, Director Date

Dr. Mary McGann, R.S.C.J, Reader Date

#### **Abstract**

The Second Council's reforms directed at full and active participation in the liturgy are not limited to the reform of the Church's celebrations and rites. What is also required is a further engagement of the Church in the world in order to address the problematic social realities that impede the realization of what the liturgy promises and represents. One particular social reality in need of such analysis and engagement is domestic abuse, and this paper seeks to address that issue within the context of India. To gain a better understanding of the problem, first, a survey of the roots and causes of domestic abuse within India is offered, with a focus on the historical role of gender in India. Next, this paper proposes the Gospel pericope of the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-42) as a basis for examining cycles of abuse that trap women within oppressive systems. This exegesis, along with Paul's address of trauma (Romans 8), serves as the foundation for examining how the Holy Spirit is at work in the lives of Indian women subject to abuse. Above all, these passages point to how a living Church is guided by the Holy Spirit and prompts us with ever-hopeful ways forward while also demanding how the Church may better listen to the voices of the voiceless. Such promptings are connected to the liturgy, and so the homily, in particular, is examined as a way of both illuminating and confronting the harms of domestic abuse. Finally, a specific case of interreligious liturgy that addresses the problem more holistically is proposed as a practical way of addressing abuse in India.

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## Introduction

In the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, 'Sacrosanctum Concilium,' the Second Vatican Council declares that the 'liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time, it is the font from which all her power flows." This statement suggests that the work and duties of a Christian ought to reflect the inspiration that one derives from the liturgy. Undoubtedly, this encyclical demands the full and active participation of the Christians in the sacred liturgy. But realizing that full and active participation in the liturgy implies full and active participation in the social mission of the church, that is, addressing the social realities of the world was not possible without addressing the social realities of the world, the Church also takes into consideration the social contexts that affect the faithful, and thus, in the succeeding conciliar documents and encyclicals, it addressed contemporary social evils explicitly. The encyclical 'Evangelium Vitae' by Pope John Paul II states, "If, at the end of the last century, the Church could not be silent about the injustices of those times, still less can she be silent today, when the social injustices of the past, unfortunately not yet overcome, are being compounded in many regions of the world by still more grievous forms of injustice and oppression, even if these are being presented as elements of progress in view of a new world order." The Church came to realize that only in addressing human issues can it fully participate in the divinity of Christ.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), par. 10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Pope John Paul II, *The Gospel of Life* (United States Catholic Conference, 1995), 7, par. 5.

Liturgy, no doubt, ought to be the center of a Christian community, but at the same time, it cannot neglect the larger community and the status quo that it is bound to. Christian faith involves concretely living out Christ's values of love, faith, and hope, and often, the larger society may not conform to the values. The Holy Spirit, an active agent of Christian liturgy, pushes the faithful to go beyond the confines of the Christian faith. It is here that these values are actualized through the works of social justice. Walter Burghardt rightly says, "Only by drawing together, liturgist and social reformers can the 'body of Christ move more effectively from the Church to the world, from altar to people, from Christ crucified on Calvary to Christ crucified at the crossroad of our earth." Christian life reaches its potential when Christ is worshiped in the liturgy and is lived out through the social actions directed by his bride, the Church.

To this purpose, the homily is a crucial and important part of a liturgical celebration, particularly the Eucharist. It also carries a unique responsibility to call the faithful to action. As the preacher proclaims the word of God, he or she challenges the congregation to embrace the teachings of Christ and live them out in their daily lives. In doing so, the homily becomes a conduit for the "redemptive and creative word of God," inspiring believers to participate actively in the mission of the Church and contribute to the building of God's kingdom on earth. Thus, the homily becomes a point where liturgy and social justice meet.

In this thesis, I employ a comprehensive approach, integrating historical analysis, theological reflection, and practical engagement to address the pressing issue of domestic

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Anne Y. Koester, *Liturgy, and Justice: To Worship God in Spirit and Truth* (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 2002), xi.

violence. Drawing inspiration from the methodology of "Seeing, Judging, and Acting," <sup>4</sup> I delve into the profound effects of domestic violence on women in India, examining its prevalence, causes, and consequences through a critical lens. Rooted in a commitment to social justice and the inherent dignity of all human beings, liberation theology serves as a guiding framework, urging us to confront systemic injustices and work toward the liberation of the oppressed. Central to this exploration is the recognition of the Holy Spirit's presence within the victims of domestic violence, irrespective of their religious, caste, or racial backgrounds. As an agent of divine grace and empowerment, the Holy Spirit infuses courage, resilience, and hope into the hearts of those who suffer, calling forth a response of solidarity, compassion, and action.

Furthermore, in my paper, I seek to harness the transformative power of liturgy as a sacred space for encountering the Holy Spirit and stirring the hearts of the faithful.

Through prayer, reflection, and communal worship, liturgy becomes a spark for spiritual renewal and collective action, enabling individuals to respond authentically to the domestic abuse crisis with compassion, empathy, and advocacy.

In the first chapter, I dwell on the history of India, tracing the roots of patriarchy and its insidious impact on women's lives. Drawing upon historical insights and sociological analyses, this chapter seeks to unravel the complex web of social, cultural, and economic factors that perpetuate gender-based inequalities and contribute to the prevalence of domestic violence. I also draw insights from a study by the 'Indian Journal of Community Medicine' to analyze the various aspects of this problem.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Jon Sobrino and Ignacio Ellacuria, *Systematic Theology: Perspectives from Liberation Theology* (ORBIS, 2015), 11.

In the second chapter, I pivot towards a theological exploration of the suffering and abuse endured by women through the lens of pneumatology. Using the Samaritan women in John's gospel as an example, I focus on the transformative presence of the Spirit of God, who breathes life, hope, and resilience into the midst of suffering and trauma.

In the third chapter, as a response to the domestic abuse crisis, I use the liturgy to sensitize the hearts of the people and provide a ground for the Holy Spirit to stir the hearts of the people. With an emphasis on the homily as the bridge between liturgy and social justice, I explore how liturgical practices and rituals can sensitize the hearts of the faithful and provide a ground for the Holy Spirit to stir hearts toward action. In the second half of this chapter, I provide an interreligious liturgy that can sensitize the people to the cry of the voiceless.

In my thesis, I endeavor to weave together historical analysis, theological reflection, and practical engagement to sensitize the hearts and enable the Spirit to work in the people's lives. Even though the issue of domestic abuse is complex and requires enormous efforts, sensitizing the hearts of the people and making them aware of the evil this issue entails is the first step in the long journey of eradicating domestic abuse.

## **Chapter 1: Domestic Violence in India**

With its rich cultural heritage and diverse population, India stands as a paradox where tradition intertwines with modernity. This vast nation is home to various traditions, languages, religions, and customs, each contributing in its way to the cultural mosaic. A history spanning thousands of years and a myriad of influences from various civilizations have added to the nation's vibrancy. Thus, it is not surprising that women in India are often described as having two contrasting aspects. "In a region famous for goddesses with multiple visages, identities, and functions, the first facade is of the serene, primordial mother Great Goddess (Devi), Primal Energy (Shakti), and Nature (Prakriti), a gentle boon-giver who also slays demons. The other is the clouded face of the domestic handmaiden trailing behind men in life expectancy, nutrition, health, education, pay, and other rights on the subcontinent." However, behind this colorful portrayal lies a complex reality of women. A few women have made a mark on Indian society, while a majority of the women have been the victims of gender, caste, and class inequalities.

Despite the country's celebration of technological achievement and economic growth, there exists a reality where one in three women is likely to experience physical, emotional, and sexual violence from their intimate partner. Within the confines of the household, a woman in India continues to endure the agony of abuse from her husband and family members. According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) conducted from 2019 to 2021, 29.3% of married women between the ages of 18 and 49 have faced domestic or sexual violence. While the legislative framework from the government for

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Sita Raman, *Women in India: A Social and Cultural History, Volume 1* (Santa Barbara, Calif: Praeger, 2009), xi.

the protection of women exists, the cultural attitude of the patriarchal society becomes a barrier against its effective implementation.

In any society, the sick, children, and women suffer the most. In liberation theology, Clodovis Boff, while broadening the notion of 'The poor,' writes, "The poor are far more grievously oppressed when, besides being poor, they are black, Indian, woman, or elderly." The starting point of liberation theology is 'the poor.' If one were to theologize and use its method (to see, judge, and act), there ought to be an exploration of 'the poor' and, in this context, the women and their social and cultural status in India. Only in understanding the complex culture around women in India can one attain the first step of seeing this social evil for what it really is.

In this chapter, I delve into the historical perspective of how women were viewed in Indian society, tracing the trajectory from the ancient Indus Valley civilization to modern India. In exploring the history of India and the impact of patriarchy, I employ the first method of liberation theology: "Seeing." I start by exploring Hindu culture during the Indus Valley civilization, examining its portrayal of women and its connection to the worship of female deities. The written literature, theology, and teachings of patriarchy during this era significantly influenced the treatment of women in society.

With the introduction of Islam, India witnessed a diversification of societal views on women. Muslim rulers brought their perspectives, contributing to the evolving landscape of gender roles. However, their reign was eventually supplanted by British

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Sobrino and Ellacuria, *Systematic Theology*, 32. Clodovis Boff talks about the poor in the context of Western countries, and when he refers to 'Indians,' he refers to the natives of America. Indians here should not be mistaken for India, in Asia.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Sobrino and Ellacuria, *Systematic Theology*, 11.

colonial rule, which imposed European-influenced rules and regulations. The Portuguese and British colonization also introduced Christianity, albeit with limited impact, primarily confined to small Portuguese colonies.

Throughout these periods of cultural exchange and colonial domination, patriarchy remained a dominant force, dictating the terms and conditions for women in society. Even as India gained independence, remnants of patriarchal structures persisted, shaping the socio-cultural landscape of modern India.

## 1.1 Women in Ancient Indian Culture

Religion has hugely impacted the view of women in Indian culture. The 2011 Indian census revealed Hinduism as the dominant religion, with 79.8% of the population identifying as Hindu. Muslims were the second largest religious group, with 14.2% of the population, followed by Christians, Sikhs, and Jains.<sup>8</sup> Hinduism has greatly impacted the culture of India, and even though India is home to many religions, Hinduism has penetrated into the daily lives of its citizens.

Hinduism, as a religion, like any other religion, developed over time. Though the history of Hinduism is complex, many historians suggest that certain aspects of Hinduism are rooted in the Indus Valley Civilization. The earliest evidence of goddess worship is from a "Paleolithic Age shrine to fertility in Baghor, central India (ca. 9000 BCE)." The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> According to the census data of 2011 on <a href="http://censusindia.gov.in">http://censusindia.gov.in</a>, Total Population in 2011 is 121.09 crores; Hindu 96.63 crores (79.8%); Muslim 17.22 crores (14.2%); Christian 2.78 crores (2.3%); Sikh 2.08 crores (1.7%); Buddhist 0.84 crores (0.7%); Jain 0.45 crores (0.4%), Other Religions & Persuasions (ORP) 0.79 crores (0.7%) and Religion Not Stated 0.29 crores (0.2%).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Raman, *Women in India*, 3. The site consists of a rubble platform with triangular natural stone resembling the womb of the goddess, who was later called 'Yoni.'

Indus Valley civilization also gives a glimpse of ancient Hinduism<sup>10</sup> and becomes a source for the studies of cultural components that have been carried on for generations and have influenced the present Indian culture. For example, "Artifacts from early Baluchi village cultures at Mehrgarh, Kulli, Zhob, and Nal (ca. 3000 BCE) reveal that they worshipped icons of the goddess and phallic symbols."<sup>11</sup> These artifacts are well connected to the worship of *lingam*, the phallic symbol of the later Hindu God, who is now known as Shiva, and also points to the presence of patriarchy even before the presence of modern India.

Even in the patriarchal society, the worship of goddesses was common in ancient India. In Harappa<sup>12</sup>, a place near the river Indus, numerous terracotta figures of women have been found. In the same figurine, a plant is observed to be growing out of the embryo of a woman. This has led some historians to believe that the people of the Indus Valley civilization saw Earth as a fertility goddess.<sup>13</sup> In the *Rig Veda*,<sup>14</sup> praises are attributed to '*Prithvi*,' referred to as Mother Earth, emphasizing the feminine side of nature for its life-giving attributes.<sup>15</sup> In the same Vedic text, prayers and hymns are

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Raman, *Women in India*, 4. From the excavation at Mohenjo Daro, an image of a male leader in yogic contemplation becomes an evidence for dating the religion.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Raman, Women in India, 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Harappa is a village in Pakistan on the banks of the River Indus, and it is a part of the Indus Valley civilization.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> R. S. Sharma, *India's Ancient Past*, Reprint edition (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2007), 82.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Rig Veda is the foundational text in Hinduism, which consists of a collection of hymns written in Sanskrit. They are primarily focused on praising deities and are often used in Hindu prayers and liturgies.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Raman, Women in India, 7.

attributed to 'Saraswati,' who appears in Hindu tradition as a river and goddess of wisdom, purification, fertility, and good fortune. The connection between the river and the deity is evident based on its properties. The worship of Goddess Saraswati is similar to the worship of the Nile goddess Isis by the Egyptians. <sup>16</sup> Because of limited historical evidence, not much can be inferred about how society viewed women during this period except for the presence of female goddesses and the association of women with life and fertility.

The most influential text on the Indian culture was the 'Smriti texts' (1000 BCE – 500CE). The chief smritis of this period were the Ramayana and Mahabharata; the Bhagavad Gita (Divine Song) interpolated into the Mahabharata (ca. 300 BCE); and liturgical sutras (ca. 800–300 BCE) such as Srauta Sutras for public rituals like coronations and Grihya Sutras for domestic life cycle rites (samskaras). The male authors of these texts enunciated the Indian paradigms of femininity through the exaltation of female domesticity, chastity, motherhood, and patrilineal descent. Sage Jaimini, in his commentary *Purva Mimamsa Bhashys (400 BCE)*, wrote, Men are unparalleled, and there is no comparison with women. The male sacrificer is learned; his wife is ignorant (PM 6.1.24). Even though the primary beneficiaries of education were

<sup>16</sup> 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Sharma, *India's Ancient Past*, 82. The composition of the Smriti text falls under the later Vedic period. Raman, in *Women in India*, 46, talks about how this period was commensurate to the later Vedic period.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> Sharma, *India's Ancient Past*, 117.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Raman, *Women in India*, 45.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Raman, Women in India, 46.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> A. S. Altekar, *Position of Women in Hindu Civilization: From Prehistoric Times to the Present Day*, 2nd edition (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2014), 205.

boys, girls from elite families also attended classes but resided at home, as the integrated forest schools (Gurukuls) were regarded as fraught with sexual dangers for women.<sup>21</sup> Early Marriage and the upbringing of children meant that women had no time for studies, which is why only a handful of women could be empowered intellectually.

The portrayal of women in the Indian epic gives us a glimpse into how society viewed women in this period (1000 BCE – 500 CE). In the Indian Epic *Ramayan*, a woman's life is seen as irrevocably bound to her husband's existence. <sup>22</sup> Because the society was patrilineal, only male progeny inherited wealth and the honor of performing the final rites of the parents. <sup>23</sup> In the same classical text of *Manu Smriti*, women are seen as too "incompetent to light the sacred fire for final obsequies for parents." <sup>24</sup> The duty of looking after the women was seen as the responsibility of a son, which is why all the wealth was reserved for a male heir. Raising a daughter was considered a liability and "lost to their husband's family." <sup>25</sup> Given the roles assigned by society, having a boy was

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Altekar, Position of Women in Hindu Civilization, 205.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Raman, *Women in India*, 52. In *Ramayan*, there is a dialogue between Kausalya and Kaikeyi, who says, "How can a chaste woman survive her husband's death? (RMY 2.65-66)" Though this text does not encourage widow immolation (sati), it binds a woman to the existence of her husband

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> Final rites are Hindu rituals that are performed after a person's death. The key elements typically include bathing the body, placing it on the pyre, and cremating it. Traditionally, a male member in the family does the cremation, but of late, female family members have intervened in the absence of male family members.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Raman, Women in India, 53.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> Raman, Women in India, 53.

considered a blessing and valued more than having a daughter. In ancient India, like "all patriarchal societies, the birth of a girl was an unwelcome event."<sup>26</sup>

## 1.2 Women and Family Life in Ancient India

In ancient India, given the patriarchal nature of the society, men held privilege and authority over women. They were typically responsible for assigning roles and establishing regulations within the family and society. On the other hand, women were often relegated to the care of household duties and domestic responsibilities. In the Hindu scriptures, the Vedic hymns state, "The bride should immediately take the reins of the household from her elderly relations." Because the groom stayed in his paternal house, the bride had to leave her parent's house and move into her husband's house and assist her mother-in-law with household chores.

The treatment of a bride at her in-laws' house was often influenced by her education qualification, the status of the family she came from, and the family she was married into. In a few cases, brides from prestigious families who were educated received good and considerate treatment from their elders. Families with strong standing commanded greater respect and influence, which extended to their daughters, even after marriage. On the other hand, the treatment of an uneducated bride in her in-laws' home could be starkly different from that of an educated bride. They often faced challenges adjusting to their new environment, as they were inexperienced and unfamiliar with

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Altekar, Position of Women in Hindu Civilization, 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Altekar, Position of Women in Hindu Civilization, 106.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Altekar, Position of Women in Hindu Civilization, 108.

household tasks and duties. In such a situation, the mother-in-law, who typically held authority over household matters, adopted a more assertive stance towards the new family member. Being uneducated, the mother-in-law often felt the "temptation of showing their power and authority too strong." This dynamic could sometimes lead to a strained relationship between the mother-in-law and the bride, especially if the mother-in-law's approach leaned towards criticism or domination.

Along with caring for the household, women were responsible for producing offspring and an heir for the family "to maintain the line of patrilineal descent, since sons largely inherited their property." The woman's status in a family and society was also linked to the offspring she gave birth to. The birth of sons was highly valued because they were seen as the rightful heirs who would inherit property and continue the family lineage. In contrast, daughters were often viewed with less favor, as they were not perceived as direct carriers of the family name and inheritance. Consequently, the status of a woman within her family and society was closely tied to her ability to produce male offspring.

The wealth and distribution of property in ancient India favored sons over daughters. This preference stemmed from the societal expectation that men were primarily responsible for providing for and safeguarding their families. As a result, it was customary for inheritance to be passed down to sons, as they were considered the natural successors who would continue the family lineage and manage the family's affairs. As

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Altekar, Position of Women in Hindu Civilization, 108.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Raman, Women in India, 59.

mentioned earlier, handing over inheritance to sons was not just a cultural norm but also a practical measure to ensure the preservation of family wealth and property within the family lineage. By entrusting inheritance to sons, families sought to maintain their socioeconomic status and uphold their social standing within their communities. This practice also served as a means of safeguarding the family's assets from being dispersed outside familial circles.

Moreover, the allocation of inheritance to sons was often perceived to reinforce the patriarchal structure of society. Sons were expected to fulfill specific roles and responsibilities, including managing the family's assets and providing for their parents in their old age. In contrast, daughters were often married off to other families, leading to the transfer of their allegiance and potential inheritance to their husbands' families. However, the Indian epic, *Mahabharata*, does advocate the equal division of family wealth, but by 200 BCE, most Hindu theologians began to oppose women's right to inherit property as daughters and wives.<sup>31</sup>

Even though the transition of a woman from her parent's house into her in-law's house came with its perks and drawbacks, and the woman was pressured to produce a male offspring, in ancient India, the custom was to treat the wife with utmost courtesy and regard. A wife, according to the teaching *of Rig Veda*, was considered the "ornament of the house," signifying her importance and value within the family structure. In many households, the management of the household was entrusted to her, and it is here that her

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>31</sup> Altekar, Position of Women in Hindu Civilization, 237.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> Altekar, *Position of Women in Hindu Civilization*, 110. In the *Rig Veda*, it is written, "The wife herself was the house." This was to assert the importance of her role in household activities.

views prevailed, even though the husband could easily overrule her views and decisions.

Despite the prevailing cultural norms emphasizing the importance of treating the wife and daughter-in-law with courtesy and regard, not many households adhered to these ideals.

## 1.3 Impact of Islam on Medieval Indian Women

Even though India was predominantly Hindu and the Hindu scripture and theologians influenced the social norms till 500 CE, it would soon change. In the seventh century CE, the Arab traders introduced Islam into South Asia. These Arab traders engaged in commerce along the west coast of India. Islam was first introduced to the "Malabar cost and later occupied Sind (711)."<sup>33</sup> This had a significant cultural and religious impact as India was introduced to a monotheistic religion. The major influx of Islam into northern India occurred with the invasion of Turkic and Afghan Muslim rulers from Central Asia starting in the tenth century. <sup>34</sup> This conquest led to the widespread conversion of the local population to Islam, particularly in the region under direct Muslim rule.

The influence of Islam did have an impact on women and how society viewed women in medieval India. Islamic literature, more importantly, the *Qur'an* dictated the way women were to be treated in Islamic society, and because of the Islamic rule over major territories of India, some of the rules and norms made their way into Indian society. In general, the Qur'an forbade men to treat women harshly, emphasizing the importance

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>33</sup> Sita Raman, *Women in India: A Social and Cultural History, Volume 2* (Santa Barbara, Calif: Praeger, 2009), 2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Raman, *Women in India, Volume 2, 2.* Islam was the vanguard religion of the later Turko-Afghans and Mughals, who established kingdoms (sultanates) at Delhi (1206–1526), Deccan, Bengal, Gujarat, and the later Mughal empire (1526–1857).

of treating women with kindness, respect, and fairness rather than as mere possession or object of ownership (*Sura* 4:19). It also stipulates special rule for the care and protection of vulnerable groups, in particular the orphans (*Sura* 4:6-9) and the widows and her possessions (*Sura* 2:240). Islamic teaching also provides women with the right to divorce and receive alimony. A married woman could initiate divorce and, under certain circumstances, was entitled to financial support during and after divorce (*Surah* 2:237). The use of hijab for women in Islamic communities was emphasized, and it became a symbol of modesty and dignity, which earned them respect in society.

While much of the Prophet's writing and teaching was favorable towards women, it was seldom that these teachings were followed to the letter. At times, the presence of misogyny in the society crept into the theology of Islam. For example, the *Qur'an* commands a husband to give his wife their "due dowries" (*Surah* 4:4), but in the next verse, it warns men not to entrust their properties to the "weak-minded" (*Surah* 4:5) but to take care of them. Despite the teaching, "misogynists have seized upon these words to denigrate women as incapable of managing property, especially since the sura also solemnly declared that 'Men are the protectors and maintainers of women' as Allah had given them greater strength and that righteous women should remain 'devoutly obedient' to their husbands (4:34). The medieval verse advocate kind paternalism, but they do not guarantee equality by today's norm."

The use of the *hijab*, which was a symbol of purity, gradually constrained Muslim women's freedom of movement, which led them to seclusion. Over time, the clerics

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> Raman, Women in India, Volume 2, 5.

argued that "this seclusion guarded women from harsh worldly affairs, but it legitimized male agency and female passivity." This attitude and reasoning not only constrained the women from attending school but prohibited them from praying at the mosque.

The presence of Islamic rules and teaching in medieval India led to changes in gender relations and family dynamics. While Islamic law prescribed certain rights and protections for women, such as inheritance rights and restrictions on divorce, these norms interacted with existing Hindu customs and practices. The interplay between Islamic and Hindu traditions sometimes resulted in complex and evolving gender norms, varying across different regions and communities. The Islamic ideas of social justice, gender equality, and women's rights had an impact towards the end of the medieval period and promoted reforms within the Hindu community, which still constituted the majority.

## 1.4 Women in Colonial Era

The arrival of Portuguese and British powers in India marked a significant turning point in the history of the Indian subcontinent. The Portuguese, led by explorers like Vasco da Gama and the British, spurred by ambitions of trade and empire, embarked on voyages that would ultimately reshape India's political, economic, and social landscape. The Portuguese were among the first Europeans to establish a presence in India in 1498, with the central purpose being establishing a trade route like the Arab traders. Despite their attempts to colonize India, they managed to have small colonies. The most

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> Raman, Women in India, Volume 2, 9.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> Raman, Women in India, Volume 2, 43.

influential were the British, who colonized India in 1757 and overthrew the Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim rulers to establish the British Empire.<sup>38</sup>

The British colonial rule in India significantly influenced the legal and social status of women, leaving a lasting impression that continues to shape gender and relations in modern-day India. The British legal system introduced in India was largely based on English patriarchal models, which often disregarded the local matrilineal rights and customs prevalent in certain regions of India, especially among the tribal communities. These frameworks worked their way into the legal system, perpetuated gender inequality, and reinforced hierarchies affecting women's rights and roles in society. Moreover, British colonial policies and administration structures crystallized political identities in India along gender, caste, and religious lines. The British employed a divide-and-rule strategy, "instigating Indians against Indians" on the basis of social division to maintain control over the Indian subcontinent. This strategy exacerbated tensions between different communities and reinforced hierarchical structures, including those based on gender and caste. Women, especially those from marginalized communities and lower casts, faced multiple layers of discrimination.

The British also introduced the Indian penal code, criminalizing aspects of human behavior and human reality that in India had not previously been regarded as criminal or required legal sanction. For example, section 377 of the Indian Penal Code directly targeted the transgender and the homosexual community, and the tolerant attitude of India

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Raman, Women in India, Volume 2, 43.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> Shashi Tharoor, *An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India*, Later printing edition (New Delhi, India: Aleph Book Company, 2016), 68.

was overruled by the colonial interpretation of right and wrong.<sup>40</sup> This penal code did not go easy on straight women either. "Section 497 criminalized adultery and punished extramarital relationships involving married women, but not men."<sup>41</sup> In an already patriarchal society, these penal codes further exacerbated the discrimination against women. Ironically, none of these offenses that were criminalized in India were illegal in Britain, pointing to the hypocritical governance of the Empire.

Even though the British colonial rule in India perpetuated inequalities and social injustices, it also brought positive changes for women, particularly in the realms of education, legal reform, and social awareness. When it came to education, the British colonial policies facilitated the spread of Western education in India, which benefitted women by providing them with access to formal schooling. Missionary efforts and the establishment of schools by the British government led to the emergence of educated women who played roles in the social reform movement and nationalist struggle. With regards to legal reform, the British introduced reforms that improved the status and rights of women, with the major contribution being the abolishment of widow immolation (sati) and the increase in the age of marriage (to fourteen for women and eighteen for men). The British rule also made possible the opportunity for women to participate in public and civil activities, which is why "three impressive women presided over the India National Congress during an era in which not a single governor, secretary or other British

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>40</sup> Tharoor, An Era of Darkness, 125.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>41</sup> Tharoor, An Era of Darkness, 125.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Tharoor, *An Era of Darkness*, 257. It is important to acknowledge that the abolishment of Sati (widow burning) and increase in marriage age was mostly due to a social activist, Raja Rammohan Roy, whom the British hailed as a progressive and modern-minded reformer.

high official was female and the very notion of a female authority figure, let alone a female viceroy, would have been a fantasy."<sup>43</sup>

## 1.5 Influence of Christianity on Indian Women

The spread of Christianity in India has been influenced by various historical factors, including trade routes, missionary activities, and colonialism. Like Islam, Christianity entered India through trade routes, albeit at different times throughout history. However, subsequent waves of missionary activities and colonial conquests played an important role in the expansion of Christianity in the Indian subcontinent. Even though the arrival of the Portuguese and their conquest by the west coast marked the advent of Christianity, some traditions claim that St Thomas first introduced Christianity in the 1<sup>st</sup> century on the southern coast of India. <sup>44</sup> Despite the historical debate surrounding this tradition, it is widely accepted that Christianity has ancient roots in India.

The arrival of the Portuguese in the 15th century marked a significant turning point in the spread of Christianity along the western coast of India. The Portuguese, driven by commercial interests and religious zeal, established colonies and trading posts in regions such as Goa and Kerala. The Church of Rome granted the Portuguese Crown

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>43</sup> Tharoor, An Era of Darkness, 257.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>44</sup> Robert Eric Frykenberg, *Christianity in India: From Beginnings to the Present*, 1st edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 92. The oldest internal traditions concerned a common belief that the Apostle came by sea from Arabia and that he landed on the Malabar coast within a lagoon that was open to the sea. The earliest literary account of this apostle's missionary work in India is found in the *Acts of Thomas*, which comes from outside the Asian continent and is traced back to the third or fourth century.

the *Padroado Real*, *which* gave them significant control over ecclesiastical affairs in their territories and facilitated their efforts to spread Christianity.

While the British Empire also played a role in facilitating Christian missionary activities in India after their arrival, particularly during the colonial period, it was the Portuguese who were more effective in the spread of Christianity in terms of the number of converts. The Portuguese territories, especially in Goa, saw significant conversions to Christianity among the local population. The British, while supportive of Christian evangelization, did not achieve the same level of success as the Portuguese.

Christianity, during the colonial rule, carried with them the same patriarchal attitudes and gender norms that were prevalent in European societies at that time. Missionaries often promoted traditional gender roles and family structure, which limited women's autonomy and perpetuated their subordination to men. The theology of marriage during colonial rule was the interpretation of St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians, where Paul writes, "Wives, be subject to your husband as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the Church, the body of which he is the Savior (Eph 5:22-23)." In Portuguese colonies of Goa, the Christian inquisitors regarded the Hindu wedding customs as inferior to the Western wedding traditions, and thus wedding customs such as "anointing the bride with turmeric and coconut water, covering the bride's face, wearing of nose-ring or Jewelry gifted by groom's parents" were banned. The Portuguese colonies, fueled by Christian teaching, prosecuted and jailed women for "prostitution, using contraceptives and abortion." <sup>46</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>45</sup> Raman, Women in India, Volume 2, 58.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> Raman, Women in India, Volume 2, 58.

Even in Christian colonies, despite Christian teachings, the interracial marriage policy did not lead to equality for either gender or race, as patriarchal norms and the institution of slavery perpetuated inequality within colonial societies. In a culture that thrived on slavery, "women and slaves of all hues were considered necessary for colonial existence." In the British colonies, Indian Christian women were trained as "suitable wives for pastors and teachers," who arrived in increasing numbers in 1813.<sup>48</sup>

The British East India Company believed that "the introduction of Western education and Christianity would transform a morally decadent society." Efforts were carried out to make people abandon their faith and embrace Christianity. The primary purpose of evangelization was to "improve the communication between Europeans and natives and produce those reciprocal feelings of regard and respect which are essential to the permanent interests of the British Empire in India." This purpose had little to do with the commission of Jesus, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit." (Mt 28:19) The evangelization was not about Christian missionary zeal, but to benefit the British East India Company. Because of this hidden motive, the message of Christian fidelity and love was lost.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Raman, Women in India, Volume 2, 61.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> The pastors who came in increasing numbers belonged to protestant organizations like the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the London Missionary Society (LMS), the Scottish Presbyterian Mission (SPM), the Wesleyan Mission, and the American Madura Mission.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Tharoor, An Era of Darkness, 215.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>50</sup> Tharoor, An Era of Darkness, 215.

The introduction of Christianity in India was accompanied by forceful conversion attempts and met with resistance, and left many feeling marginalized and inferior due to the imposition of their religious beliefs and customs. Despite this contentious beginning, Christianity did bring about notable positive changes, particularly regarding the status and rights of women. For example, the Christian missionaries who came to India clearly advocated for the education of women. Initially, the patriarch advised that women be taught only "handicrafts and domestic skills" but the influence of Christian teachings prompted a broader educational curriculum for women encompassing various disciplines beyond traditional gender roles.

Furthermore, Catholic intervention played a pivotal role in the prohibition of harmful practices such as polygamy and Sati. By challenging these oppressive traditions, Christianity contributed to the advancement of women's rights and dignity in Indian society. Additionally, Christian communities in the Portuguese colonies actively discouraged child marriage, recognizing the detrimental effects they had on the young girl's health and well-being. By advocating against child marriage, "Christian girls were married at a later age so that their mortality rates in childbirth were lower than of Hindu women." 52

<sup>51</sup> Raman, *Women in India*, 61.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>52</sup> Raman, Women in India, Volume 2, 61.

#### 1.6 Domestic Abuse in India

From the time of the ancient Indus Valley civilization until India's independence in 1947, the nation has undergone significant political, cultural, and environmental transformations. Yet, throughout this rich history, discrimination against women has persisted in various forms, deeply rooted in patriarchal norms prevalent since antiquity. Even during the earliest civilizations, such as the Indus Valley and Vedic periods, patriarchal structures were firmly entrenched, shaping societal norms and power dynamics. These norms persisted through the medieval era and were further reinforced during the colonial period, perpetuating systems of inequality and oppression.

Despite patriarchal norms, Indian scriptures and texts have long revered female deities, associating them with fertility, life, and nurturing qualities. Worship of female deities has been a central aspect of Indian culture for millennia, and this is reflected in the feminine names of many Indian rivers. However, such worship of female deities has often existed alongside practices that subjugated women. Despite the acknowledgment of feminine qualities in deities, women frequently faced discrimination and violence within their households.

India's independence in 1947 marked a pivotal moment in the nation's history, ushering in a new era of political and social change. Efforts were made to address gender inequality and violence against women through legislative reforms and social initiatives. The Constitution of India enshrined principles of gender equality and non-discrimination, providing a framework for legal interventions to combat domestic violence and empower women.

The treatment of women in post-independent India has been marked by progress in some areas but persistent challenges and inequalities in others. Despite constitutional guarantees of equality and non-discrimination, women continue to face various forms of gender-based discrimination and violence. The issue of Dowry has persisted and has led to the ill-treatment, if not the death, of women. <sup>53</sup> In modern India, especially among the Hindus, "the groom's family now often demands real estate, an apartment, or a car as the price for their son." <sup>54</sup> Failure to pay the desired sum has led to ill-treatment, domestic violence, and even death at the hands of the groom's mother or father. Young brides are even sent home until they return with the agreed sum. Newspaper reports of "bride burning" increased in the 1970s-80s, when the groom's family whitewashed these as kitchen "accidents" or "self-immolations" using kerosene. <sup>55</sup>

As I mentioned earlier, the treatment of young brides in India has long been influenced by various socio-economic factors, perpetuating inequalities and disparities in their experiences. As was the case in ancient India, a bride's treatment at her in-laws' house was often determined by her educational qualifications and the status of her family

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>53</sup> The Dowry system in India existed even before the colonial era. Dowry-like customs existed in ancient Indian societies, where gifts were exchanged between families during marriage. These gifts were meant to provide financial support to the newlyweds and establish social bonds between families. Over time, these practices evolved into the dowry system we recognize today. In the Muslim communities, dowry was required to be paid by men upon marriage (Sura 4). This was partly influenced by Persian customs and traditions, which emphasized exchanging gifts and valuables during marriage ceremonies. The dowry system underwent significant changes during colonial rule as British colonial policies and legal frameworks shaped marriage customs and practices in Inda. They introduced laws that recognized and regulated the dowry transaction, further institutionalizing the practice within Indian society

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>54</sup> Raman, Women in India, Volume 2, 194.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> Pramila Dandvate and Ranjana Kumari, *Widows, Abandoned and Destitute Women in India*, ed. Jamila Verghese (New Delhi: Stosius Inc/Advent Books Division, 1989), 84.

of origin, reflecting entrenched social hierarchies and prejudices. Thus, it is no surprise that a literate bride from a prestigious family was well respected by her in-laws,<sup>56</sup> while those from poorer families could face neglect and mistreatment.

Moreover, this pattern of differential treatment based on socio-economic factors persists in modern times. Families of brides in modern times anticipating the ill-treatment of their girl child strive to nourish their daughter before marriage as they face nutritional deprivation.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, deep-rooted beliefs regarding gender, such as the notion that a child's sex depends on the mother, continue to influence societal attitudes, especially in rural areas. This belief can lead to mistreatment or discrimination against young brides, particularly if they give birth to a girl child. However, the dynamics of a young bride's situation often change with time and the birth of a son, as the arrival of a male child is traditionally valued and can improve the bride's standing within the family.

Alcoholism, often prevalent among husbands, emerges as another significant contributor to domestic abuse, particularly in India. This correlation is strikingly evident in households where men, especially manual laborers reliant on daily wages, succumb to alcohol abuse. For instance, "there is a close correlation between the drinking habits of Dalit men, their type of employment, and the nature of their payment." Tragically, this pattern intertwines with a cycle of violence, as alcohol abuse frequently amplifies instances of domestic violence, inflicting physical, emotional, and psychological trauma on wives and children. On the other hand, the survey also showed that the drinking habit

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> Altekar, Position of Women in Hindu Civilization, 108.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> Mehrotra, "Child Malnutrition and Gender Discrimination in South Asia," 912 18. Mehrotra cites United Nations, Second Report on the World Nutrition Situation, vol. 1 (Geneva: United Nations, 1992)

led to further problems in the family because "male alcoholism depleted small family incomes and led often to rape, assault, and burning when women resisted men's advances." Despite the clear role of alcoholism in exacerbating domestic abuse, it is invariably women who bear the brunt of its consequences within afflicted households.

While domestic violence is still prevalent in India, the government, on their part, has put in efforts to curb this issue. As of now, a comprehensive legal framework exists to address and combat domestic violence, encompassing various laws and regulations aimed at protecting victims and holding perpetrators accountable. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005), stands as a cornerstone legislation, providing a broad definition of domestic violence and empowering victims to seek protection orders, financial assistance, and other forms of relief through specialized legal mechanisms.

Alongside this Act, provisions within the Indian Penal Code address specific forms of domestic abuse, such as physical assault, cruelty, and dowry-related offenses, prescribing criminal penalties for offenders. Additionally, laws such as the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, the Dowry Prohibition Act, and the Child Marriage Restraint Act contribute to the legal arsenal in combating various facets of domestic violence, including sexual harassment, dowry-related abuse, and child marriage. Despite these legal frameworks, challenges remain in enforcing them, especially in rural areas.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>58</sup> Raman, Women in India, Volume 2, 210.

#### 1.7 Statistics on Domestic Abuse

The Indian Journal of Community Medicine conducted a study on "The risk factor of domestic violence in India." This study delves into the disturbing reality of violence faced by women within their homes across the country. The research analyzes data from over 14,500 women in 18 Indian states. It sheds light on the prevalence of physical, psychological, and sexual violence experienced by these women. The findings expose a critical situation, with a staggering 39% of respondents reporting abuse.

The survey shows that different sorts of violence were markedly higher among women with lower household incomes, those belonging to lower castes, and individuals with limited literacy. Additionally, instances of domestic violence were higher when the partner exhibited tendencies towards alcohol consumption and gambling.

The study meticulously outlined various risk factors contributing to domestic violence, encompassing variables such as age, religion, caste, education, occupation, family income, type and duration of marriage, as well as alcohol and gambling habits. Women below the age of 20 faced a heightened risk of domestic violence, and those in mixed or arranged marriages were found to confront a more significant risk compared to their counterparts in love marriages. The study also demonstrated that domestic violence in any form of marriage decreased as the span of marital life increased.

Education attainment emerged as a noteworthy factor for women who graduated from elementary school and beyond. Women who had higher education experienced

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>59</sup> Meerambika Mahapatro, RN Gupta, and Vinay Gupta, "The Risk Factor of Domestic Violence in India," *Indian Journal of Community Medicine: Official Publication of Indian Association of Preventive & Social Medicine* 37, no. 3 (2012): 153–57, https://doi.org/10.4103/0970-0218.99912.

lower risks of domestic abuse than those with lower education levels. A surprising revelation was the higher incidence of domestic violence among working women compared to homemakers, which was quite contrary to the expected norms.

Religious affiliation emerged as a critical factor, with women identifying as Muslim facing a heightened risk of domestic violence compared to their Hindu counterparts. According to the study, women belonging to Christianity and Buddhism exhibited minimal discernible risk of facing domestic violence. This religious dimension suggests that specific values emphasized in different religions may act as a protective factor.

A limitation that the study also considers is the inaccurate reporting due to stigma and embarrassment, which can lead to underreporting of these abuses. The study also makes it clear that the reporting of domestic violence is still inadequate, and the study may not capture the full extent of the problem. Additionally, the study only focuses on violence against women by their husbands or family members. Despite this limitation, the findings highlight the complex interplay of demographics and social factors influencing the prevalence of domestic violence.

Domestic violence is deeply rooted in Indian history. Right from ancient times, the way a woman was viewed in society has influenced how she was dealt with. Each era saw a change in how a woman was viewed, but being patriarchal at its core eventually had a negative impact on how a woman was treated. The violence against women that is observed in today's society has been the product of history. Even though the present Indian society is much more favorable to women than it was in the past, it is not sufficient and calls for more.

Even after facing oppression and discrimination, history has proved that women struggled and managed to cling to life. This clinging to life is seen as the Spirit of life crying to God. The Holy Spirit is responsible for 'Life and Peace' (Rom 8:6). The same Spirit that raised Jesus in the face of discrimination, hate, and death also animates the women who suffer under ill-informed patriarchy. The same Spirit also has the potential to change the hearts of those inflicting violence and to strengthen those bearing the consequences of violence.

# Ch: 2 Holy Spirit, Women, and Trauma

The Holy Spirit occupies a central role in Christian theology's understanding of creation. As the breath of God, the Spirit infuses the world with life and vitality, sustaining all living beings and inspiring human creativity. Moreover, the Spirit's creative activity extends beyond individual acts of creation to encompass the ongoing renewal and transformation of the cosmos. Three activities of the Holy Spirit are visible when it comes to creation. First and foremost, the Holy Spirit is the co-creator, along with the Father and the Son. Secondly, The Holy Spirit is the giver of life and is associated with the breath. Lastly, the Holy Spirit is seen as responsible for the renewing of creation. This role of the Spirit as co-creator, giver of life, and renewal of creation is supported by scripture and the theologians within the Catholic tradition.

When we speak about the Holy Spirit as the "co-creator," we are emphasizing that the Holy Spirit is not subordinate to the Father or Son but equally participates in creation. Jürgen Moltmann, in his work, 'God in Creation,' writes, "the Father creates through the Son in the Holy Spirit. The created world is therefore created 'by God,' formed 'through God' and exists 'in God." Moltmann backs this with the words of the Psalmist, who says, "When you send forth your Spirit, they are created." (Ps 104:30) The Holy Spirit is likened here to the divine breath that renews, creates, and brings forth life in the midst of desolation.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>60</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, 1st U.S. ed edition (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 9.

While the Spirit of God is the Spirit of life, death and circumstances that breed oppression continue to exist. In the first chapter, I have laid down a history of a patriarchal culture that oppressed women. These patriarchal roots made their way into religion and exacerbated the suffering of women. After having seen this, I "judge" the consequence of domestic abuse by talking about the trauma of those suffering but using a lens of pneumatology.

I begin by talking about the creative work of the Holy Spirit, who gives life to all creation. After that, I pivot to the role of the Spirit within the context of the Church and its broader impact on believers and non-believers. When we talk about the work of the Holy Spirit among non-Christians, we are called to reflect on the transcendent work of the Holy Spirit. I intend to do this by exegeting in detail the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman (John 4: 1-42). This encounter serves as an example of how the Spirit transcended the ministry of Jesus and how the suffering of a woman drew Jesus to her and the point of her need becomes a point of her conversion. In her story, we find echoes of the pain experienced by countless women trapped in cycles of abuse and oppression. Thus, the reflection on the Samaritan woman and the work of the Holy Spirit in her life becomes a segue into the trauma of a woman suffering abuse.

Trauma becomes a point where the Samaritan woman and the women facing domestic abuse meet. The Spirit's presence in the suffering is evident in St. Paul's letter to the Romans (Romans 8), where Paul talks about how the Spirit prays when humans under the burden of suffering cannot. Thus, through the lens of Pneumatology, we are compelled to confront the stark realities of domestic abuse with renewed empathy and resolve. This theological reflection on the suffering of women becomes the second step in

the method of liberation theology: "Judging." With the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit in an environment that breeds death, the Holy Spirit has the power to stir the heart to bring change and redemption to the suffering.

## 2.1 Holy Spirit and Creation

Yves Congar points out that the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament was compared to 'Ruah,' which is the breath or the principle of life. 62 It is that which animates the body and is opposed to 'flesh,' which is different from the body, and thus 'Ruah' is a giver of life. The flesh is purely an earthly reality of humankind and is characterized by the fact that it is weak and corruptible. 63 On the other hand, the Spirit is from God and is responsible for 'Life and Peace' (Rom 8:6). The same Spirit that raised Jesus is the Spirit that gives life to all creation. This function of the Holy Spirit, as declared by the 150 fathers at the council of Constantinople (381), affirms that the same Holy Spirit is "the holy, lordly and life-giving one, proceeding forth from the Father, co-worshipped and coglorified with Father and Son, the one who spoke through the prophets." Therefore, life in the cosmos originates from the same Spirit of God who was with God from the beginning.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>61</sup> Sobrino and Ellacuria, Systematic Theology, 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>62</sup> Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit: The Complete Three Volume Work in One Volume*, Revised edition (New York: Herder & Herder, 1997), 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>63</sup> Congar, I Believe in the Holy Spirit: The Complete Three Volume Work in One Volume, 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> Norman P. Tanner, *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. One (London, Washington, DC: Sheed & Ward, 1990), 21-23.

From the standpoint of creation, the Holy Spirit, according to Jürgen Moltmann, is the "principle of creativity on all levels of matter and life." He explains that the Spirit is responsible for creating life, new possibilities, new designs, and a blueprint for creation. In this way, the Spirit becomes responsible for the continuous and renewed work of creation. The Holy Spirit also determines and anticipates the development of creation. In this sense, the Spirit is the principle of evolution. Not only is the Holy Spirit responsible for creation, but so is the sustenance of created things. The Psalmist writes, "When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth." (Ps 104:29-30) Thus, the Holy Spirit is God immanent in his creation, completing the creative process and giving life to creatures.

#### 2.2 Holy Spirit and the Church

The Church, which is the bride of Christ, has its origin in Christ. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that "the Church is born primarily of Christ's total self-giving for our salvation, anticipated in the institution of the Eucharist and fulfilled on the cross." "For it was from the side of the Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the 'wondrous sacrament of the whole Church." If the Paschal Mystery is regarded as the birth of the Church, then Pentecost is regarded as the day the Church became known to the eyes of people. The liturgist Godfrey Diekmann says,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>65</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*, 1st U.S. ed edition (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 100.

<sup>66 &</sup>quot;Catechism of the Catholic Church," n.d., 766, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c1a1.htm.

"Then it was that the Holy Spirit animated the organism already formed (by Christ), giving to each organ its operation, and to the whole body life, vigor, and growth."<sup>67</sup> The promise of Christ that he would send an advocate (Jn 14:26) came to fruition during the Pentecost, empowering the disciples to preach the Gospel with newfound courage and understanding, enabling them to speak different languages and reach a wider audience (Acts 2).

Having played a vital role in making the Church known to the world, the Holy Spirit also plays a crucial role in guiding the Church. *Lumen Gentium* discusses the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding the Church and illuminating the truths of faith when it says, "The Church, which the Spirit guides in the way of all truth and which He unified in communion and in works of ministry, He both equips and directs with hierarchical and charismatic gifts and adorns with His fruits." This teaching of the Church is rooted in the discourse of the Gospel, where Jesus says, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come." (Jn 16:13) Because the Holy Spirit is a gift from God and comes from God, the Church is believed to be guided by the Holy Spirit, who works through different individuals, unifying the Church and bringing to fruition the work done by Christ.

<sup>67</sup> 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> Hugh Farmer, "The Holy Spirit in the Chruch," *Life of the Spirit (1946-1964)* 7, no. 84 (1953): 534.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>68</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017), 4.

The Church actively acknowledges the role of the Holy Spirit in its liturgy and sacraments. At the start of every prayer and celebration and its end, the Holy Spirit is acknowledged.<sup>69</sup> Central to Catholic tradition is the Eucharist, which is the "Source and Summit of the Christian life."<sup>70</sup> During the epiclesis, the celebrant asks God to send the Holy Spirit upon the gifts of bread and wine, transforming them into the Body and Blood of Christ. In the Sacraments of initiation, which are Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation, the baptized becomes a member of "Christ and a temple of the Holy Spirit"<sup>71</sup> and receives his body and blood. The sacraments of healing and service, which are Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony, focus on the various aspects of Christian life. The Holy Spirit here grants forgiveness as promised by Jesus, offers comforts and strength for the weak, and empowers individuals for a specific vocation. In Holy Orders, the Holy Spirit confers the grace necessary for ordained ministry. Similarly, in Matrimony, the Holy Spirit strengthens the couple for their lifelong commitment. Thus, in its liturgy and sacraments, the Holy Spirit plays an important role by breathing life, strength, and charism into its Church.

#### 2.3 Holy Spirit, the Christians, and Non-Christians

In the Christian tradition, the Holy Spirit has been perceived as an agent of the history of the Church and its mission of evangelization. The Holy Spirit, who is

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> At the start of every prayer and celebration and its' end, the Holy Spirit is acknowledged with the invocation, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," and at the end of every prayer, the trinity is glorified with the prayer, "Glory be to the father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>70</sup> Second Vatican Council, Lumen Gentium, 11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>71</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1279.

associated with creation, is acknowledged in the Nicene creed as "the Lord, the giver of life," and challenges Christian theology to recognize its work beyond the confines of the Church, Christianity, or regions where Christian faith has a prominent influence. Delving into this discourse, it becomes increasingly apparent that the working of the Holy Spirit transcends sectarian boundaries, permeating all aspects of creation. This recognition prompts Christian theology to transcend the limitation of religious orthodoxy and develop a deeper understanding of divine presence within the entirety of creation.

In light of this perspective, Christianity is confronted with the imperative to embrace a broader worldview, one that acknowledges the omnipresence and active involvement of the Holy Spirit beyond the familiar confines of the faith community. Such understanding encourages the believers to transcend the confines of their comfort zone, fostering a more inclusive and holistic appreciation of a transcendent God who animates all creation.

This understanding entails a systematic process characterized by two fundamental steps. First, it is imperative for believers to attain a profound understanding of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit within their own religious tradition, notably within the context of Christian scriptures, liturgies, and faith practice. This foundational grasp serves as a prerequisite, facilitating the believers' ability to progress toward the next step, which is identifying the Holy Spirit and its work in others, particularly among individuals and communities who do not identify with the Christian faith. This critical transition is only possible when a person is grounded in one's own tradition because it enables them to see the working of the Holy Spirit beyond the confines of their Christian framework.

## 2.4 Holy Spirit in Scriptures

In the Catholic tradition, the Holy Spirit is pivotal and essential to divine revelation. It is understood that the Spirit of God played a crucial role in scriptures by inspiring the authors of sacred scriptures, guiding them, and inspiring them in the composition of these sacred texts. As articulated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "The divinely revealed truths, which are contained and presented in Sacred Scripture, have been written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit." Despite the human medium through which these scriptures were conveyed, their authorship is attributed to God, who imparted and disclosed the profound mysteries of the divine to humanity.

The Catechism further explains the Church's stance on the scriptures, emphasizing their sacred and canonical status. It asserts that the books of the Old and the New Testament, in their entirety, are regarded as sacred and canonical by the Church. This recognition is grounded in the understanding that these texts, being written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, trace their origin to God Himself and have been transmitted as such to the Church, which is why it adds, "For Holy Mother Church, relying on the faith of the apostolic age, accepts as sacred and canonical the books of the Old and the New Testaments, whole and entire, with all their parts, on the grounds that, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author and have been handed on as such to the Church herself."<sup>73</sup>

The presence of the Holy Spirit, as delineated in the Catechism, manifests both in the Old and the New Testament. While the theological discourses surrounding the Holy

<sup>72 &</sup>quot;Catechism of the Catholic Church," 105.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> "Catechism of the Catholic Church," 105.

Spirit are notably shaped by the teaching of St. Paul and the Gospel according to John, its presence is also visible in the Old Testament. In the book of Genesis, the Holy Spirit is portrayed as the creative force that hovered over the primordial waters during the act of creation (Genesis 1:2), signifying the Spirit's presence and role in creation and its sustenance. Furthermore, the Spirit is depicted as an empowering agent among leaders and prophets, as evidenced in the narratives of Judges (6:34) and Samuel (1 Samuel 16:13) and in the prophetic utterances of Isaiah (11:2-3) and Micah (3:8).

In the book of Psalms, we have vivid imagery about the Holy Spirit, who is depicted as the breath of God (Ps 104:30), the giver of life (Ps 33:6), and the one responsible for providing guidance (Ps 143:10). In psalm 51, we hear David pleading for the restoration of God's presence and the renewal of a steadfast spirit within him (Ps 51:10-12). This psalm recognizes the Spirit's transformative power to cleanse, renew, and empower the faithful.

The depiction of the Holy Spirit's presence in the Old Testament is predominantly implicit rather than explicit. Although references to the Spirit are scattered throughout Deuteronomic writings, wisdom literature, and prophetic texts, its comprehensive role is explicitly articulated in the New Testament. The glimpses of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament prepare the stage for a more developed understanding of the Spirit in the New Testament, where the Spirit is revealed as a distinct person of the Trinity, actively guiding, empowering, and transforming God's people.

The development of pneumatology in the New Testament, particularly through the writings of St. Paul, has significantly enriched the understanding of the Holy Spirit and its role in the life of believers. He moved beyond the Old Testament's implicit references

and presented the Holy Spirit as a vital force in the lives of believers, empowering them to live Christian lives, to exercise spiritual gifts, and to contribute to the mission of Christ through the Church. First and foremost, the Spirit is associated with life and peace (Rom 8:6), and the Spirit is responsible for making believers children of God (Rom 8:14). The believers, who are children of God, receive spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12) to build the Church and carry on the mission of Christ. Along with the gifts are the fruits of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22-23) that help maintain peace in the community of believers.

The portrayal of the Holy Spirit in the four Gospels further enriches understanding of its significance. The Holy Spirit is seen resting on Jesus during baptism (Mt 3:16. Mk 1:10, Lk 3:22, and Jn 1:32). John's gospel offers a discourse where Jesus promises the Holy Spirit, a gift from God that would be with them (Jn 14:16-18, 15:26). St. Augustine of Hippo, building on this biblical foundation, expounds on the Holy Spirit as the Gift of God. In his work, "On the Trinity," he speaks about the Holy Spirit as the Gift of God where he elaborates, "Love, then, which is from God and is God, is properly the Holy Spirit, through whom the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, through which the whole Trinity dwells in us. For this reason, the Holy Spirit, since He is God, is also most rightly called the Gift of God."<sup>74</sup>

#### 2.5 Holy Spirit transcending the boundaries in John 4: 1-42

The belief that the Holy Spirit transcends boundaries is a crucial theme in Theology. Throughout scripture and tradition, the Spirit is depicted as breaking down barriers of race, culture, language, and social status. In the Act of the Apostles, the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>74</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *On the Trinity* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013), 204.

Pentecost is seen as the crucial point where the disciples were empowered to speak different languages and to proclaim the gospel to various nations and ethnicities (Acts 2: 1-41). Furthermore, St. Paul, in his epistle, spoke about the Holy Spirit as the source of unity within the body of Christ, transcending social distinction. In his letter to the Galatians, he writes, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal 3:28). This transcending power of the Holy Spirit underscores the inclusive nature of God and his reign.

The inclusivity of Christ's mission is made clear in John's gospel, where Jesus says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."(Jn 3:16) Salvation here is made open to all, irrespective of their societal status and or place of origin. The breaking of the barrier by the Holy Spirit is made clear in the encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman (Jn 4: 1-42), who transcends the boundaries himself by engaging in a conversation with a foreigner. Set in the unfamiliar terrain of Samaria, it is the longest theological conversation that Jesus has with anyone in all four gospels. While Jesus breaks barriers and engages in a theological discussion with an outsider, the reader gains an insight into the working of the Holy Spirit. She receives the living water, the Holy Spirit, that Jesus offers.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>75</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, Revised edition (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 260. Leon Morris argues that 'living water' in this passage symbolizes the Holy Spirit. He points out that Jesus never referred to himself as the 'living water' but the one who gives it.

#### 2.6 Tension of the past between Jews and Samaritans

The relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans was marked with conflicts. The origin of this conflict and division goes back to the time when the Assyrians took Samaria captive. "These people brought their own gods with them (2 Kings 17:29-31), but they added the worship of Yahweh to their other practices (2 Kings 17:25, 28, 32-33, and 41). In time, their polytheism disappeared, and they worshiped Yahweh alone, though their religion had its peculiarities. For example, they acknowledged the Pentateuch as the only sacred scripture. They thus cut themselves off from the riches in the Psalms, the Prophets, and other books." The relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans was further marked with bitterness when the Samaritans offered their help to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, and the Jews refused this aid. Furthermore, the temple on Mt. Gerizim, where the Samaritans worshiped, was burned by the Jews in 128 B.C. With all these tensions in the background, the occasional friction between the Jews and the Samaritans was common. The encounter of Jesus and the Samaritan woman transcended the boundaries set by the history of both denominations.

The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman also displays the transcendence of the social stigma that society imposed on the Samaritan woman.

Transcendence is seen not only on the part of Jesus, who chose to converse with a woman but on the part of the Samaritan woman, who chose to stay and respond to Jesus. Caroline M. Breyfogle, in her studies on the matter of the social status of women in the Old Testament, writes, "Legally, the wife was the property of her husband. He was her Baal,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 256.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>77</sup> Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 256.

master, or owner (Exod. 21:3, 22; Prov. 31:11); she was his Be'ulah, or chattel (Gen. 20:3 [E]; Deut. 22:22; Isa. 54:I; 62:4). In the law, she is listed with his ox and ass (Exod. 20: 17; cf. Deut. 5:21), ranked after his children (Deut. 29: ii), and dropped altogether from the family list, where her personality is completely merged into that of her husband (Deut. 12:12; Num. 18: 11,19)."<sup>78</sup> A woman's main role in this society was that of a wife and a mother. But the Samaritan women had none of that. The evangelist points out that this encounter between Jesus and the woman was at noon because that was when the woman chose to come to draw water from Jacobs's well. Given the time of the day, it can be inferred that "The woman had a bad reputation, and the explanation may be very simple – she chose the time and the place to avoid other women."<sup>79</sup>

#### 2.7 The Point of Need Becomes a Point of Conversion

Despite their difference in denomination, gender, and social status, both parties had things in common. First and foremost, both individuals were strong characters displaying the qualities of confidence, wisdom, thoughtfulness, and a desire to thrive. Both individuals were in need of water. Jesus shows his willingness to cross gender, culture, and religious lines to ask for help, proving his human desire to thrive, and the woman, by enduring the head of the day to draw water for herself, mirrors this endurance. From their encounter and conversation, it becomes clear that the woman is "confident, bold, thoughtful and open, qualities that a first-century Jews wouldn't expect to find in a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>78</sup> Caroline M. Breyfogle, "The Social Status of Woman in the Old Testament," *The Biblical World* 35, no. 2 (1910): 110.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, 258.

Samaritan, let alone a woman."<sup>80</sup> These same qualities were also present in Jesus, and like the woman, the Jews did not expect a carpenter's son to possess these qualities (Mark 6:3). Both individuals possessed the desire to thrive and shared similar qualities that helped them thrive.

Secondly, both parties shared a spiritual thirst for one another. Nancy Haught points out that the well had been a spot where Abraham's son Issac met Rebekah, who later became his wife.<sup>81</sup> The meeting at the well, which could have been a setting for a romantic encounter, as had been in the past, instead becomes a point of spiritual encounter, and yet the spiritual chemistry between the two individuals is as clear as day. The woman's request for living water (Jn 4:15) and the desire of Jesus to give of himself by making himself known to the woman (Jn 4:26) affirms their need for each other. Jean Corbon, in his work, 'Wellspring of Worship,' writes, "At the origin of the human person – of each and every human being – there is this outpouring of love within the Trinity, a pierced love that calls us to life; from the gaze of the Father in his beloved Son, there springs up God's thirst, his thirst for human being. This, too, is the very beginning of the human nostalgia for God is born."<sup>82</sup> The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman became a point where the thirst of God met the thirst of humans.

The thirst that Jesus and the Samaritan woman shared is quenched by the end of the story. Initially, both Jesus and the woman find themselves in need of water. Jesus, in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>80</sup> Nancy Haught, *Sacred Strangers: What the Bible's Outsiders Can Teach Christians* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2017), 60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>81</sup> Haught, *Sacred Strangers*, 60.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>82</sup> Jean Corbon, *The Wellspring of Worship*, trans. Matthew O'Connell (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005), 33.

this situation, appears to be more helpless as he has no instrument to retrieve the water from the well, and the woman does not hesitate to point it out.<sup>83</sup> Despite the apparent helplessness of Jesus, the conversation pivots towards deeper intellectual and spiritual matters, which underscores their willingness to look past each other's differences. Bonnie Thurston declares, "The Samaritan woman is, in fact, one of the most theologically informed persons in the Fourth Gospel. She is, in short, conversant in Samaritan theology. (which is not surprising since, unlike Jews, Samaritan educated both male and female children religiously)"84 As the conversation between the two unfolds, the woman recognizes the potency of Jesus and calls him a prophet (Jn 4:19). As a Samaritan, her statement to declare Jesus as a prophet is a significant one because the Samaritans "acknowledge no prophet after Moses other than the one spoken of in Deut 18: 18, and him they regarded as the Messiah."85 On the other hand, Jesus recognizes the woman's intellectual capacity and perceives her as a potential intellectual partner who could understand him, so Jesus does not hesitate to reveal his true self to her (v 26). By the end of the conversation, Jesus had gained a follower, and the woman came to believe in a Messiah who satisfied her spiritual thirst. Both parties gained what they longed for. Towards the end of this episode, Jesus and his disciples stay in that city for two days, and many come to believe in him (v 40-41), which points to the success of Jesus' ministry.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>83</sup> Conditioned by years of hostility between the two denominations, the woman cannot help but take a dig at Jesus in the beginning with a sarcastic question (Jn 3:11) but soon moves past these differences.

<sup>84</sup> Haught, Sacred Strangers, 65.

<sup>85</sup> Morris, The Gospel According to John, 266.

## 2.8 The Spirit Transcends

The episode of Jesus and the Samaritan woman is filled with many spiritual and theological teachings. This episode contains the theme of living water and spiritual thirst (Jn 4:14-15), true worship (v. 23) and spirituality (v. 24), and the messiahship of Jesus (v. 26). All these themes underscore one overarching theme, which is the Holy Spirit and its works. Despite the brief mention of the Holy Spirit in the passage, the whole episode takes place because of the Holy Spirit and relies upon the working of the Holy Spirit.

In the first chapter of the Gospel, according to John, John the Baptist testifies that he saw the Holy Spirit descend and remain on Jesus (Jn 1: 32) and adds that Jesus is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit (v 33). The Synoptic gospels, in their respective traditions, describe that during the baptism, the Holy Spirit descended on Jesus (Mt 3:22, Mk 1:10 and Lk 3:22). His baptism marks the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus, and the descent of the Holy Spirit, indicates that the Holy Spirit would accompany him in his ministry. Right after his baptism, the evangelists Matthew and Luke describe Jesus being led by the Spirit in the wilderness to be tempted (Mt 4:1, Lk 4:1). Mark is more forceful about the Holy Spirit and adds that the Holy Spirit "drove" (Mk 1:12) Jesus to the wilderness. Nevertheless, in all the synoptics, it is made clear that the Holy Spirit guided Jesus in his ministry.

If the Holy Spirit truly guided Jesus and led him to unchartered territories, then it can be assumed without a doubt that the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman was the work of the Holy Spirit. Lilly Nortje-Meyer affirms this when she points to the evangelist's use of the words, "he had to pass through Samaria," indicating that

there was a purpose behind the journey. 86 Given the history of conflict between the Jews and the Samaritan, the encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman would not have ended the way it did had it not been the working of the Spirit. Not only did the Holy Spirit lead Jesus through the city of Samaria, but it also led him to encounter the Samaritan woman.

The encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman illustrates the working of the Holy Spirit. First, Jesus talks about the living water that he wishes to give (Jn 4:14). Jesus does not refer to himself as the living water but the one who gives it, which is why the primary meaning of living water is the Holy Spirit.<sup>87</sup> The understanding is reinforced in the subsequent verse, where Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit becoming a spring of water gushing up to eternal life in them (v. 14). Moreover, Jesus highlights the essential role of the Holy Spirit in facilitating genuine worship, emphasizing the necessity of worshiping in "spirit and truth." (John 4:23) "Spirit and truth" in this verse does not mean the Holy Spirit but the human spirit; nevertheless authentic worship is made possible by the Holy Spirit, especially when the believers do not know how to pray (Rom 8:26). 88 Additionally, the Holy Spirit is instrumental in revealing the truth about Jesus, as seen in the tentative question of the Samaritan woman: "He cannot be the Messiah, can he? (Jn 4:29)." This question, seemingly posed with uncertainty, carries an implicit acknowledgment of Jesus' identity as the Messiah. In the discourse on the work of the Spirit (Jn 16:4-11), Jesus affirms that the Spirit will take what belongs to him and declare

<sup>86</sup> S. J. Nortjé, "The Role of Women in the Fourth Gospel," Neotestamentica 20 (1986): 25.

<sup>87</sup> Morris, The Gospel According to John, 260.

<sup>88</sup> Morris, The Gospel According to John, 270.

it to believers, thus confirming his identity and mission. In this encounter, the Samaritan woman came to understand the true identity of Jesus and the working of the Holy Spirit.

The work of the Holy Spirit does not end with the woman's realization of the true identity of Jesus and the working of the Holy Spirit. The woman herself becomes a font of living water and is now on a mission to draw people to Jesus. The encounter with Jesus has led her through some changes, and the woman who came to the well at noon to avoid people now goes to meet people and invite them to meet Jesus. Her encounter with Jesus becomes her testimony, and she does not hesitate to use her life as an example. There was no command or commission from Jesus, yet she took the initiative to invite her neighbors (Jn 4:28-29). She is contrasted with the disciples, who puzzle over the meaning of Jesus' harvest sayings while she performs them (v 31-38).89 The testimony of the woman bears fruit (v 39), and the rhetorical question that the woman asked (v 29) is answered by the people, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world (v 42)."

#### 2.9 Holy Spirit and Trauma

Before identifying the possibility of trauma in the life of the Samaritan women and the victims of domestic abuse, it is crucial first to reflect the profound impact of trauma on any individual. The line between life and death is clearly marked for a living

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>89</sup> Amy Smith Carman and Joseph Grana, "The Woman of Samaria as Mistress, Slave, and Disciple," in *Looking Both Ways*, ed. Wm. Curtis Holtzen and J. Blair Wilgus, At the Intersection of the Academy and the Church: Essays in Honor of Joseph C. Grana II (Claremont Press, 2021), 66, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2b07vwc.8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> The woman initially asks a rhetorical question, "He cannot be the Messiah, can he? (Jn4:29)." Hidden within the question is her conviction that Jesus is the Messiah. The rhetorical question asked to the people could have been her way of drawing people to Jesus, and the people's response shows that her mission was successful.

person. But often, this line is blurred when one undergoes an overwhelming event(s) beyond one's comprehension and which exceeds the human capacity to take in and process the external world. 91 When confronted with such an experience, access to life as previously known becomes obstructed, and the experience of desire, which was lifegiving, is blocked. 92 The encounter with death fundamentally alters one's perception of life, imbuing it with vulnerability and complexity. The encounter with death is defined as trauma.

All living creatures who share the Spirit of God also share a similar experience of trauma when life encounters death. Trauma triggers a physiological response where the body mobilizes all resources to address the threat, severely impairing the individual's ability to regulate their bodily response. While the body struggles to regulate the response, the human Spirit is at a loss for words. The desire for life is affected, and the person traumatized can no longer see the difference between life and death as these two are intertwined for the person.

The person suffering from trauma often feels abandoned. That person is unable to articulate the effect of trauma and one's experiences. The frustration that a person

<sup>91</sup> Shelly Rambo and Catherine Keller, *Spirit, and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>92</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Beyond The Pleasure Principle*, trans. C. J. M. Hubback (Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2010), 44. Life and death are normal phenomena, and what remains between life and death is desire. Sigmund Freud, in his article, 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle,' considers this desire as a life force and identifies it as sexual desire. He avoids theologizing and giving a metaphysical explanation. According to him, the God language people usually employ is sex in masquerade. This theory of Freud was challenged by Sarah Coakley, who thinks otherwise. According to her, the sexual drive human beings experience is the desire for God. Coakley states that this desire is more fundamental than sex, and sexual desire is only participation in the desire that human has for God.

undergoes while articulating the experience of trauma can further intensify a sense of isolation.<sup>93</sup> Something similar is seen in the experience of Adrienne Von Speyr, a mystic who underwent a mystical experience of the suffering of Christ on Good Friday, which lasted till Sunday morning. Her experience of Holy Saturday was that of loneliness, forsakenness, and abandonment in hell.<sup>94</sup> Trauma can be compared to the experience of Holy Saturday, which narrates the aftermath of the passion of the Lord on Good Friday. This abandonment transcends the physical realm, extending into the spiritual realm, leaving the individual severed from creation and their Creator.

In the Samaritan woman's encounter with Jesus, the signs and impact of trauma are visible. The first sign of trauma, which is evident, is the social stigma and discrimination that she faced due to her personal history. This stigma and discrimination she faced led her to draw water at noon, an unusual time chosen by her, to avoid social encounters. The desire to isolate herself from others can suggest a fear of judgment or a subject of gossip from her community members. Her struggle in relationships, as hinted by Jesus's revelation of her multiple marriages, indicates a life marked by hardship and rejection, leaving emotional scars and fostering a sense of isolation and unworthiness. Moreover, her dialogue with Jesus reveals a deep spiritual longing, evident in her desire for the "living water." This spiritual thirst reflects her yearning for her connection with God.

<sup>93</sup> Rambo and Keller, Spirit and Trauma, 21.

<sup>94</sup> Rambo and Keller, Spirit and Trauma, 50.

The Samaritan women's encounter with Jesus mirrors the experience of Holy Saturday of Von Speyr, where one feels abandoned by God and humanity. The uniqueness of Holy Saturday is that it is neither the death nor the resurrection, and the suffering lies in the "finality of its disconnection." Her longing to connect with God and humanity highlights the impact of trauma on her life and the Spirit of God inside her, thriving for healing and redemption through her encounter with Jesus.

The parallels drawn between the trauma experienced by the Samaritan women in a patriarchal society and the plight of women facing domestic abuse in India shed light on the universal struggle of women across different cultures and times. In both contexts, women are subject to various forms of violence and control within their intimate relationships, leaving a lasting impact on their physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing.

First and foremost, the physical repercussions of the women facing marital violence are evident in their signs of physical injury. National data indicates that among those reporting physical or sexual violence, 26 % of urban women and 39 % of rural women have been injured by marital violence. These injuries, ranging from deep wounds to broken bones and teeth, of the goes untreated due to a lack of access to

95 Rambo and Keller, Spirit and Trauma, 50.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>96</sup> Anita Raj, "Public Health Impact of Marital Violence against Women in India," *Indian Journal of Medical Research* 150, no. 6 (December 2019): 525, https://doi.org/10.4103/ijmr.IJMR 1427 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>97</sup> *National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) 2015-16: India*, 2017, 561, https://ruralindiaonline.org/en/library/resource/national-family-health-survey-nfhs-4-2015-16-india/.

healthcare and familial objections. Because of this, many women are compelled to endure the pain in silence.

The second impact of domestic violence is on the emotional wellbeing of the woman who is a victim of sexual and emotional abuse. The NFHS-4 data indicates that "among married women age 15-49 who have experienced sexual violence, 83 % report their current husband, and 9 % report a former husband as perpetrators." A married woman also experiences marital control in the following ways: i) when her husband becomes jealous or angry if she talks to other men; ii) when he limits her contact with her friends and her own family. The shock from sexual abuse and the imposition of marital control have significantly impacted the emotional and psychological well-being of the women. Enduring such abuse not only inflicts profound psychological trauma but also erodes a woman's sense of autonomy and self-worth. The pervasive fear instilled by the threat of violence and control over her social interaction leaves these victims emotionally scarred and mentally exhausted.

The trauma experienced by the Samaritan woman and women in India serves as a meeting point, highlighting the impact of abuse on individuals' behavior and social interactions. Regardless of cultural context, the experience of abuse inflicts deep psychological wounds that shape the way women navigate their lives and relationships. In the case of the Samaritan woman, the social stigma attached to her compelled her to avoid the company of others. The withdrawal from social interactions becomes a coping mechanism for her to save herself from judgment and shame. Similarly, women in India who are victims of domestic abuse often find themselves trapped in a cycle of shame and

<sup>98</sup> National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) 2015-16, 565.

isolation, which is inflicted on them by their spouses or family members. Being trapped in an abusive relationship, submission to the abuser becomes one way of coping to save themselves from the physical and mental pain that would be inflicted if they resist or fail to obey.

## 2.10 The Spirit's Resilience in a Culture of Suppression

Domestic abuse and the violence that women suffer are not merely isolated incidents but manifestations of deeper societal issues. These acts of violence serve as a tool of suppression, control, and death, perpetuating a cycle of inequality and suffering. There is a correlation between how women are perceived and how they are treated in society. According to the National Family Health Survey of 2007, the Indian states which had poor records on female literacy, domestic violence, and female feticide<sup>99</sup> also had the highest rate of gun violence towards women, torture, rape, and subsequent suicide.<sup>100</sup> This culture of oppression and suppression stems from the belief in the superiority of the male gender, which creates an environment that is conducive to the subjugation of women. This inequality breeds an environment where those in power silence women's voices, their bodies and spirits crushed under the weight of oppression.

But despite facing such adversities, women's resilience and their desire to survive often find a way to transcend their circumstances. While their survival is accompanied by trauma, they nevertheless find a way to reach God and the human spirit and demand a response. In the case of women who face abuse and whose voices are suppressed by

<sup>99</sup> Feticide is the act of killing a fetus or causing a miscarriage.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>100</sup> Raman, Women in India, Volume 2, 206.

society, their groaning and their pain have an impact on God and creation. In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul addresses this when he says that the whole creation is 'groaning' to its final Christological telos in God (Rom 8: 18-21). This groaning is indeed a sigh that has a prayerful implication and, at times, is equivalent to crying out to God. When the creatures are in pain and experiencing suffering, they often lack the words to pray, and 'when we (they) cannot pray, it is the Spirit that intercedes on behalf of creation with sighs too deep for words.' (Rom 8: 26b)

The Spirit that intercedes on behalf of creation to God is the Spirit of God present in creation. Jurgen Moltmann emphasizes the immanence of God within creation by pointing out that when God called the universe into existence, he entered into it and, through his creative power, dwelled in it. <sup>101</sup> The same Spirit that breathed life into the cosmos is present within every living individual. This divine essence animates and sustains all of creation, including human beings. Recognizing this presence is an acknowledgment of the interconnectedness of all life and a profound affirmation of human dignity.

This acknowledgment also implies that the women who are victims of domestic abuse, irrespective of their religion, caste, creed, or occupation, are the vessels of the Spirit of God.<sup>102</sup> Despite their oppression, they remain bearers of the divine essence,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>101</sup> Moltmann, God in Creation, 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> The dignity of the human person is intricately linked to their creation in the image of God and the indwelling of God's Spirit within them. As expressed in *Gaudium et Spes*, this dignity is grounded in the inherent call to communion with God. Thus, by virtue of being created in the image and likeness of God and redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ, every individual possesses an inherent right to be recognized as a person. Consequently, each human being deserves respect as a reflection of the living God, and their life should be treated with utmost sacredness. (*Gaudium et Spes*:14, 22)

deserving of dignity, respect, and compassion. Their suffering is not only a consequence of human cruelty but also a desecration of the Spirit of God within them. The human groaning that arises out of the act of violence is the Spirit of God within the person calling out to God and has the potential to move the hearts of other individuals who are also the vessels of the Spirit of God.

### 2.11 God's preferential love for the suffering and stirring of the Human Heart

The Spirit of God, who resides in all of his creation, is ever-present. In moments of profound weakness and desolation, when acts of violence violate the human Spirit, the presence of the Spirit of God is magnified. When the human being is desecrated through domestic abuse, resulting in the feeling of abandonment, the Spirit is manifested ever more profoundly in their groaning. St. Paul speaks about how the Spirit of God helps us in our weakness and prays on our behalf when praying becomes difficult (Rom 8:26). When a person has no control over their situation and suffers under their current circumstances, the Spirit uses experiential force, and the individual enters into a realm beyond words. 103 Even without the conscious invocation of their Creator, the Spirit of God within the victim connects the creation to their Creator.

Gustavo Gutierrez, speaking about those abused and marginalized, notes how the bible is marked with "God's love and predilection for the weak and the abused of the human history."<sup>104</sup> In the midst of violence, where the victim's sense of control is stripped away and replaced with submission, their act of surrender to the situation becomes an act

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>103</sup> Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay "On The Trinity"* (Cambridge New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 126.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> Sobrino and Ellacuria, Systematic Theology, 240.

of profound spiritual significance. In this state of vulnerability and powerlessness, they become vessels for divine grace, their very existence a testament to the enduring resilience of the human Spirit.

The Samaritan woman and the women who face abuse because of their vulnerability become favorable to God. Their silent groaning and cries are spirit-filled, and in the midst of their suffering and trauma, they are able to move the Spirit of God, present inside others, which demands a response. The Samarian woman was able to encounter Jesus, and this encounter made her become a vessel of spiritual teaching and an instrument that drew others to Jesus. The women of domestic abuse, through their submission and groaning, can stir human hearts. This stirring of the human heart is the work of the Holy Spirit present inside all creation, and it urges humans to respond to the cries of other humans.

The stirring of the human heart is the work of the Spirit, which is deeply related to human suffering. In the book of Ezra, the author writes, "... the Lord stirred up the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia..." (Ezra 1:1b). This stirring of the spirit, as described by Ezra, can be the result of the groaning of the people under their captivators. The people of Israel who were in captivity were the victims of shame and trauma. The temple in Jerusalem, which was the symbol of the presence of God, was destroyed. This loss of the sacred space left a void in their spiritual life. This loss, which translated into groaning, song, and psalms, could have played some role in stirring the hearts of people around them (Ezra1:5), including the ruler, who not only let the people return but also sent material help to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.

The groans of suffering people hold a profound power to stir the hearts of humanity, demanding empathy and action. Just as the suffering of the exiled Israelites and the marginalized Samaritan woman transformed them into vessels of spiritual influence, so too does the suffering of women facing domestic abuse evoke a response from those in favorable positions. Through these interconnected narratives, the Spirit is at work, bridging the gap between human suffering and divine intervention, inspiring creation to heed the cries of the marginalized and act with compassion.

This stirring of the heart by the Spirit is evident throughout history, including during colonial times in India, notably in the abolition of Sati, a practice deemed sacred in Hindu tradition. Even though the practice of *Sati* was honorable and a matter of pride in Hinduism, it was a scene of horror for outsiders, including the colonizers. During the Colonial era, the magistrate of Gornekpore reports on the practice of *sati*, which he witnessed: "Mussumul Bussuntree *leaped twice from the pile and attempted to escape; she was twice thrown back by her relations, who surrounded the pile, and forcibly detained her until consumed.* This took place in the presence of the cutwall of the city, who, with others, proved to have been concerned, are committed for trial to the judge of the circuit." The voices of the voiceless, initially ignored in a society that glorified violence against them, were eventually amplified through the Spirit's stirring.

This account is one of numerous accounts that eventually led the colonizers to abolish it despite the opposition of the colonized. But before the British government could declare this practice illegal, "many Christian missionaries like James Piggs raised

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> *The Oriental Herald and Journal of General Literature: 1824*, v. 15, 1827, 411, https://books.google.com/books?id=BPIaAAAAYAAJ.

the problem of Sati in the name of humanitarianism."<sup>106</sup> Eventually, in 1829, the British government in Bengal made the practice of Sati a criminal offense and warned other Indian rulers against the practice of *Sati*. <sup>107</sup> This historic event serves as a testament to how the oppressed, whose cries were once disregarded, eventually managed to stir the hearts of the colonizers through the Spirit's intervention.

Human suffering demands human intervention because the Spirit residing within those suffering stirs the human heart. For Christians, being attuned to the prompting of the Spirit is important and requires readiness to heed its guidance. In this regard, Christian liturgy assumes a significant role in preparing the believer's heart to be sensitized to the Spirit's movements. When approached with sincerity and right intention, the liturgy possesses the potential to deeply stir the hearts of Christians, compelling them to confront actions that defile human dignity, in particular, domestic abuse. This liturgical possibility will be explored In the next chapter.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>106</sup> G.D. Shukla, "British Attitude Towards the Practice of Sati in Gujarat in the 19th Century," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 48 (1987): 480.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>107</sup> Shukla, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 480.

# **Chapter 3: Liturgy that Stirs the Heart**

As emphasized in the previous chapter, in the journey of human existence, the presence of the Holy Spirit transcends all boundaries. Regardless of differences in religious beliefs, social status, or background, every individual serves as a vessel for the divine essence. Jurgen Moltmann underscores this notion, emphasizing that God's creative power dwells in each of his creations and is present within each individual. The presence of the Spirit of God in an individual is also linked to the dignity of the human person because each individual has a call to communion, and this communion is possible because of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Top

The same spirit of God, who animates living beings, also guides the people through discernment and the recognition of the signs of God's activity within the events, their needs, and desires. The Holy Spirit is also present in the suffering of the weak and the marginalized and continues to stir the hearts of those in positions of power to aid those who are traumatized.

In Christian practice, the Holy Spirit assumes a central role as the active agent within liturgical rites. Every Christian prayer begins and concludes with acknowledgment of the Holy Trinity, underscoring the indispensable role of the Spirit in spiritual life.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Moltmann, God in Creation, 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> Human beings, by virtue of being created in the image and likeness of God and redeemed by the sacrifice of Christ, every individual possesses an inherent right to be recognized as a person. This is why each human deserves respect as they are a reflection of the living God, and their life should be treated with utmost sacredness. *Gaudium et Spes, 22*.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>110</sup> Gaudium et Spes, 2.

<sup>111</sup> At the start of every prayer and celebration and its' end, the Holy Spirit is acknowledged with the invocation, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," and at the end

Recognizing the presence of the Holy Spirit and heeding its promptings thus becomes paramount for effective Christian living, permeating every aspect of existence with divine guidance and grace.

In this chapter, I explore the profound impact of liturgy on the human spirit with a particular focus on its ability to evoke heartfelt responses from the people. First, I delve into the potential of the Christian liturgy as a vehicle for promoting social justice, emphasizing the importance of inculcating social justice. I lay a special importance on homily, which has the potential to stir the hearts of Christians and make them sensitive to the cry of the woman suffering abuse. The full realization of Christian life occurs when the worship of Christ in liturgy is translated into tangible acts of compassion and justice. Walter Burghardt rightly says, "Only by drawing together liturgists and social reformers can the 'body of Christ move more effectively from the Church to the world, from altar to people, from Christ crucified on Calvary to Christ crucified at the crossroad of our earth.""

Secondly, I seek to formulate interreligious liturgy, drawing inspiration from the program of indigenization of the Catholic Church in India.<sup>113</sup> Through this approach, I seek to create inclusive worship experiences that resonate with individuals of diverse

of every prayer, the trinity is glorified with the prayer, "Glory be to the father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is not and ever shall be, world without end." In some cases, the closing acknowledgment differs and often takes the form of a blessing, "May Almighty God bless you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," to which the congregation responds, "Amen."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>112</sup> Anne Y. Koester, *Liturgy, and Justice: To Worship God in Spirit and Truth* (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 2002), xi.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> D. S. Amalorpavadass, "Indigenization and the Liturgy of the Church," *International Review of Mission* 65, no. 258 (April 1, 1976): 164–67, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-6631.1976.tb03048.x.

faith traditions, fostering a shared spiritual connection and allowing the Holy Spirit to stir their hearts. While acknowledging that the concept of the Holy Spirit may not be universally recognized outside of Christian theology, I highlight parallels within Hinduism that mirror the essence of divine presence and guidance. By identifying common ground between religious traditions, we can bridge religious gaps and let the Spirit of God stir the hearts of people so that they can come together to respond to the social evil of domestic violence.

#### 3.1 Liturgy and Social Justice

The symbiotic relationship between liturgy and just living is integral to Christian existence, grounded in the Old and New Testaments. This foundational understanding is encapsulated in Jesus' teachings, notably when he responded to the Pharisees' inquiry about the greatest commandment. Jesus articulated, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and most important commandment. The second is like this: 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.' All of Moses' Teachings and the prophets depend on these two commandments" (Mt 22:37-49). While the love for God finds expression in various ways, liturgical practices become one of the avenues through which this love is manifested. Conversely, love for our neighbors is actualized through living justly. However, the essence of Christian living lies in the harmonious integration of both. Compartmentalizing liturgy and social justice cannot bear fruits on their own, and the amalgamation of these two is essential for a healthy Christian life. The convergence of these two elements is necessary for a healthy Christian existence; this unified integration ensures that each aspect becomes efficacious in its respective sphere.

Liturgy and social justice ought to influence each other and be influenced by one another. This reciprocal relationship is what helps the liturgy be relevant. Social justice, in particular, plays a pivotal role in offering a fresh interpretive lens for liturgy, considering the context in which the liturgical celebration unfolds. The second Vatican Council was the result of the changing society and the need to address the social and political transformation that the world had undergone. The Church realized that mere liturgical practices alone would not go a long way, which is why Pope John XXIII writes, "She (The Church) preaches and inculcates a social doctrine and social norms which would eliminate every sort of injustice and produce a better and more equitable distribution of goods if they were put into practice as they should be. At the same time, she encourages friendly cooperation and mutual assistance among the various classes so that all men and women may become in name and in fact not only free citizens of the same society but also brothers and sisters within the same family."<sup>114</sup> The Second Vatican Council, in essence, signifies the Church's responsiveness to the evolving political and social consciousness of the global community, compelling an adaptive approach to liturgy. This openness is aptly characterized as "the Church's first official selfactualization as a world Church."115

The awareness of the social and the political scenarios led to the Church making a decision that "allowed for Catholics to pray with other Christian denominations, encouraged friendship with other non-Christian faiths, and opened the door for languages

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>114</sup> Pope John XXIII, "On Truth, Unity, and Peace in a Spirit of Charity," *Papal Encyclicals*, June 29, 1959, par. 128, https://www.papalencyclicals.net/john23/j23petri.htm.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>115</sup> Karl Rahner, "Towards a Fundamental Theological Interpretation of Vatican II," *Theological Studies* 40, no. 4 (December 1, 1979): 717, https://doi.org/10.1177/004056397904000404.

besides Latin to be used during Mass. Other new positions concerned education, the media, and divine revelation."116 Prior to that, the church was seen to be interested in its own internal stability and integrity, which is why the Church was seen as a "fortress." 117 Thus, the second Vatican Council becomes an excellent example of how openness to the notion of social justice can influence liturgy and practices related to it.

By its very nature, liturgy calls for just living which impacts communal living. A good liturgical celebration "facilitates public responsibility, not because it provides principles of solution... but because it makes them aware of their addiction and their illusions, casts a pitiless light on myopic self-interest, detaches from a narrow selfishness and facilitates Christian discernment."118 We must also note that a good liturgical celebration does not depend on the celebrant alone but, more importantly, on the people, and that is why the church desires from the faithful a "conscious and active participation."119

Pope Francis made it clear when he said, "A celebration that does not evangelize is not authentic, just as a proclamation that does not lead to an encounter with the risen Lord, in the celebration is not authentic." Francis, in saying so, emphasizes that liturgy

<sup>116</sup> Teicher, Jordan, "Why Is Vatican II So Important?" Oct 10, 2012 (Web) https://www.npr.org/2012/10/10/162573716/why-is-vatican-ii-so-important

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> Teicher, Jordan, "Why Is Vatican II So Important?" Oct 10, 2012 (Web) https://www.npr.org/2012/10/10/162573716/why-is-vatican-ii-so-important

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>118</sup> Koester, Liturgy, and Justice: To Worship God in Spirit and Truth, 41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>119</sup> Second Vatican Council "Sacrosanctum Concilium," 14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>120</sup> Pope Francis, "Desiderio Desideravi," on the Liturgical Formation of the People of God (June 29, 2022) | Francis," 37, accessed December 3, 2023, par. 37.

has the potency to influence the way of life of the faithful if celebrated with proper understanding and reverence. Thus, liturgy and social justice are deeply interconnected, and they ought to be influenced by each other for authentic Christian living.

#### 3.2 The Homily as the Bridge Between Liturgy and Social Justice

The Eucharist stands as the cornerstone of Christian worship because of its emphasis on the sacrificial love of Jesus Christ. Recognizing its importance, the Second Vatican Council articulated its understanding of liturgy, including the Eucharist, as the central act of Christian worship and the pinnacle of Christian life: "Nevertheless the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time, it is the font from which all her power flows. The aim and object of apostolic works is that all who are made sons of God by faith and baptism should come together to praise God in the midst of His Church, to take part in the sacrifice, and to eat the Lord's supper." 121

An important moment of the Eucharistic celebration is the Homily, which serves as a pivotal moment where the word of God intersects with the lived experience of the faith. It serves as a beacon of guiding the hearts and minds of the faithful toward a deeper understanding of divine truth and inspiring transformative action in the world, and this shares in the "redemptive and creative word of God." Thus, the homily, in particular, becomes a point where liturgy meets social justice.

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\_letters/documents/20220629-lettera-ap-desiderio-desideravi.html.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>121</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Sacrosanctum Concilium: Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2016), 10.

In eucharistic celebration, John Corbon articulates the transformative power of the homily, asserting that when the Gospel is proclaimed during the eucharist, it transcends mere words and "becomes an event." Through the workings of the Holy Spirit, the words of Jesus cease to be mere teachings; they become a living encounter with the divine, a sacred event that has the power to touch hearts and change lives. The role of the preacher, thus, is to articulate in a way that this "event" is clearly recognizable to the people.

In order for preaching to become an "event," the preacher must prepare the homily with reverence. The homilist must be attuned to the needs and realities of the congregation, crafting a message that is relevant, engaging, and spiritually nourishing. According to Pope Benedict XVI, ordained ministers should prepare homilies carefully and avoid "generic and abstract" <sup>123</sup>preaching. This highlights the importance of crafting homilies that are concrete, specific, and grounded in the lived experiences of the congregation. Rather than offering high theological abstractions, the preacher is called to delve into the concrete realities of human life and faith, offering practical insights and guidance that resonate with the faithful. Pope Francis went ahead and admonished preachers who took no time to prepare by calling them "dishonest and irresponsible." <sup>1124</sup> The General Instruction of the Roman Missal indicates that a homily "should be an exposition of some aspect of the readings from Sacred Scripture or of another text from

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>122</sup> Corbon, The Wellspring of Worship, 149.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis, 2007, 46. https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost\_exhortations/documents/hf\_ben-xvi exh 20070222 sacramentum-caritatis.html

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> Francis, "Evangelii Gaudium," 145.

the Ordinary or from the Proper of the Mass of the day and should take into account both the mystery being celebrated and the particular needs of the listeners." <sup>125</sup> Therefore, through the exploration of scripture and the application of the teachings to the lives of the congregation, a homily ought to seek to inspire spiritual growth, moral transformation, and deeper intimacy with God.

As indicated by the Homiletic Directory, a homily is directed towards the glorification of God. Because it is an integral part of the eucharist, a homily "should flow quite naturally out of the readings and into the liturgical action that follows." The readings selected for the liturgy serve as a foundation upon which the homily is based. By drawing upon the themes, narratives, and teachings contained within the readings, the homily becomes intimately connected to the liturgical texts and the liturgical season, fostering a sense of continuity and coherence within the celebration. Therefore, the homily is not an isolated or disconnected element within a eucharistic celebration but an integral part of the whole.

The effect of a homily on the lives of the faithful goes beyond liturgical celebration. This highlights the transformative power of the Word of God, proclaimed in the homily, and its relevance to everyday life. The command to "Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord by your life" serves as a summons for the faithful to live out their faith in the world, carrying the message of the Gospel into their daily interactions and endeavors. It is a command to "carry out the works of the gospel and fulfill one's baptismal commitment."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>125</sup> The General Instruction of the Roman Missal, 65.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>126</sup> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Fulfilled in Your Hearing, 23.

While the liturgy is concluded, the words of the homily start concretizing in the lives of the faithful, shaping their perspective on the world and influencing their actions and decisions. The acceptance of the word proclaimed in the homily demands a response that can take many forms. "Sometimes, it will be appropriate to call people to repentance for the way they have helped to spread the destructive power of sin in the world. At other times, the preacher will invite the congregation to devote themselves to some specific action as a way of sharing in the redemptive and creative words of God."<sup>127</sup>

The success of a homily is ultimately measured by its "impact on people when they leave the church and return to their homes or schools, neighborhoods, or workplaces." It is measured not only by the immediate emotional or intellectual response elicited during the liturgical celebration but also by the lasting transformation it inspires in individuals and communities. As the faithful embody the message of the homily in their words and deeds, they become living witnesses to God's redemptive and creative power at work in the world. This witness is manifested not only in acts of charity and compassion but also in efforts to confront and challenge the structures of injustice and oppression that perpetuate sin and suffering.

At times, bearing witness to God's transformative power may require speaking out against the "destructive power of sin," which prevails in society. Whether advocating for the rights of the voiceless, challenging systems that breed abuse, or promoting environmental stewardship and sustainability, the faithful are called to be agents of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>127</sup> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Fulfilled in Your Hearing, 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>128</sup> Dominic Grassi and Joe Paprocki, *Living the Mass: How One Hour a Week Can Change Your Life*, Second edition (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2011), 44.

change and transformation in the world. That is why, when done right, a good homily becomes a bridge between liturgy and social justice.

# 3.3 The Homily that Stirs the Heart

The connection between the stirring of the human heart and the work of the Holy Spirit is a recurring theme in Scriptures and Christian theology. In the book of Ezra, the Lord stirred the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia, leading him to take action that ultimately facilitated the return of the people to Jerusalem (Ezra 1:5). The groaning of the people, heard by God, stirred the human spirit that eventually led King Cyrus to intervene. Even though the stirring of the heart is the work of the Spirit, it is translated into human action.

Similarly, in the context of homilies, while preaching is a human action, it is the Spirit of God that moves the hearts of people to respond to the call that the homily entails. In the Institutes, Calvin writes, "For first, the Lord teaches and instructs us by his Word. Secondly, he confirms it by the sacraments. Finally, he illumines our minds by the light of his Holy Spirit and opens our hearts for the Word and sacraments to enter in, which would otherwise only strike our ears and appear before our eyes but not at all effect us within." While the "sacraments and liturgies" are human creations, they are nevertheless inspired by God through his Spirit. Through the working of the Holy Spirit,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>129</sup> John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* 4.14.10, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1989) 89.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>130</sup> According to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "sacraments" are "efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us. ", 1131 The word "liturgy" comes from the Greek words "leitourgia" which means "public service" or "work of the people." https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/liturgy

the liturgical celebrations become encounters with God, stirring the hearts of the faithful and inviting them into a deeper communion.

The stirring of the human heart in response to preaching and sacraments is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit, who breathes life into the words and actions of the Church, transforming them into instruments of grace and redemption. As the faithful participate in liturgical worship and engage with the Word of God proclaimed in homilies, they are drawn into the mysterious and transformative work of the Spirit, who moves them to respond with faith, love, and obedience.

Like others, a preacher has limitations and "cannot be expected to know everything." This recognition of human weakness points to the need for humility and reliance on God's grace in the preaching ministry. While the word of God has immense potential and power, the preacher has a human weakness, which is why the preacher, while preaching, makes an act of faith.

Paul Janowiak says, "Preaching the Word from the inside out is a vulnerable act, a human act, where stammering to be true to the Scripture handed on to us and now offered up to bring life to the People of God requires a profound act of faith and trust and, dare I use that fretful word, surrender." In this act of faith and surrender, the preacher becomes a humble instrument through which the transformative power of the Word of God is communicated. It is not simply the preacher's eloquence or rhetorical skill that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>131</sup> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Fulfilled in Your Hearing, 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>132</sup>Janowiak SJ, Paul A, "That I Might Know How to Answer the Weary a Word That Will Rouse Them" in Michael E. Connors, "That they may Connors, ed., *Preaching as Spiritual Leadership: Guiding the Faithful as Mystic and Mystagogue* (Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications, 2021), 105.

brings about transformation, but rather the inherent potency of the Word itself, working through the humble obedience and openness of the preacher.

By embracing their human frailty and entrusting themselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the preacher allows the Word of God to speak and act through them, bringing life and nourishment to the People of God. Faith and surrender also underscore a sense of helplessness on the part of humans and a call for the help of the divine. It is this sense of human helplessness that invites the Spirit of God to work and stir the hearts of the faithful. This sense of human helplessness reminds the preacher of the words of God to St. Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9).

#### 3.4 From Christ to the Victim of Domestic Abuse

A homily during the celebration of the Eucharist is not merely an explanation of theological truths. As the GIRM indicates, a homily ought to dwell on the readings of the day while considering the mystery of Christ that is celebrated in the eucharist and the need of the faithful who are present to celebrate that paschal mystery. Thus, the unifying factor in the homily is Jesus himself, which is why preaching ought to be Christocentric. He is the message and the messenger and is the key to interpreting scripture, which is why Henri de Lubac calls him the "whole exegesis" when he writes, "Jesus Christ brings about the unity of scripture because he is the endpoint and fullness of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>133</sup> Daniel Cardo, *The Art of Preaching: A Theological and Practical Primer* (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021), 48.

Scripture. Everything in it is related to him. In the end, he is its sole object. Consequently, he is, so to speak, its whole exegesis."<sup>134</sup>

The Christocentric aspect of the homily also points to the continuous salvific action of Christ in the world. Daniel Cardo writes, "Preaching finds its true meaning in the context of salvation history. What we say in our homilies is not mere teaching, but a humble and necessary participation in today's unfolding of the history of redemption." This participation in the history of redemption and the saving act of Christ is the result of the response to the call of the preacher, and this dynamic is what makes Christ "Wort und Antwort," Word and Answer."

Jesus as "Wort und Antwort" underscores the dynamic and dialogical nature of Christian faith, which involves both receiving and responding to the Word of God revealed in the person of Christ. It emphasizes the reciprocal relationship between God's self-disclosure and humanity's faithful response, highlighting the transformative power of encountering Christ and following Him in discipleship. The discipleship of Jesus has a broader implication as it encompasses the call for social justice and the transformation of society. His purpose and ministry were deeply rooted in the prophetic call for justice, mercy, and compassion. In His teachings and actions, he exemplified the principles of

<sup>134</sup> Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture, Vol. 1* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Edinburgh: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998), 237.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>135</sup> Cardo, *The Art of Preaching*, 48.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>136</sup> Paul Janowiak SJ and Edward Foley Capuchin, *The Holy Preaching: The Sacramentality of the Word in the Liturgical Assembly* (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 2000), 27. Otto Semmelroth calls Christ both the word and answer (Wort und Antwort). The word and the answer is located within the person of Christ, and his followers are called to actively participate in the ongoing work of the kingdom of God, seeking to bring about positive change and transformation in the world.

love, justice, and solidarity, calling His followers to embody these values in their own lives and communities.

As people encounter Christ within the Eucharist and particularly the homily, they are called to respond with faith and action. This response entails not only a personal transformation but also a commitment to working for justice and the common good. It involves recognizing the inherent dignity and worth of every human person, advocating for the rights of the marginalized and oppressed, and striving to create a society that reflects God's kingdom of love and justice. Jesus made this evident when he read from the scroll of Isaiah, "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 recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. (Luke 4: 18-19)"

With this Christological foundation, the homily can then transition into an examination of the issue of domestic abuse and make known to the faithful the harm it does to the dignity of an individual. Stories and statistics may provide the necessary tools for effective preaching, but they should not distract and deviate from the central message, which is Christ. When talking about issues that are sensitive, utmost care ought to be taken so that the homily does not discourage the faithful but rather motivates them to act toward the good of society. Care also ought to be taken so that the faithful, even in trying times, harbor hope because "Hope is a weapon that protects us in the struggle of salvation." <sup>137</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>137</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1820.

Addressing the issue of domestic violence during a homily requires sensitivity, empathy, and a deep understanding of the context of the congregation. Taking up such sensitive issues can be done only by pastors and leaders "who are in touch with the cares and concerns, needs and good fortune of the assembly."<sup>138</sup> The effectiveness of a homily on domestic violence is only possible if the pastor and the preacher are able to make a "connection between the lives of the people and the Gospel."<sup>139</sup> Pastors who have cultivated genuine relationships with their parishioners and are attuned to the social realities facing their community wield a greater authority on such subjects than those who do not know the congregation.

It's crucial to recognize that a homily alone cannot solve the complex issue of domestic abuse. However, it can serve as a powerful tool for raising awareness, fostering dialogue, and encouraging reflection on the social realities that contribute to domestic abuse. By shedding light on the prevalence and devastating impact of domestic violence, a well-crafted homily can lay the groundwork for the Spirit of God to stir the hearts of the faithful, prompting them to respond in their own unique ways.

There are a couple of ways that a preacher can make people aware and sensitive to the violence of domestic abuse. The most effective way is to narrate stories and real-life incidents, which move people to sympathy. By recounting real-life incidents and narratives, a preacher can evoke empathy and compassion in their listeners, compelling them to confront the reality of domestic violence. Even though these stories carry a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>138</sup> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Fulfilled in Your Hearing, 9.

<sup>139</sup> National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Fulfilled in Your Hearing, 10.

poignant sting, the congregation is brought face to face with the suffering endured by victims, allowing them to grasp the gravity of the issue. At the same time, drawing parallels between the brokenness of Christ's body and the anguish experienced by abused women, the preacher can illuminate a deeper spiritual dimension to the problem. Shawn Copeland writes, "Theologically considered, their suffering, like the suffering of Jesus, seeds a new life for the future of all humanity. Their suffering, like the suffering of Jesus, anticipates an enfleshment to freedom and life to which the eucharist is linked ineluctably." The faithful can thus see that, in a mystical way, Christ continues to suffer in the abuse of the women, even if the women do not belong to the same faith community.

Another way to make people sensitized to the violence of domestic abuse is to emphasize catholic social teaching and the role of Christians in the upliftment of society. By drawing upon the tradition of the Chruch documents, encyclicals, and teaching, the preacher can provide a solid theological foundation for understanding the moral imperative to combat domestic violence. Quoting relevant passages from encyclicals such as Pope Francis' "Laudato Si" or St. John Paul II's "Evangelium Vitae," the preacher can highlight the Church's unequivocal condemnation of all forms of violence and its commitment to promoting human dignity and the common good. By emphasizing key principles such as the inherent dignity of every person, the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable, and the call to solidarity and social responsibility, the preacher can

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>140</sup> M. Shawn Copeland, *Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 124. Copeland is comparing the suffering of the black community with the suffering of Christ, but the words are very much applicable to the suffering of the victims of abuse.

help form the conscience of the faithful and sensitize their hearts to the suffering of victims of abuse.

According to the "Indian Journal of Community Medicine,"<sup>141</sup> the issue of domestic violence does not exhibit discernable risk in Christian communities. However, the awareness raised can help in the formation of conscience, lead individuals to examine their attitudes and behavior and lead to a community that is sensitive to the voice of the voiceless. Thus, a homily on domestic violence serves as a call to action, inviting the faithful to confront the realities of abuse in their neighborhood with courage, compassion, and solidarity. By speaking truth to power and offering hope and support to victims, the Church plays a vital role in fostering healing, reconciliation, and social change within communities affected by domestic violence.

# 3.5 Interreligious Liturgy in the Missions of Goa Jesuit Province

In this section, I plan to propose an interreligious liturgy that is geared toward addressing the issue of domestic violence. Creating an interreligious liturgy focused on addressing the issue of domestic violence while navigating the political and cultural landscape of India presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities. Given the violent introduction of Christianity in India, even the attempt for interreligious dialogue and inculturation may meet challenges and opposition, and it is essential to approach this endeavor with sensitivity, respect, and inclusivity.

One approach to developing such a liturgy is to emphasize universal spiritual themes and values shared across different religious traditions while intentionally avoiding

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>141</sup> Mahapatro, Gupta, and Gupta, "The Risk Factor of Domestic Violence in India."

specific religious references or symbolism. By centering the liturgy on concepts such as love, compassion, justice, and dignity, it becomes accessible and relevant to individuals of diverse faith backgrounds, fostering a sense of unity and solidarity in addressing the issue of domestic violence. The primary goal of creating the liturgy is to make people sensitive to the abuse of domestic violence so that they, in their way, respond to the call of the hour.

The primary target of this interreligious liturgy will be the families of children studying in the mission school of the Goa Jesuit Province. Mark Francis delves into the three levels at which liturgy speaks. The official level, which is monitored by the Church; the public level, which is the common people; and the personal level. This interreligious liturgy aims to speak to the families in the village without focusing solely on the church. That is why this liturgy seeks to speak on the public and personal level.

The Goa province of the Society of Jesus extends its presence from Goa into the neighboring states of Maharashtra and Karnataka. Some of the main mission centers of the Goa Jesuits are Ratnagiri, Harnai, Gadinghlaj, and Chiplun, which are in the state of Maharashtra, and Sangargalli, Torangatti, Khanapur and Nesargi in the state of Karnataka. It is important to note that these three states diverge in language, religious affiliation, and cultural nuances, significantly influencing the operational dynamics of the missions. Nesargi, Sangargalli, and Khanapur are the rural villages where the Jesuits run the primary and secondary schools, and the relationships between the Jesuits and the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>142</sup> Mark R. Francis CSV, *Local Worship, Global Church: Popular Religion and the Liturgy* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2014), 8.

Locals are favorable. Given the influence of the schools in these villages, these three mission stations are the primary target of this interreligious liturgy.

# 3.6 The Liturgy

### Introductory rite

- 1) As the people gather, hymns and bhajans can be sung. The hymn and bhajans will not address any deity or religion but a universal God. The presider<sup>143</sup> can call and invite people to sing after him if needed.
- 2) The presider then welcomes the congregation by performing the arati.
- 3) The presider then invites the speaker<sup>144</sup> of the event will be to light the big lamp with an arati lamp. The congregation is invited to sing the Sanskrit invocation as the lamp is lit.

Asatoma Sad-Gamaya Asatoma Sad-Gamaya Tamaso Maa Jyotir-Gamaya Mrytyor-Maa Amritam Gamaya Om Shaantih Shaantihi Shaantihi

#### Penitential rite

4) During the penitential right, the presider will guide the assembly into an Ignatian Examen. This is done in three parts. A) The good things that I have experienced,B) the not-so-good things I have done, and C) things I will do to make amends.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>143</sup> The role of the presider will be taken on by a senior teacher, irrespective of their religion, caste, and gender.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>144</sup> The speaker, in most cases, will be a woman who holds a prominent role in society. She will be given the topic, the themes, and the choice of readings for her to prepare her preaching.

5) At the end of the examen, the presider will vocally beg for pardon from God on behalf of the people

# Liturgy of the Word

- 6) A reading from the Bhagavad Gita, Qu'ran, Bible, and other spiritual writings are read. The speaker decides the number of readings for the day.
- 7) The congregation then sings a hymn or a bhajan in response to the readings.
- 8) There follows a preaching. The preacher will dwell on the reading and connect it with the issue of domestic violence and the need to respect women in society. The preaching will be no longer than fifteen minutes.
- 9) The presider will then invite a prayerful silence to reflect on what was just heard.

## Prayers and affirmation

10) Simple prayers for the upliftment and safety of women and other needs will be read by school students.

## Concluding rite

11) The presider then invites the congregation to join their hands and say the following prayer<sup>145</sup>:-

Divine Source of Love and Compassion: In the sacred space of our hearts, we come together as one family, united in our shared humanity and bound by the bonds of love and respect.

We pray for the eradication of domestic violence, and the promotion of gender equality,

<sup>145</sup> The local language spoken in these areas is Marathi. While translating, priority will be given to the meaning and spirit of the prayer rather than accuracy.

in every corner of our world, irrespective of religion, race, or creed.

May your guiding light illuminate our path as we strive to create a world where all are valued, every voice is heard and honored, and love reigns supreme over fear and violence.

Grant us the wisdom and courage to challenge injustice, stand in solidarity with the oppressed and marginalized, and work tirelessly to empower all, especially those who have suffered in silence.

Bless us with the strength to break the chains of oppression and to build bridges of understanding and compassion so that together, hand in hand, we may create a future of hope, equality, and peace.

Om, Shanti, Shanti, Shanti

12) After the prayer, the presider will dismiss the congregation.

### Note

The interreligious liturgy proposed for use in school settings during school hours aims to promote inclusivity, respect, and unity among students and faculty members, regardless of their religious affiliations. Even though the ideas and concepts are borrowed from the liturgy of the Eucharist, it remains religiously neutral. The role of the presider will be taken on by a senior teacher, irrespective of their religion, caste, and gender.

The liturgy may be tailored to suit various occasions such as "open day," women's day, or national celebrations and should not be conducted on any religious feast or occasion.

Lastly, after the conclusion of the liturgy, feedback from the parents and teachers will be received.

## Conclusion

The prevalence of domestic violence in India is deeply entwined with the nation's history and patriarchal culture. The patriarchal worldview that so often dominates India continues to permeate through religious teachings and traditions today. It must be noted, however, that there exists some inherent respect for women in many of India's religious doctrines. Such alternatives, unfortunately, have often been misconstrued or misinterpreted so as to uphold patriarchal power structures. Additionally, despite more recent attempts at reinterpretation and reform, such a deep cultural understanding of the subordinate place and role of women within India continues to prevail and serve the patriarchal needs of society.

Knowing how deeply the roots of domestic violence run in India, eradicating this social sin is a slow yet essential process for the betterment of society. While this paper does not propose a sweeping solution to such longstanding and deeply rooted problems, it does offer a small and hopeful contribution. It advocates for the power of awareness-raising efforts within religious communities, particularly through liturgical practices and preaching. By embracing the principles of liberation theology and adopting a "See, Judge, Act" framework, individuals can cultivate a Christian response to combatting domestic violence and fostering a culture of respect, dignity, and equality for all members of society. The richness of Indian tradition and religious heritage holds a positive view of women, yet the misinterpretation of these traditions has led to the objectification and subjugation of women. Drawing upon the perspectives of women authors, this paper aims to "see" the historical treatment of women in society and the distortions within Hinduism,

Islam, and Christianity perpetuated by patriarchal interpretations. Following Shawn Copeland's telling of the story of Emmett Till, a woman who was violently murdered and whose mother insisted upon an open coffin for her son "in order to show the world the ravage of lunch like violence and mutilation," the Church, too, might also show society the horrors of these ongoing social ills. <sup>146</sup> "Seeing" the history and social sin and letting that impact us becomes the necessary step before moving towards "judging" and thus moving forward with more concrete social and political actions that address these structures of sin.

Central to this paper's thesis is the recognition of the Holy Spirit's transformative presence within the lives of domestic violence victims, something that transcends religious, caste, and racial boundaries. As vessels of divine grace and empowerment, victims are imbued with courage, resilience, and hope, calling forth a response of solidarity, compassion, and action from the wider community. In the second chapter, I look at the Holy Spirit, the author of life, and I "judge" that anything that goes against the Spirit of life and hinders it is not from God and is evil. I exegete the story of the Samaritan woman and compare it with the trauma of the women suffering domestic abuse to show that despite the trauma faced by these women, the spirit of God continues to thrive for life and eventually finds its way to flourish in life. Throughout human history and within sacred scriptures, numerous accounts illustrate how the Spirit of life has stirred people's hearts to respond compassionately to the suffering of others. These narratives serve as reminders of the Holy Spirit's enduring resilience and transformative power, moving individuals to respond with compassion and accordingly.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>146</sup> Copeland, Enfleshing Freedom: Body, Race, and Being, 117.

At the heart of liberation theology's call for justice is the imperative for action: "The focus of liberation theologies is praxis-oriented, moving away from orthodoxy towards orthopraxis, which is necessary if the goal is to bring about salvation, understood as liberation." Bearing this principle in mind, I turn my focus to liturgy, particularly the homily, recognizing its pivotal role in educating the faithful about the social sin of domestic violence. A well-prepared homily has the potential to enable the Holy Spirit to stir the hearts of the people and invite them to act for the betterment of society. While the homily remains inherently Christocentric, guiding the people "from Christ crucified on Calvary to Christ crucified at the crossroad of our earth," can enable the people to be sensitive to the cries of those abused. Inculcating real-life stories about victims of abuse and connecting them to the broken body of Christ is one way to help people be sensitive to the pains of people.

In addition to eucharistic and liturgical homilies within Christian contexts, interreligious liturgies in educational settings offer a unique opportunity to engage people of diverse faith backgrounds. However, in regions like the missions of Goa province, where religious tensions may exist, it is essential to approach such liturgies with sensitivity and care. Rather than promoting a specific Christian agenda, the focus should be on addressing the societal issues affecting all members of the community, particularly women who bear the brunt of many social injustices, including domestic violence. If

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>147</sup> Dr Miguel De La Torre, ed., *Introducing Liberative Theologies* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2015) xxii.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>148</sup> Anne Y. Koester, *Liturgy, and Justice: To Worship God in Spirit and Truth* (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 2002), xi.

done right, this interreligious liturgy will be well-received and bear the necessary fruit, in this care, the awareness of the social sin of domestic violence.

As highlighted above, domestic violence is a complex issue, and it cannot be resolved quickly. At the same time, the journey toward addressing this issue begins with a heightened awareness of its profound implications for human dignity, life, and spirituality. When our conscience is pricked by the sight of such violence and the Spirit stirs our hearts to respond, liturgy fulfills its crucial role of guiding the people "from Christ crucified on Calvary to Christ crucified at the crossroad of our earth." 149

<sup>149</sup> Anne Y. Koester, *Liturgy, and Justice: To Worship God in Spirit and Truth* (Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press, 2002), xi.

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