

In Action: Pope Francis' Diplomacy of Peace

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Abstract: This study is an analysis of Pope Francis' responses to humanitarian crises of his time, bringing with him the image of the Church as a stabilizing force *of its kind* in international relations. A historical survey of his constructive interactions with contemporary religious and political leaders is incorporated in this study to illustrate his unique style in building momentum for sustainable peace. Furthermore, to demonstrate consistency and distinction in diplomatic approaches, a brief comparison with the techniques of his immediate predecessors, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope John Paul II, is likewise integrated. Pope Francis' style for peace is a well-loved manifestation of the iconic "culture of mercy," which attempts to dissolve deep-rooted prejudices among peoples. The Church, a mystery of communion that engages the Gospel with the fast-paced world, has an excellent communicator in Pope Francis who can take the double role of a shepherd and a diplomat.

Keywords: Catholic Social Teaching, diplomacy, mercy, Pope Francis, peace

Introduction

Peace, on the other hand, triumphs through solidarity.
*It generates the desire for dialogue and cooperation
which finds an essential instrument in diplomacy.*
Mercy and solidarity inspire the convinced efforts of
the Holy See and the Catholic Church to avert conflicts

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and to accompany processes of peace, reconciliation, and the search for negotiated solutions. It is heartening that some of these attempts have met the goodwill of many people who, from a number of quarters, have actively and fruitfully worked for peace.¹

The desire for “dialogue” and “cooperation,” from the wellspring of mercy and solidarity, reflect the heart of the shepherd, who sees the inevitable in diplomacy, for the enrichment of peace. As threats form knots against order, this shepherd responds in ways that only he can, both as the head of the Roman Catholic Church and as the chief agent of the Holy See’s diplomatic relations. Having an unmediated experience of *periphery* did not prevent this shepherd from seeing the goodness in the world, for he is Francis, a champion of mercy, and God’s instrument for peace.

His sensible style for comprehensive peacebuilding revamped the predominance of the Roman Catholic Church as an indispensable moral force in world politics from his election to papacy on March 13, 2013. Devotees of human and sacred sciences alike see “mercy,” as the recurring theme of his pontificate. Indeed, Pope Francis knows when and where to speak and do mercy when peace and other related fundamental values are violated. He inherited not only the same political and religious throes of his immediate predecessors, but he also witnessed the evolution in mass atrocities that some secular leaders had failed to address. The question of whether he or the Church has the right to speak in these matters is already expected in the significant political climate of the post-Cold War era.

¹ Pope Francis, “The Pope to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps: Peace is a Gift, Challenge, and Commitment,” *Holy See Press Office*, 1 September 2017, [http:// www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va) [accessed January 20 2018]; italics supplied.

For the method of this study, the researcher will interpret the pope's diplomatic approaches to peace using his "four principles of building a people of peace," found in paragraphs 222-237 of his apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii gaudium*. These four principles will be explained briefly, followed by how they were applied in the pope's apostolic journeys to countries that have or have been in conflict situations, or to countries that have potential in building sustainable peace.

This study will be prompted by a brief overview of the Holy See's character in world politics and how it leads, through the current pope, other religions in case the new norm on humanitarian intervention—or responsibility to protect—fails to be enforced due to deadlock in the UN Security Council decisions. This study will prove that the four principles contribute to a concrete and lasting wave of sustainable peace.

The Holy See's Character in World Politics

The unique position of the Church in the world had long existed before the implementation of the modern state system in 1648. Eighteen years following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations (UN), the Church, through the Holy See, was granted the status of the permanent observer mission in 1964. This status enables the Church to perform the following non-partisan activities:

...the exercise of *ius contrahendi* in stipulating treaties; participation in intergovernmental organizations, such as under the auspices of the United Nations; and *mediation initiatives in situations of conflict*.²

² Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Makati, Philippines: Word & Life

The abovementioned juridical activities, particularly the performance of mediation *in situations of conflict*, distinguish the Holy See from being branded as an NGO.³ The international community undeniably recognizes the Holy See as a juridical personality of its kind (hence, *sui generis*). Non-ratification of the UN Charter as a result of being a permanent observer mission does not prevent the Holy See from actively participating in UN agencies⁴ that promote human dignity and social order.⁵ Likewise can be said in the promotion of peace as an indispensable part of the Church's mission:

The promotion of peace in the world is an integral part of the Church's mission in continuing Christ's work of redemption on earth. In fact, the Church is, in Christ, a "sacrament" or sign and instrument of peace in the world and for the world."⁶

As of the present, the Holy See maintains diplomatic relations with 183 out of 193 countries. It has 116 Apostolic Nunciatures and Permanent Missions in the different parts of the world,⁷ making the Holy See the only religious institution that made the establishment of diplomatic networks among its priorities.⁸ The

Publications, 2004), no. 444; italics supplied. Succeeding quotations and inferences will use "CSDC" for abbreviation.

³ James G. Cussen, "The Church-State(s) Problem: The Holy See in the International Theoretical (or Theological) Marketplace," *The International Symposium on Religion and Cultural Diplomacy* (March-April 2014): 5.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ CSDC, no. 445.

⁶ Ibid., no. 516.

⁷ Bernardito Auza, "Pope Francis' Diplomacy," to the Audience of the *School of Diplomacy and International Relations*, Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey, 1 March 2017, <https://zenit.org/articles/archbishop-auza-describes-popes-diplomacy-at-seton-hall-university/> [accessed January 20, 2018].

⁸ Anna Carletti, "From the Center to the Periphery: Holy See's

establishment of diplomatic networks is hopeful in the subfields of (1) war and peace, and social justice, and (2) diplomacy.⁹

The Holy See does have the necessary qualifications in emerging as an influential moral actor in world politics. The pope, its chief agent, is similar to any secular leader who is as competent in decisions that “maximize success while minimizing costs.”¹⁰ As a consequence of his spiritual or religious mission, he can speak and act on matters of global injustice, international conflict, and world poverty, just as when secular leaders fail to do so.¹¹ Preferences are unquestionably in the light of the Church’s social doctrines, a body of Catholic Social Teachings (CST) that have developed manifestos in response to major political instabilities and other failures:

In effect, to teach and to spread her social doctrine pertains to the Church’s evangelizing mission and is an essential part of the Christian message, since this doctrine points out the direct consequences of that message in the life of society and situates daily work and struggles for justice in the context of bearing witness to Christ the Savior.¹²

The pope does not have his military.¹³ Even if he has,

Diplomacy Ideological Displacement After Pope Francis,” *Austral: Brazilian Journal of Strategy and International Relations* 7 (June 2015): 211.

⁹ Jodok Troy, “The Catholic Church and International Relation,” *Oxford Handbooks Online*, <http://www.oxforhandbooks.com> [accessed January 20, 2018].

¹⁰ Federica Genovese, “Politics Ex Cathedra: Religious Authority and the Pope in Modern International Relations,” *Research and Politics* 4 (2015): 2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹² CSDC, no. 67.

¹³ Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury, “Diplomacy and Papacy: How Do

it is not his way of addressing gross and systemic human rights violations perpetrated by secular leaders who failed in upholding the life and dignity of their citizens. He would act in a way the Gospel teaches, especially when universal values have amputated from the foreign policies of powerful countries.¹⁴ The Holy See uses *soft power*, or in Joseph Nye’s definition, an ability that uses attraction and persuasion.¹⁵ It has adopted a more liberal approach in statecraft after the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) had concluded. For instance, the pope may “set public agenda, sway opinions, legitimize initiatives, and encourage groups and individuals”¹⁶ according to his preferences.

Pope Francis’ Solution to Deadlock in Responsibility to Protect

Like his immediate predecessors, John Paul II and Benedict XVI, Pope Francis believed in the capabilities of the UN as an institution that champions the prevention of war and the promotion of peace. Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer at the Holy See to the UN, deems the diplomacy of Pope Francis as a continuation of the ministries and tasks that have been successfully implemented by his immediate predecessors, John Paul II and Benedict XVI.¹⁷ Furthermore, he commented that the four pillars of the UN complement the four main components of CST: “the prevention of war and the promotion of peace; the

the Twain Meet,” *Institute of South Asian Studies* 532 (December 2017): 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁵ Anna Carletti “From the Center to the Periphery: Holy See’s Diplomacy Ideological Displacement after Pope Francis,” 212.

¹⁶ Daniel H. Levine, “What Pope Francis Brings to Latin America,” *CLALS Working Paper Series* 11 (March 2016): 3.

¹⁷ Bernardito Auza, “Pope Francis’ Diplomacy.”

protection and advance of human dignity and rights; human development; and helping nations to keep their word of honor [in] international treaties and law.”¹⁸

But attached to the success rate of the above-mentioned institution as a peace mechanism is also its ineffectiveness in addressing instances of gross and systemic human rights violations in countries whose secular leaders are perpetrators of the violence themselves. Back in September 2005, a doctrine called as *responsibility to protect* (R2P) was proposed during a UN Millennium Summit to set a new norm that will immediately counter-violence of such nature. The proposal included a new norm on humanitarian intervention, which is also open to the possibility of armed intervention if all peaceful means have been exhausted. The option, however, would materialize from the consensus of states willing to deploy troops that will create safe havens for the civilians.¹⁹ Below are the three pillars of this doctrine:

Pillar One: The state bears the primary responsibility to protect their population from genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing.

Pillar Two: The international community, i.e., the UN, regional organizations, governments, and civil society, *must assist states in fulfilling their protection obligations.*

Pillar Three: When a state manifestly fails to protect its own population or is in fact the perpetrator of these crimes, the international community has a responsibility to take *collective action in a timely and decisive manner to prevent or halt the commission of*

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Barbara Delcourt, “The Doctrine of ‘Responsibility to Protect’ and EU Stance: A Critical Appraisal,” in *The Impact of 9/11 on European Foreign and Security Policy*, ed. Giovanna Bono (Brussels: VUBPRESS, 2006), 120.

mass atrocities. Such action must be a *case-by-case basis* using a broad range of political, economic, and humanitarian measures, *and should peaceful means prove inadequate, coercive measures, including the use of force as authorized by the Security Council and in accordance with the UN charter.*²⁰

Although the doctrine itself is a prominent political breakthrough in the matters of collective action and security, it still failed to lessen the gap between those who argued for *absolute sovereignty* and *sovereignty with reservations*. Those who support *absolute sovereignty* continue to appeal against stronger states to stop using human rights as a legitimate reason for intervention.²¹ Whereas, those who support *sovereignty with reservations*, demanded a more prominent UN Security Council (UNSC), whose sole authority is to authorize interventions under chapter seven of the UN charter.²² Moreover, they argued that sovereignty could not be an absolute right, for, in some circumstances, it has been unsuccessful in preventing suffering, displacement, and deaths of populations.²³ They perceive humanitarian intervention as a duty or a “conscience of humanity”²⁴ when sovereign states fail to prevent,

²⁰ International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect, “At a Glance: Q&A: The Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) and Syria,” <http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org> [accessed January 20, 2018]; italics supplied.

²¹ Adam Roberts, “The United Nations and Humanitarian Intervention,” in *Humanitarian Intervention and International Relations*, ed. Jennifer Welsh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 76–78.

²² “The United Nations and Humanitarian Intervention,” 87.

²³ Stanley Hoffman, “The Debate about Intervention,” in *Classical Readings and Contemporary Debates in International Relations*, eds. Phil Williams, et al. (Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth, 2006), 668.

²⁴ Derek S. Jeffreys, *Defending Human Dignity: John Paul II and Political Realism* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos Press, 2004), 164.

protect, and preserve their citizens.²⁵

The doctrine does not promote a unilateral resort to force either. It recognizes the sole authority of the UNSC in reassuring pro-sovereign states that measures—if armed intervention is the only solution—will be executed appropriately. Stronger states which shared their troops for deployment will be prevented from using their foreign policies to remedy affected countries. However useful it may seem, the pillars of R2P will not be executed if one from the five permanent members of the UNSC vetoes the decision.²⁶ Take for instance, in the case of Syria.

Syria was the first of the global humanitarian crises that tested the moral leadership of Pope Francis. The series of gross and systemic human rights violations in Syria began in March 2011, when Syrian President, Bashar Al-Assad, dismissed cease-fire and reform appeals from opposition groups. Furthermore, he used force to retaliate against his opponents. With government crimes on the rise, armed rebel groups began to form in the different parts of the said country. One of the groups ever created was the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The said group began with the public beheadings and torture of religious minorities, mostly Christians.²⁷ As of 2015, more than 220,000 people have died. The mass atrocities posed a threat to the whole Middle East Region particularly to neighboring countries like Iraq,

²⁵ Jennifer Welsh, "Conclusion: Humanitarian Intervention after 11 September," in *Humanitarian Intervention and International Relations*, 177.

²⁶ Miles Kahler, "Legitimacy, Intervention, and International Institutions," *Politics Philosophy Economics* 20 (2010): 41.

²⁷ International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect, "At a Glance: Q&A: The Responsibility to Protect (RtoP) and Syria and Simon Adams, "Failure to Protect: Syria and the UN Security Council," *Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect Occasional Paper Series* 5 (March 2015): 5.

Lebanon, and Jordan.²⁸

The UNSC condemned the mass atrocities in Syria and made series resolutions (UNSCR) to address the problem. Some of the recommendations proposed included humanitarian assistance, protection of civilians, and destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles. But the resolutions and sanctions were not enough to lessen the catastrophe.

Moreover, other resolutions were blocked by the votes of permanent UNSC members, China and Russia. Both countries cried not to interfere with the internal affairs of Syria. Syria is a classic example of the R2P norm gone awry.

With the UNSC deadlocked, the Holy See released a statement concerning the collective security action of R2P. Since there is no international juridical formulation yet that would legalize the use of joint force; the Holy See has called on religious leaders from different religious communities to help in the peace process. According to Paul Gallagher, Secretary for Relations with States, religious leaders also have the *responsibility to protect*:

Religions, which help to discern the good and put into practice through deeds, prayer and diligent cultivation of inner life, are called to *build a culture of encounter and peace, based on patience, understanding, and humble tangible steps*. This is the way a humane society is best served.²⁹

Religious leaders may offer a “complementary” or “alternative path” when secular leaders fail to protect

²⁸ Simon Adams, “Failure to Protect: Syria and the UN Security Council,” 3.

²⁹ Paul R. Gallagher, “Intervention of the Secretary for Relations with States at the 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the “responsibility to protect,” <http://www.vatican.va> [accessed January 20, 2018]; italics supplied.

their citizens (or in this case, when the Security Council is deadlocked in its decisions).³⁰ As stated in Article 53 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969):

A treaty is void if, at the time of its conclusion, *it conflicts with a peremptory norm of general international law (jus cogens)*. For the purposes of the present Convention, a peremptory norm of general international law is a norm accepted and recognized by the international community of States as a whole as a norm from which no derogation is permitted and which can be modified only by a subsequent norm of general international law having the same character.³¹

Before the existence of treaties that honor sovereignty, there is the peremptory norm of general international law that is above any source in international law. This norm is called *jus cogens*, or compelling law. This norm is based on natural law concepts that compel states to respect the fundamental principles of international public policy.³² Pope Francis would usually refer to these fundamental principles as points to be stressed, accompanied by his articulateness and gestures that give off a powerful vibe of mercy.³³

Francis' Diplomacy of Conscience through Mercy

In international relations, it is a common knowledge that the charisma of leaders is a formidable element in

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.; italics supplied.

³² Kamrul Hossain, "The Concept of Jus Cogens and the Obligation under the U.N. Charter," *Santa Clara Journal of International Law* 1 (2005): 73.

³³ Holy See Press Office, "Cardinal Parolin in Vilnius: the Diplomacy of the Holy See at the Service of Peace," <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2016/05/09/160509d.html> [accessed January 20, 2018].

effecting transformation in institutions and policies.³⁴ Pope Francis' articulateness and merciful gestures, escorted with positivity for the goodness of the world, refreshingly resurrects themes in the Second Vatican Council, commonly found in *Lumen Gentium* and *Gaudium et Spes*, especially in the desire of the Church to transform institutions and policies that will uphold the Catholic Social Principles of human dignity, solidarity, and common good. Unlike his predecessors John Paul II and Benedict XVI, Pope Francis was not an attendee of the said council, yet, his diplomatic style is in continuity with his Vatican II predecessors. The way he engages with the world is refreshingly new and spontaneous.³⁵

Among the issues that Pope Francis actively devoted himself to, is peace. In describing peace, Pope Francis made use of descriptors that resemble his predecessors:

Nor is peace “simply the absence of warfare, based on the precarious balance of power; it is fashioned by efforts directed day after day towards the establishment of the ordered universe willed by God, with a more perfect justice among men.” In the end, a peace which is not the result of integral development will be doomed; it will always spawn new conflicts and various forms of violence.³⁶

Like Paul VI, Francis believes that holistic human development and peace share a synergetic relationship. Without integral human development, disputes and

³⁴ Jodok Troy, “Two Popes to Speak for the World: The Pope and The United Nations Secretary General in World Politics,” *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 4 (2017): 70.

³⁵ Alan Falconer, “Mercy as the Essence of the Gospel: Key Themes in Walter Kasper and the Ministry of Pope Francis” *International Journal for the Study of Christian Church* 3 (October 2015): 249.

³⁶ Francis, *Evangelii gaudium*,” <http://www.vatican.va> [accessed October 5 2017], no. 219. Or EG in the succeeding citations.

other forms of violence will continue to threaten the stability of the countries affected, the region where they belong, and the rest in the international community. Hence, Pope Francis utilizes diplomacy to further the spiritual and religious mission of the Church in maintaining peace. His apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii gaudium*, listed four principles in building and guiding diverse people to the one pursuit of peace: 1) time is greater than space (#s222-225); (2) unity prevails conflict (#s226-230); 3) realities are more important than ideas (#s231-233); and 4) the whole is greater than the part (#s234-237). These four principles are the backbone of Pope Francis' soft power diplomacy, which uses the art of persuasion in reviving an atmosphere of trust and cooperation in dialogue. These principles are listed below, together with how Pope Francis utilized each in building momentum of peace.

Time is Greater than Space

Giving priority to time means being concerned about initiating processes rather than possessing spaces.³⁷

This principle shows the tension between time and space. Prioritizing time does not entail the complete elimination of spaces. What the pope conveys is the reality of investing time if the goal is to build better peoples and societies. Bringing immediate results is by people who have failed to oversee the long-term.³⁸ Fast-tracking results compromise healthy development, including the appreciation of the good and the bad, which only occur during processes.

³⁷ EG, no. 223.

³⁸ Thomas Rourke, *The Roots of Pope Francis' Social and Political Thought: From Argentina to Vatican* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 94.

Furthermore:

This principle enables us to work slowly but surely, without being obsessed with immediate results. It helps us to patiently endure difficult and adverse situations, or inevitable changes in our plans.³⁹

As Thomas Rourke interpreted, the best and satisfying results materialize in mastering the art of patience.⁴⁰ Similarly, Victor Manuel Fernández said that what happens in between the chain of processes is enriching.⁴¹ Coming across different perspectives make up the possibility of a unified perspective without the danger of synthesizing them. But encountering various aspects is best partnered with prayerful discernment. The pope's mentor in Argentina, Juan Carlos Scannone, said that aiming for the right decisions is only possible when consulted with the Lord.⁴²

In action, Pope Francis applies this principle first with the considerable improvements in the Roman Curia, implying his wishes to continue his predecessors' attempts at peace. In 2015, he proposed for the revival of Pope John Paul II's Office for Pontifical Mediation in 2015, an office that offers mediation assistance to territorial disputes.⁴³

In the same way, he bestowed a new name for the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace. Agreeing

³⁹ EG, no. 222.

⁴⁰ Rourke, *The Roots of Pope Francis' Social and Political Thought*, 94.

⁴¹ Victor Manuel Fernández, "Encounter," in *A Pope Francis Lexicon*, eds. Joshua McElwee and Cindy Wooden (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2018), 62.

⁴² Juan Carlos Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People," *Theological Studies* 1 (2016): 128.

⁴³ Carletti, "From the Center to the Periphery," 222.

with Pope Paul VI's definition of "development as a new name for peace," Pope Francis created the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Development. These concrete improvements, which are linked to the thoughts of his predecessors, reflect building momentum of what the predecessors have initiated.

Second, Pope Francis prioritized the strengthening inter-civilization and interfaith dialogues in his apostolic journeys, intending to improve diplomatic relations with Russia, China, and the Islamic world. He is a peacebuilder who personally involves himself in the process. From the beginning of his pontificate, he had a total of 31 apostolic journeys outside Italy, some of which are conflict-prone areas, and some are vital in stabilizing peace in their respective regions. His eagerness to make himself personally involved in this kind of situations is captured in an excerpt from his interview below:

This is really important to me: the need to become acquainted with reality by experience, to spend time walking on the *periphery* in order to become really acquainted with the reality and life experiences of people.⁴⁴

A people-person like Pope Francis perfectly projects the face of the Church as God's mercy and communion, especially to countries branded as peripheries: those which have been excluded from the "global political and economic center,"⁴⁵ or those who have significantly suffered the consequences of humanitarian catastrophes. The pope branded his commitment to the peri-

⁴⁴ Joshua McElwee, "Francis Tells Religious to Wake the World Outlines Modern Struggles for Church," *National Catholic Reporter*, 3 January 2014, <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/francis-tells-religious-wake-world-outlines-modern-struggles-church> [accessed January 20, 2018]; italics supplied.

⁴⁵ Carletti, "From the Center to the Periphery." 222.

peripheries as *mercy*, an encounter filled with Christ's humility and openness.⁴⁶

He had assumed his post at the height of complexity and complicatedness in interfaith dialogues. Despite this, his charisma and *mercy* helped in boosting relations with these other faiths. Both his immediate predecessors, John Paul II and Benedict XVI, had softened the tensions between Catholic and Islamic relations by personally visiting Islamic countries and their places for worship.⁴⁷ Perhaps it was his profile as a Latin American—or as someone from the peripheries—that added to Pope Francis' advantage to resume and to strengthen relations with them. In his visit to Palestine in 2014, the pope attested to the cordial diplomatic relations between the Holy See and Palestine by formally recognizing the latter as a state.⁴⁸

Furthermore, he vocally showed appreciation to the steps made by the Palestinian government in drafting an agreement that will support the Catholic community in its endeavors, particularly in religious freedom. In his meeting with the Palestinian authorities, he called the president a man of peace:

Mr. President, you are known as a man of peace and a peacemaker. Our recent meeting in the Vatican and my presence today in Palestine attest to the good relations existing between the Holy See and the State of Palestine. I trust that these relations can further develop for the good of all. In this regard, *I express my appreciation for the efforts being made to draft an agreement between the parties regarding various aspects of the life of the Catholic community in this*

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Boris Vukievi, "Pope Francis and the Challenges of Inter-civilization Diplomacy," *Revisita Brasileira de Politica Internacional* 2 (July-December 2015): 71.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

country, with particular attention to religious freedom.⁴⁹

Diplomacy as a peace mechanism involves this vital ingredient: trust. The recognition of Palestine as a peer and the affirmation for its peace efforts were intended to create a chain of trust between these states that practice different faiths. The cordial accord between Palestine and the Holy See created the possibility of establishing good relations with the rest of the Islamic world as well. But the key to the Islamic world is Saudi Arabia. Diplomatic ties with Saudi Arabia would lead to having Turkey, Egypt, Iran, and Pakistan in the list of foreign peers.

The pope has yet to improve diplomatic relations with Orthodox churches so that the relations between the Holy See and Russia may be enhanced. After John Paul II's successful revolution of conscience, the collapse of the Communist regime in 1989 may have added to the tension between the Holy See and Russia. Pope Francis doubled the efforts of his predecessors by meeting the Patriarchs of Constantinople, Armenia, and Egypt in 2014, 2016, and 2017, respectively. The pope and Bartholomew I issued a common declaration that called for unification in the Catholic and Orthodox churches.⁵⁰ This concrete step in creating an ecumenical dialogue with Orthodox churches established the hopes of building good relations with the rest of Orthodox majorities and with anticipation of an enhanced relationship with Russia.

As with the rest of the countries in the Asian continent, Pope Francis has planted the seeds in East

⁴⁹ Pope Francis, "Meeting with Palestinian Authorities," 25 May 2014, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/may/documents/papa-francesco_20140525_terra-santa-autorita-palestine-si.html [accessed January 20, 2018]; italics supplied.

⁵⁰ Boris Vukievi, "Pope Francis and the Challenges of Inter-civilization Diplomacy," 74.

Asia with the hopes of furthering diplomatic ties with China. The stepping stones have been made in his visit to ASEAN countries and its dialogue partners: South Korea (2014), Philippines (2015), Bangladesh, and Myanmar (2017). Apostolic journeys to Japan and Thailand are set to happen soon. ASEAN is a peace mechanism that stabilizes the East Asian region. In 2018, the apostolic nuncio to ASEAN presented his credentials to Dato Lim Jock Hoi, ASEAN secretary-general.⁵¹ The presence of the Holy See in the ASEAN attests to collaborations, especially of securing peace in the region and, hopefully, of furthering diplomatic ties with China, which have signed a provisional agreement with the Holy See in September 2018.⁵²

Apart from apostolic journeys, the pope also made use of conferences to appeal for complete nuclear disarmament. Through the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, a two-day conference entitled, “Perspective for a World Free from Nuclear Weapons and Integral Disarmament,” was organized on November 10-11 of 2017. The purpose was to create a chain of signatures that would ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons by all countries, especially those that have not yet declared their full nuclear arsenal. Pope Francis made headlines by making the Holy See a pioneer in signing and ratifying the treaty. Participants of the said conference also had the opportunity to have a private and personal audience with the pope in his apostolic palace.⁵³

⁵¹ ASEAN Secretariat News, “Ambassador of the Holy See to ASEAN Presents Credentials,” <https://asean.org/ambassador-of-the-holy-see-apostolic-nuncio-to-asean-presents-credentials/> [accessed October 28, 2019].

⁵² See Gianni Valente, “Holy See and China Sign Agreement on the Appointment of Chinese Bishops,” *La Stampa*, September 22, 2018, Weekly Edition in English.

⁵³ Pax Christi International, “Perspective for a World Free from

Unity Prevails over Conflict

This principle shows the tension between unity and conflict. While one quickly categorizes both in extremes, the words of Pope Francis would say otherwise:

In this way, it is possible to build communion amid disagreement, but this can only be achieved by those great persons who are willing to go beyond the surface of the conflict and to see others in their deepest dignity.⁵⁴

Manuel Paul Christopher underscored the capabilities of a peacemaker at a maximum,⁵⁵ who sees conflict as an opportunity in creating a “link in the chain of new processes.”⁵⁶ Scannone nursed a similar interpretation, adding a profound theological meaning again to a peacemaker whose capabilities are sourced from being a People of God.⁵⁷ In these lines, a peacemaker should see conflict in the perspective of diversity, so that the possibility of reconciliation will be at sight:

Diversity is a beautiful thing when it can constantly enter into a process of reconciliation and seal a sort of cultural covenant resulting in a reconciled diversity.⁵⁸

Nuclear Weapons and for Integral Disarmament,” https://www.paxchristi.be/sites/default/files/vatican_city_conference_brief_report_paul_lansu.pdf [accessed January 20, 2018].

⁵⁴ EG, no. 228.

⁵⁵ Paul Manuel Christopher, “How the Theological Priorities of Pope Francis Inform His Policy Goals,” in *Pope Francis as a Global Actor: Where Politics and Theology Meet*, eds. Alynna Lyon, Christine Gustafson, and Paul Christopher Manuel (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG, 2018), 30.

⁵⁶ EG, no. 227.

⁵⁷ Scannone, “Pope Francis and the Theology of the People,” 129.

⁵⁸ EG, no. 230.

Every person possesses a reality that may be the same or different from anyone. The acceptance of diversity without compromising the truth owned by different camps creates a culture of shared passions.⁵⁹ The harmonizing of diversities according to Rourke, is possible because of the unifying action of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁰ It allows the peacebuilder to embrace the realness of the conflict, and to call for active solidarity between the strong and the affected.⁶¹

The pope applied this principle in his meetings with religious leaders in his apostolic journeys. These meetings were the pope's way of embracing the conflict by telling religious leaders that they have the responsibility to protect their brothers and sisters from the savagery of disputes, especially if the nature of those conflicts invokes the name of religion. The September 11 attacks in 2001 and other related violence have ignited interest in religion and its role in peacebuilding.

Ecumenical and interfaith dialogue is Pope Francis' concrete manifestation of the second principle, and a continuation of what his predecessors did in the past, as a "common desire to know the truth and practice

⁵⁹ Fernández, "Encounter," 62.

⁶⁰ Rourke, *The Roots of Pope Francis' Social and Political Thought: From Argentina to Vatican*, 94.

⁶¹ Pope Francis said, "I assure you of my personal closeness and that of the whole Church, whose mission is to bring Christ's love to the defenseless victims of forgotten wards through her prayers for peace, her service to the wounded, the starving, refugees, the displaced and all those who live in fear. The Church also speaks out in order to make the leaders hear the cry of pain and suffering and to put an end to every form of hostility, abuse and violation of fundamental human rights." See Francis, "Message of His Holiness Francis for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace" 1 January 2014, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20131208_messaggio-xlvi-giornata-mondiale-pace-2014.html [accessed January 20, 2018].

justice.”⁶² He personally met religious leaders or representatives in these countries: Patriarch Bartholomew I in Turkey (2014), leaders of Christian denominations in Albania (2014), Patriarch Athenagoras in Israel (2014), Muslim communities in Central African Republic (2015), Holiness and Beatitude Ilia II in Azerbaijan (2016), Holiness Karekin II in Armenia (2016), His Beatitude Ieronymos in Greece (2016), the Ronghiya Muslims and refugees in Bangladesh (2017), the Supreme Council of Buddhist Monks in Myanmar (2017), and Pope Tawadros II in Egypt (2017). With the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, a joint declaration was made to state their stand and to encourage reconciliation between affected parties in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq.

We especially pray for the Churches in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, which have suffered most grievously due to recent events. We encourage all parties regardless of their religious convictions to continue to work for reconciliation and for the just recognition of peoples' rights. We are persuaded that it is not arms, but dialogue, pardon, and reconciliation that are the only possible means to achieve peace.⁶³

The declaration was a call to stop gross systemic human rights violations such as religious persecutions,

⁶² Francis, “Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See for the Traditional Exchange of New Year Greetings,” 8 January 2018, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/january/document_s/papa-francesco_20180108_corpo-diplomatico.html [accessed January 20, 2018].

⁶³ Holy See Press Office, “Private Meeting with the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople: Common Declaration of Pope Francis and the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I,” 25 May 2014, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/may/documents/papa-francesco_20140525_terra-santa-dichiarazione-congiunta.html [accessed January 20, 2018].

ethnic cleansing, and genocide. The years in which the meetings were fulfilled proved that the pope has not ceased in using the diplomatic art of persuasion and his pastoral sense in appealing for religious leaders and groups to responsibly protect their brothers and sisters from conflicts.

Realities are More Important than Ideas

This principle shows the tension between realities and ideas.

This principle has to do with incarnation of the word and its being put into practice...at the same time, this principle impels us to put the word into practice, to perform works of justice and charity which makes the word fruitful.⁶⁴

Pope Francis' concept of reality echoes Romano Guardini's inclusiveness, which recognizes both the good and the bad, and the structures that both ideas result to it.⁶⁵ Ideas that bear fruit in actions are based on Christ; the Word made flesh. Not only did Christ teach necessary moral precepts, but he also performed them.⁶⁶ Apart from ideas that remain suspended in the air, the pope warns against ideologies that estranges people than unite them.⁶⁷

The joint declaration between Pope Francis and Patriarch Karekin II of Armenia in 2016 stated the call for practical commitments against war and extremism:

⁶⁴ EG, no. 233.

⁶⁵ Christopher, "How the Theological Priorities of Pope Francis Inform His Policy Goals," 31.

⁶⁶ Rourke, *The Roots of Pope Francis' Social and Political Thought*, 94.

⁶⁷ Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People," 129.

We ask the faithful of our Churches to open their hearts and hands to the victims of war and terrorism, to refugees and their families. At issue is the very sense of our humanity, our solidarity, compassion, and generosity, which can only be properly expressed in the immediate practical commitment of our resources.⁶⁸

Since conflicts also lead to the displacement of peoples, migrants and refugees became a concern of the Church. Pope Francis led the drafting and approval of the two Global Compacts, which contained policy proposals and practical measures for ensuring the safety and orderliness in the passage of migrants and refugees. A twenty-point action plan for the migrants and refugees was also published through the Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development.⁶⁹

Meanwhile, Pope Francis had employed several diplomatic tools for the continuing eight-year war in Syria. Apart from continuing the World Day of Peace prayers of his predecessors, he sent his Secretary of State Pietro Parolin and Foreign Minister Dominique Mamberti to Geneva for rounds of peace negotiations. He wrote to Russian President Vladimir Putin, asking the president to bring to an end the use of force by the Russian soldiers deployed in Syria.⁷⁰ In 2019, the pope

⁶⁸ Holy See Press Office, "Joint declaration by Pope Francis and the Catholicos Karekin II: We implore the leaders of nations to listen to the plea of millions of human beings who urgently need bread, not guns," 27 June 2016, <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2016/06/27/160627d.pdf> [accessed January 20, 2018].

⁶⁹ Francis, "Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Holy See for the Traditional Exchange of New Year Greetings."

⁷⁰ Reuters, "Update 1-Syria's Assad Sends Message to Pope Francis, Vatican Says," <https://www.reuters.com/article/syria-crisis-pope/update-1-syrias-assad-sends-message-to-pope-francis-vatican-says-idUSL6N0K708L20131228> [accessed January 20, 2018].

wrote to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, offering concrete solutions for reconciliation, so the displaced may return to their country safely.⁷¹ He also sent Parolin in September 2019 to a high-level meeting in the UN, asking for repeal in sanctions, encourage voluntary and safe return of the displaced persons, and support to Christian minorities in their efforts of bringing peace to Syria.⁷²

The sending of representatives is also an extension of the pope's power to persuade. In Colombia, whose people were experiencing a fifty-year civil struggle, he used the Sant' Egidio community to facilitate rounds of peace negotiations. Through this community, the pope was able to send his cordial communications to Columbian President Juan Manuel Santos and the rebel group of *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Columbia*. The Colombian president asked for the pope's help while the rebels asked for his forgiveness for the massacre that happened at Bojaya. To witness the reconciliation ceremony, the pope visited Colombia in 2017.⁷³

Post-civil war efforts were also extended to non-Catholic communities. For instance, the contribution of the Catholic Church in the construction of the Central African Republic and resolution of conflicts were recognized through the ratification of the framework

⁷¹ Rome Reports, "Pope Francis Sends Letter to Assad, and Asks for Reconciliation in Syria," <https://www.romereports.com/en/2019/07/22/pope-francis-sends-letter-to-assad-and-asks-for-reconciliation-in-syria/> [accessed October 28, 2019].

⁷² Pietro Parolin, "Intervention of His Eminence Pietro Cardinal Parolin at High Level Event on Syria," <https://holyseemission.org/contents//statements/5d8a6e4ad9883.php> [accessed October 28, 2019].

⁷³ Cindy Wooden, "Colombian Guerilla Fighters Ask Pope Francis for Forgiveness at Reconciliation Ceremony," [_https://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/09/09/colombian-guerilla-fighters-ask-pope-for-forgiveness-at-reconciliation-ceremony/](https://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2017/09/09/colombian-guerilla-fighters-ask-pope-for-forgiveness-at-reconciliation-ceremony/) [accessed October 28, 2019].

between the Holy See and the Central African Republic in March 2019.⁷⁴

But few human rights advocates were less satisfied with the intervention of the pope toward ongoing disputes. In his visit to Bangladesh in 2017, the pope personally met the Rohingya refugees who suffered extreme bouts of ethnic cleansing. However, despite his sympathy for the victims of the systemic violations and calls for national reconciliation and commitment to human rights, the pope did not give a reference or mention these minorities in his speeches at Myanmar. Few may not approve this style of diplomacy and may have remembered the time when Pope Pius XII did not publicly condemn the holocaust during the Second World War, but the pope did it to prevent Yangon from closing its doors to peace negotiations.⁷⁵

The Whole is Greater than the Part

We constantly have to broaden our horizons and see the greater good which will benefit us all. But this has to be done without evasion or uprooting.⁷⁶

This principle shows the tension between the whole and the part. It overlaps with the second and third principles by invoking inclusivity as part of the whole reality and working for the common good.

For Christopher, this principle is about 'shared obligations';⁷⁷ for Rourke, the flow of obligations from

⁷⁴ Holy See Press Office, "Audience with the President of the Central African Republic," 3 March 2019, <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2019/03/05/190305e.html> [accessed October 28, 2019].

⁷⁵ Iftekhhar Ahmed Chowdhury, "Diplomacy and Papacy: How do the Twain Meet?," *ISAS Brief* 532 (7 December 2017): 4.

⁷⁶ EG, no. 235.

⁷⁷ Christopher, "How the Theological Priorities of Pope Francis

personal to communal, and from local to global;⁷⁸ and for Scannone, the responsibilities that arise from being historical, cultural, and religious.⁷⁹ The parts of reality come together as a unified whole through the polyhedron model:

It is a polyhedron, which reflects the convergence of all its parts, each of which preserves its distinctiveness...it is the convergence of peoples, who within the universal order, maintain their own individuality; it is the sum total of persons within a society which pursues the common good, which truly has a place for everyone.⁸⁰

Since the pope is associated with the Argentinian School of Liberation Theology's theology of the people, his take on peoples and their shared obligations are historical, cultural, and theological. In other words, the People of God are communion-oriented, just as their Source: the Holy Trinity.⁸¹

Thus, in the pope's apostolic journeys, the pope shows his appreciation for all the members of the society working for the realization of peace. Taking the theme of the migration of refugees again, the pope expressed his gratitude to the Jordanian government for collaborating with the Catholic Church in protecting and preserving the displaced people rushing to their borders from Palestine, Iraq, and Syria:

Jordan has offered a generous welcome to great numbers of Palestinian and Iraqi refugees, as well as

Inform His Policy Goals," 31.

⁷⁸ Rourke, *The Roots of Pope Francis' Social and Political Thought*, 94.

⁷⁹ Scannone, "Pope Francis and the Theology of the People," 130.

⁸⁰ EG, no. 236.

⁸¹ Keith Lemna and David Delaney, "Three Pathways into the Theological Mind of Pope Francis," *Nova et Vetera* 1 (2014): 37.

to other refugees from troubled areas, particularly neighboring Syria, ravaged by a conflict which has lasted all too long. Such generosity merits Your majesty, the appreciation, and support of the international community. The Catholic Church, to the extent of its abilities, has sought to provide assistance to refugees and those in need, especially Caritas Jordan.⁸²

Caritas Jordan collaborated with the Jordanian government in welcoming the Syrian refugees and providing emergency aid and long-term development programs. Meanwhile, Iraqi refugees were given jobs in which the pope initiated himself in an expo in Milan.⁸³

As this principle overlaps with the second and third, the cases mentioned to it also qualify under this principle. For instance, the collaboration with the community of San't Egidio in the realization of national reconciliation in Colombia; the joint prayers and declarations with the brothers of the Orthodox churches, the national governments Colombia and Jordan, and the use of the United Nations platforms in signing and ratifying the Global Compacts for the Migrants and Refugees and the Treaty of the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Collaborations such as these manifest the convergence of the affected and those giving aid, contributing then to the realization of peace.

⁸² Francis, "Meeting with the Authorities of the Kingdom of Jordan," 24 May 2014, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2014/may/documents/papa-francesco_20140524_terra-santa-autorita-amman.html [accessed January 20, 2018].

⁸³ Linda Bordoni, "Caritas Jordan Providing Iftar Meals for Syrian Refugees," http://en.radiovaticana.va/news/2017/06/13/caritas_jordan_providing_iftar_meals_for_syrian_refugees/1318784 [accessed January 20, 2018].

Conclusion

This paper presented that in the presence of political deadlock, religious leaders can intervene and contribute through peaceful concrete gestures. The four principles served as the method to peacebuilding and peacekeeping, in Pope Francis' way. They were briefly identified and supported with cases taken from the pope's apostolic journeys or interventions made by his delegates or representatives.

Thus, the two concluding points are made. First, *every country visited or intervened by the pope bears an aspect of the periphery*. The nature of conflicts from the time that the pope assumed leadership of the Holy See is predominantly motivated by racial or religious prejudices. Therefore, meeting with religious leaders is necessary for prompt and lasting collaborations for peace. This Franciscan style is a precedent to further developments in the Holy See diplomacy, especially papal diplomacy.

It is also evident that Pope Francis gave special attention to the migrants and displaced persons. In this case, the pope was able to use his two roles entirely. As a pastor, he projected the image of God's mercy, by conscientizing the doubtful and affirming those who have exerted efforts to provide a life for the refugees. As the chief agent of the Holy See, Pope Francis resorted to international peers and legal instruments for the protection of their rights. This leads to the second point that the pope demonstrates consistency with his predecessors in *opting for non-violent means of addressing conflicts*. The pope does not have a military of his own, but the voice of the conscience is enough in making domestic and international key players conscious

of what they can do for peace.⁸⁴ The Holy See's peaceful interventionist nature is manifested in choosing dialogue over sanctions and the use of force.

⁸⁴ Orlando Antonini, "The Diplomatic Activity of the Holy See," Lecture, Megatrend University, Belgrade, December 10, 2014.

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