

Epilogue: From Fraternity to Integrality —An Integral Reflection on *Fratelli Tutti*

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Abstract: The article reflects on the relevance of *Fratelli Tutti* to Hong Kong when the encyclical was published in October 2020 when the city was still in the shock of social unrest and violence. After this historical hermeneutical reflection, the article analyzes how the features of Pope Francis’s pontificate in moving toward global Catholicity with an evolving spiritual and ecclesiological mapping of the global church. Taking this as a cornerstone and guiding stick, the article ends with a brief discussion on how Pope Francis’ new theological and ecclesiological vision may reconstruct a new paradigm for intercultural and interreligious dialogue in which the Chinese cultural tradition may interact with Christianity under the polyhedral model and integral human development. This envisions an integral approach to reflect on the local and global significance of the encyclical.

Keywords: intercultural and interreligious dialogue, a better kind of politics, global church, spiritual and ecclesiological

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geography, integral human development

【摘要】當2020年10月《眾位弟兄》發表時，香港仍處於社會動蕩和暴力的餘震之中，這份通諭有助反思香港的特殊經歷。在這個歷史詮釋學反思之後，本文分析了教宗方濟各走向全球性天主教的特徵，同時反映出他的全球性教會的精神和教會學。本文再以此為基石和指導，在尾段簡短地闡述了教宗方濟各的新神學和教會願景如何能重建跨文化和跨宗教對話的新範式，使中國文化傳統可以在多面體模式和圓融生命發展下與基督宗教互動，這設想了一種圓融方法來反思這份通諭的本地與全球的意義。

關鍵詞：跨文化與跨宗教對話、治國良策、全球化教會、靈性與教會的地理、圓融生命發展

1 Introduction

When *Fratelli Tutti* was published in October 2020, the response of the Catholic community was relatively mild compared to the release of *Laudato Si'*. The paradox is that the message of *Fratelli Tutti* is very relevant to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (hereafter “Hong Kong”), a city torn up by social unrest and political conflict. The document should be the “evening drum and morning bell” (暮鼓晨鐘) as the popular Chinese saying goes. It is probably the aftershock of the immense emotion and tension which caused the avoidance of facing the reality of the “dark clouds” over the city of the last ten to twenty years. Of course, the historical significance of the document goes beyond the role of a theological reminder to the challenges confronting the world of today. As an integral part of the three major pieces of encyclical teaching of Pope Francis, it brings out the socio-political vision of Francis’ papacy to re-ignite the journey of the “pilgrim church” inspired by the spirit of Second Vatican Council. Together with *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Laudato Si'*, the document demonstrates how the historical contribution of Francis’ papacy responds to the “signs of the time” in advancing the Catholic Church as a modern and universal church. As a Jesuit, he is following the path of St. Ignatius to reach out to the unknown and uncertainties of a new world to be explored and created. As an epilogue to this special issue published in this part of the world to celebrate the second anniversary of the release of *Fratelli Tutti*, the present article aims to bring out both the

local and global dimensions of the document considering the intercultural and interreligious spirit of Second Vatican Council.

2 Local Relevance of *Fratelli Tutti*

When the encyclical appeared in October 2020, over in USA, the *Washington Post* wrote, “Humankind, Pope Francis says, is in the midst of a worrying progression. People are intensely polarized. Their debates, absent real listening, seem to have devolved into a ‘permanent state of disagreement and confrontation’. ... the document amounts to a papal stand against tribalism, xenophobia, and the dangers of the social media age”. “For Americans, certain messages will like read as a warning against Trump style politics”.¹ In Hong Kong, one newspaper also asked the government to take a close look at the encyclical to review its work to help solve the housing crisis for the poor.² For the local Catholic congregation, in fact, also the Christian Protestant community, this encyclical deserves to be treated much more seriously.

Fratelli Tutti brings out a new vision and broad horizon

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- 1 Chico Harlan and Stefano Pitrelli, “Pope Francis’s new encyclical is a papal warning about a world going backward”, *Washington Post*, 4 October 2020.
 - 2 Editorial Desk, 〈香港官員應認真理解教宗通諭〉 (Hong Kong Officials Should Try to Understand the Papal Encyclical Seriously), *HK01*, 5 October 2020, https://www.hk01.com/01_觀點/531939/香港官員應認真理解教宗通諭 [accessed 5 October 2020].

for Catholic Social Teaching giving it a more updated and contemporary analysis and interpretation of the world we are in. We are in a dark and closed world where on the one hand we are closely interconnected and at the same fragmented. Pope Francis warns against the loss of a sense of historical consciousness. The people of Hong Kong must go back to history, especially with an intercultural and interreligious role which Hong Kong has been playing between China and the world.

Hong Kong experienced a very unique period of decolonization since the 1980s. Standing at a turning point in history, Hong Kong has been searching and cultivating a new identity. Since the end of the last century, China and the world have changed dramatically. Not only Hong Kong becomes a part of China, but Hong Kong has been absorbed in the emergence of a new international political order. Decolonization is fully mixed with globalization and the birth of the social media age. Hong Kong gets confused with its history and polluted up by ideological generalizations as warned by *Fratelli Tutti*.

It is in the context, that Pope Francis' teaching in *Evangelii Gaudium* becomes highly relevant to Hong Kong. In paragraphs 222 through 237 of this exhortation, following the spirit of *Gaudium et Spes*, he teaches about the four axioms of dialogue. First, time is greater than space. Second, unity prevails over conflict. Third, realities are more important than ideas. Fourth, the whole is greater than the

part.

Taking these four principles as guidelines for reflection, together with the advice of *Fratelli Tutti* to treasure the value of historical consciousness, the following discussion will demonstrate how the socio-political experience of Hong Kong in 2019 needs to be considered from these perspectives. As analyzed more extensively later in the following discussion, Hong Kong has experienced a very challenging period of decolonization since 1984 with local socio-political development deeply intertwined with both national and international socio-politics. One can even broaden the scope of reflection to the changes of history to the Chinese people since the 19th century when China was directly absorbed in the modern world. Hong Kong's historical position in contemporary Chinese history cannot be viewed just alone by what have happened in the city. Under this lens of historical consciousness, as Pope Francis suggests, what happened in the disturbing years of 2019 need to be viewed more holistically and historically. Suffice to say and not to preempt the analysis of the encyclical in relation to Hong Kong, what is obvious is that the world including China has changed so much since the end of the last century. Effects of historical change in the last two centuries continue to shape the development of Hong Kong as a unique city in Chinese city since the mid-19th century. Time is more important than space. The reference of these axioms to Hong Kong is in fact one of the core themes of the present paper which aims not to be absorbed in political ideological

debates but return to the values behind these four principles.

Further discussion on these four axioms will be taken later in the paper.

Using the words of *Fratelli Tutti*, the city has embraced “a strategy of ridicule, suspicion and relentless criticism, in a variety of ways” denying the right of others to exist or to have an opinion (*FT* 15). The views mostly seen from social media only selectively choose bits and pieces from the Bible and usually out of context. “The way many platforms work often ends up favouring encounter between persons who think alike, shielding them from debate. These closed circuits facilitate the spread of fake news and false information, fomenting prejudice and hate” (*FT* 45). What is most challenging is Pope Francis’ warning, “Even in Catholic media, limits can be overstepped, defamation and slander can become commonplace, and all ethical standards and respect for the good name of others can be abandoned” (*FT* 46).

As Pope Francis starts his teaching with *Evangelii Gaudium*, then brings out the concept of integral human development and integral ecology in *Laudato Si’*. Now with *Fratelli Tutti*, it is love and fraternity, he develops further this Gospel and Christian based social and political actions. Integral human development is the key concept and direction which Pope Francis has been promoting since his pontificate. With the social vision set up in *Evangelii Gaudium*, he moves on to crystalize his social vision in the two closely

connected concepts of integral human development and integral ecology.

Integral human development is directly inherited from the social teaching since Pope Paul VI and Pope Benedict, a human centered perspective on development. Inspired by St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis puts the concept of integral human development in the context of a broader horizon of integral ecology, appealing to humanity to look at creation as a whole. *Fratelli Tutti* provides this concept with a vision of a new kind of social and political action based on values of mercy and fraternal love.

The encyclical reminds us of the need of universal love that promotes persons, a heart open to the whole world, envisaging and engendering an open world, looking at local flavour as well as a universal horizon. "... seeking and pursuing the good of others and of the entire human family also implies helping individuals and societies to mature in the moral values that foster integral human development" (*FT* 112). "Let us return to promoting the good, for ourselves and for the whole human family, and thus advance together towards an authentic and integral growth" (*FT* 113).

To the Hong Kong people, Pope Francis' call for a "better kind of politics" (*FT* ch.5) truly at the service of the common good is most important and appealing. He points out the problems of populism, and the benefits and limits of liberal approaches (*FT* 163-169). We need "a politics which is far-sighted and capable of a new, integral and

interdisciplinary approach to handling the different aspects of the crisis” (*FT* 177). He emphasizes that charity unites both the abstract and the institutional to develop an effective process of historical change that embraces everything, including institutions, laws, technology, professional expertise, scientific analysis and so forth. This also showed that “there is no one solution, no single acceptable methodology, no economic recipe that can be applied indiscriminately to all. Even the most vigorous scientific studies can propose courses of action” (*FT* 164).

That is why realities are more important than ideas. Social and political actions must be based on love and charity. In paragraphs no. 181 and 182, Pope Francis says, “Every commitment inspired by the Church’s social doctrine is derived from charity, which according to the teaching of Jesus is the entire Law (cf. Mt 22:36-40). This means acknowledging that love, overflowing with small gestures of mutual care, is also civic and political, and it makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world” (*FT* 181). “Social charity makes us love the common good” (*FT* 182).

For Hong Kong, Pope Francis’ advocacy about “effective love”, “social love” and “political love” become more urgent and fundamental. “Social love is a force capable of inspiring new ways of approaching the problems of today’s world, of profoundly renewing structures, social organizations and legal systems from within”. Political love is a love that is born of love of sacrifice, basing on

the principle of subsidiarity and solidarity. It is a love that integrates and unites because we should be “ready to listen to other points of view and to make room for everyone. Through sacrifice and patience, we can help to create a beautiful polyhedral reality in which everyone has a place” (FT 190).

These are core values of his advocacy of integral human development as well as integral ecology. For love is the foundation of interconnectedness, helping us find God in everything. In no. 194, “Politics must make room for a tenderness of others. What is tenderness? It is love that draws near and becomes real.” That is what Cardinal Walter Kasper writes about *Pope Francis’ Revolution of Tenderness and Love*.³ Cardinal Walter states that mercy is the key word for Pope Francis’ pontificate. That is how Christian love should be grounded because God is mercy and God’s mercy is infinite in supporting the missionary Church on the journey of salvation.

Following the guidelines of the four axioms laid down in *Evangelii Gaudium*, in Chapter Six of *Fratelli Tutti*, he lays out a clear description of how dialogue and friendship in society should and may be achieved. He advocates social dialogue for a new culture (FT 199-205). “Authentic social dialogue involves the ability to respect the other’s point of view and to admit that it may include legitimate convictions

3 Walter Kasper, *Pope Francis’ Revolution of Tenderness and Love* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2015).

and concerns ... in a true spirit of dialogue, we can grow in our ability to grasp the significance of what others say and do, even if we cannot accept it as our own conviction” (*FT* 203). We need greater interdisciplinary communication. “Although reality is one, it can be approached from various angles and with different methodologies. There is a risk that a single scientific advance will be seen as the only possible lens for viewing a particular aspect of life, society and the world” (*FT* 204).

However, in Hong Kong and other parts of the world, in various sectors and levels of the society, division and polarization dominate and reveal the ugliness of humanity with misinterpretations of facts and distortion of truth. That is what Pope Francis points out as the “basis of consensus” and the “solution is not relativism” (*FT* 206). “If society is to have a future, it must respect the truth of our human dignity and submit it to that truth” (*FT* 205). Of course, if we follow his advice in “consensus and truth” (*FT* 211-214), we may be able to create this new culture. We will investigate the details behind different presentations and representations of the conflicting views. We will follow the “paths of renewed encounter” by “starting anew from the truth” (*FT* 226-227). “Truth, in fact, is an inseparable companion of justice and mercy. All these together are essential to building peace; each, moreover, prevents the other from being altered ... Truth should not lead to revenge, but rather to reconciliation and forgiveness.”

Pope Francis clearly condemns violence. “Every act of violence committed against a human being is a wound in humanity’s flesh; every violent death diminishes us as people ... Violence leads to more violence, hatred to more hatred, death to more death” (*FT* 227). It is not surprising to recall the quasi-numbness in the response of the Hong Kong Catholic congregation to the publication of *Fratelli Tutti* after having witnessed so much violence in Hong Kong in unprecedented ways.

“Jesus never promoted violence or intolerance. He openly condemned the use of force to gain over others” (*FT* 238; Mt 18:22; Mt 25-26). However, the realities of violence aroused by emotional media which Pope Francis also criticizes still need to be confronted. His advice is to learn “the art and architecture of peace”, the “ways of making peace, of placing reason above revenge, of the delicate harmony between politics and law” (*FT* 231).

The vision to build a country’s social peace requires the involvement of everyone concerned because this is an “open-ended endeavour, a never-ending task that demands the commitment of everyone. This requires us to place at the center of all political, social, and economic activity in the human person, who enjoys the highest dignity and respect for the common good”. Built in axiom of unity over conflict, he recognizes the inevitability of conflict. When facing conflicts, “Christ’s words do not encourage us to seek conflict, but simply to endure it when it inevitably comes, lest deference

to others, for the sake of supposed peace in our families or societies, should detract from our own fidelity” (FT 240). He refers us to the teaching of St. Paul that “it is no easy task to overcome the bitter legacy of injustices, hostility, and mistrust led by conflict. It can only be done by overcoming evil with good” (Rom 12:21). He emphasizes that “authentic reconciliation does not flee from conflict, but is achieved in conflict, resolving it through dialogue and open, honest and patient negotiation” (FT 244).

This is Pope Francis’ principle of “unity is greater than conflict”. Forgiveness and love form the base for this principle. Hong Kong experienced intensive social and political conflicts accumulated in months of violence. The messages of *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Fratelli Tutti* become the evening drums and morning bells to alert the people of Hong Kong, loud and clear.

One of the basic challenges to the Christians, both Catholics and Protestants, is how to balance between socio-political actions in the real world and those based on the values of Gospel. Towards the end of *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis demonstrates clearly how his teaching goes back to Vatican Council, St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. When discussing the ultimate foundation of different religions at the service of fraternity in our world, he cites St. John Paul II’s statement on the root of modern totalitarianism in denying transcendent dignity of the human person (FT 273).

He refers to Pope Benedict that the Church, while respecting the autonomy of political life, has to reawaken the spiritual energy that can contribute to the betterment of society.

The last Chapter of the encyclical deals with religions at the service of fraternity in the world. When Pope Francis points out the need of the world to respect transcendent truth of religion, he touches on the complex position of the role of Church in secular politics. This issue is very relevant to Hong Kong. In paragraph 276, he writes:

For these reasons, the Church, while respecting the autonomy of political life, does not restrict her mission to the private sphere. On the contrary, “she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines” in the building of a better world or fail to “reawaken the spiritual energy” that can contribute to the betterment of society. It is true that religious ministers must not engage in the party politics that are the proper domain of the laity, but neither can they renounce the political dimension of life itself, which involves a constant attention to the common good and a concern for integral human development. The Church “has a public role over and above her concern for charitable and educational activities”. She works for “the advancement of humanity and of universal fraternity”. She does not claim to compete with earthy powers, but to offer herself as “family among families, this is the Church,

open to bearing witness in today's world, open to faith hope and love for the Lord and for those whom he loves with a preferential love. A home with open doors. The Church is a home with open doors, because she is a mother". And in imitation of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, "we want to be a Church that serves, that leaves home and goes forth from its place of worship, goes forth from its sacristies, in order to accompany life, to sustain hope, to be the sign of unity ... to build bridges, to break down walls, to sow seeds of reconciliation".

From the above reflection, one can see how the new encyclical has touched on almost all aspects of our society, especially the challenges the Diocese of Hong Kong has been facing in the last two decades. The historical role of the Diocese as a bridge-church to link up the Church of China to the Universal Church has been seriously undermined. The present author analyzed this issue while tracing the intercultural and interreligious legacy of Matteo Ricci, Second Vatican Council, Pope Francis and Fr. Yan Po Tak.⁴ This is a historical task which Hong Kong should take up to continue this legacy.

In fact, the historical role of Hong Kong as a special city in China serving as its window to the world has also been undergoing deep changes. That is why the three papal

4 Edmund Kwok, "The Legacy of Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue: From Ricci, Second Vatican Council, Pope Francis to Father Yan Po Tak", *Tripod* 196 (2019): 85-128.

exhortation and encyclicals of Pope Francis are so important to Hong Kong Diocese.

Looking closer into these fundamental responsibilities to support the new evangelization efforts advocated by Second Vatican Council, Hong Kong should have an important role to play serving as a bridge-church. The Catholic congregation of Hong Kong has much to learn from the richness of *Fratelli Tutti* to discern how to build a society with “a better kind of politics” for the future. With this, the focus of attention to the encyclical can move from the local to the universal church under Pope Francis’ papacy in his mission to expand the vision of Second Vatican Council.

3 From Local to Universal: A Historical-Ecclesiological Reflection on *Fratelli Tutti* and Pope Francis’ Papacy

The above analysis of the local relevance of *Fratelli Tutti* may serve as a key to open the door to look at the broader picture of Pope Francis’ pontificate in promoting the spirit of Second Vatican Council. Looking from this hermeneutical angle, the relationship of Pope Francis with the legacy of the Council opens, on one hand, a broader scope of appreciating the significance of the encyclical, and on the other hand, move the focus of attention to the intercultural and interreligious challenges facing his pontificate. Helping immensely the present study to follow up the topic of Pope Francis inheriting the legacy of the Council, it is opportune

that Massimo Faggioli, one of the leading experts of the topic, is writing the prologue for this special issue. In fact, his contribution can be read as a masterly synopsis touching on the complexity of Pope Francis' attempt to further the mission of the Council. His earlier work on *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning* provides the historical backdrop to the discussion. His two other books on Pope Francis (*Pope Francis: Tradition in Transition* and *The Liminal Papacy of Pope Francis: Moving Toward Global Catholicity*) greatly facilitates the present paper to reflect on the three major papal publications under study.

In the concluding chapter of *Vatican II: The Battle of Meaning*,⁵ Faggioli identifies three different positions on Vatican II around theological “macro-issues”: (1) Vatican II as the end or the beginning of the renewal; (2) the intertextual dynamics of the council documents; (3) change and historicity in the Church and in theology. As Faggioli at the same time points out that the change of pontificate from John Paul II and Benedict XVI “is not just a leadership change: the resignation of Benedict and the election of Francis are two eminent acts of interpretation, at the top level of the Church, of a vast and under the surface change in the way that the Church interprets Vatican II.”⁶ He continues to state that “the change of pontificate between Benedict XVI

5 Massimo Faggioli, *Vatican II: The Battle for Meaning* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2012), Chapter 6.

6 Faggioli, *Pope Francis: Tradition in Transition* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2015), p. 30.

and Pope Francis means also a change of paradigm in the way the Church frames the idea of reform in connection with the different interpretations of Vatican II”.⁷

In this context, the monumental work of Ormond Rush, *The Vision of Vatican II*, provides a broader and more structured approach to certain basic understanding of the complexity of this “battle of meaning” of the Council. He lays down the framework of three categories of principles, hermeneutical, theological, and ecclesiological, with which to understand the judgements made by the Council.⁸ In the principle of *resourcement* / *aggiornamento*, he concludes that in adopting this principle, “Vatican II took on a historical consciousness and embraced a dynamic understanding of tradition: *resourcement* is to *aggiornamento* as tradition is to reception. The history of tradition shows continuous adaptation; what is constant in that process is the need for reinterpretation for new times and contexts”.⁹ Rush’s description of this principle of *resourcement* / *aggiornamento* may well useful to appreciate Pope Francis’ change of paradigm referred by Faggioli. John W. O’Malley, towards the end of his revisit of the Council as “reconciliation” touching on “The Francis Factor”, concludes in a somewhat casual fashion that Pope Francis is “free” of the historical burden of participants of the Council and is “implicitly

7 Ibid, p. 31.

8 Ormond Rush, *The Vision of Vatican II: Its Fundamental Principles* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press Academic, 2019), p. xv.

9 Ibid, p. 21.

asking us to step back, to put behind the memories of liturgical wars and doctrinal wars” and “invites us to revisit the Council and see it with fresh eyes”.¹⁰ However, as Faggioli and other studies of Francis’ pontificate show, the transition is by no means simple especially with the different hermeneutical positions and length of leadership of his two papal predecessors put together.

Due to his unique background of being the “first” for many reasons, the more prominent ones being non-European, non-Mediterranean, Jesuit, taking the name of “Francis”, and son of an immigrant, Faggioli analyzes the “liminal” nature of Pope Francis demonstrating himself as a “global” Catholic, projecting more distinctively Second Vatican Council as a “global” council, viewing Catholicism from the peripheries, creating his “ecclesiology of globalization” to meet new challenges and opportunities of globalization, and lastly developing “global governance” for the Catholic Church.¹¹ The movement toward “global Catholicity” can shed light on the intercultural and interreligious interpretation of *Fratelli Tutti*, with the other two major papal documents. This, in turn, will be taken further to interpret the intercultural and interreligious significance of Second

10 John W. O’Malley, “Vatican II Revisited as Reconciliation”, in Massimo Faggioli and Andrea Vicini, ed., *The Legacy of Vatican II* (Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2015), p. 22.

11 The list is basically taken from the structure of Massimo Faggioli, *The Liminal Papacy of Pope Francis: Moving toward Global Catholicity* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2020).

Vatican Council in the dialogue between Christianity and Chinese cultural tradition in general, and the implications which this dialogue may have on the effort of Pope Francis to reach out to the Catholic community in China.

Since it is not the primary purpose of this paper to study Pope Francis' pontificate as a whole, the second half of this paper only selects a few features of this movement toward "global Catholicity" for illustrative purpose.

The first feature to note is the dynamics of the papacy between "universal" and "global". The Second Vatican Council "summed up the historical consequences of the long history of estrangement between the Catholic Church and the political embodiment of Christianity in an empire (from imperial Roman to the Holy Roman) or in a precise geographical part of the world".¹² Through comparing Pope John XXIII and Pope Francis, Faggioli explains the engendering and responding to an evolving Catholic Church of the two pontificates in three dimensions. The first is the globalization of Catholicism and its need for a post-institutional and witnessing papacy. In this, "Pope Francis' ecclesiology and spirituality sees the world not as an object metaphysically separate from or threatening Christianity, but as the space in which time opens new processes".¹³

The second is the relationship the Pope sees between

12 Faggioli, *The Liminal Papacy of Pope Francis*, p. 24.

13 Ibid, p. 44.

the Church and the world, the Pope and the Curia and Rome, and between the papacy in Rome and the catholicity of the Church. The papacies of both John XXIII and Francis are global that “they break down a paradigm and build a new one, and specifically they ‘receive’ – again in different ways – the end of European Christendom”.¹⁴

The third concerns the papal mystique and the Church as an institutional and spiritual “empire”. Pope John XXIII and Francis have three elements in common: universalism (in the sense of the Latin *universa* and not *universalis*), anti-ideological Catholicism, and a new geopolitics. For Pope Francis, “he interprets Catholicism as plural because its universality is a product of globalization of the modern world” which allows him to acknowledge the Church’s liberation from the “European cradle”. At the same time, he is aware of the present globalization dominated by social media means a flattening of the difference between the local and global, center and periphery. Lastly, he embraces the emphasis of historical consciousness and openness to a new understanding of the world as advocated by *Gaudium et Spes*.¹⁵ Reinforcing his resistance to the pontificate of Benedict XVI to return to the argument between “continuity and reform” and “discontinuity and rupture” of Second Vatican Council, he presents himself as the “Bishop of Rome”, with his emphasis on the ecclesiology of the local

14 Ibid, p. 46.

15 Ibid, pp. 47-48.

church and on the diocese of Rome as a local church.¹⁶ Lastly, he maps out his spiritual and intellectual geography, including redefining his maps of Europe and the world, by viewing Catholicism and the Catholic Church from the peripheries. This represents a “new trajectory for the development of global Catholicism, which spread between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from the northern toward the southern hemisphere”.¹⁷ As illustrated by Chapter 1 of *Evangelii Gaudium*, he is envisioning “the Church’s missionary transformation” in his missionary ecclesiology of repositioning the global map and the local church communities. He describes the model of the global church as a “polyhedron” both in *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Fratelli Tutti* (FT 190). Instead of a model of a sphere “which is no greater than its parts, where every point is equidistant from the centre, and there are no differences between them”. The polyhedron “reflects the convergence of all its parts, each of which preserves its distinctiveness” (EG 236). “Through sacrifice and patience, they (these parts) can help create a beautiful polyhedral reality in which everyone has a place” (FT 190).

The new spiritual geography for the global church created by this new missionary ecclesiology and model is the lens through which Pope Francis looks at the reality of world as depicted in both *Laudato Si’* and *Fratelli Tutti*.

16 Ibid, pp. 53-54.

17 Ibid, pp. 77-78.

Hence, it is in this context that his vision becomes a serious challenge to the old spiritual world of neo-Constantinianism, pre-Vatican II political Augustinianism, the neoconservative and neo-traditionalist Catholicism. The challenge to the “globalization of indifference” after the Lampedusa tragedy in 2013 sets the early scene of looking at the world from the periphery. His emphasis on non-ideological assessment of the common good in terms of keeper of the common good is located in this new spiritual geographical setting where the declaration of *Nostra Aetate* at the Second Vatican Council is the spiritual base for his interreligious dialogue. This explains also why his global initiatives have not changed dramatically since his post-Vatican II predecessors. But the global context has changed dramatically from that early post-Vatican period. “In this sense it is not surprising that the most important successes of Francis’ international activity have been in areas still marked by the geopolitics of the Cold War ... the normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba in December 2014, and the Vatican opening to the People’s Republic of China with the agreement of September 2018”.¹⁸ “The major difference now from the Ostpolitik between the 1960s and the 1980s is that challenges against the church’s message on democracy and human rights no longer come only from the ‘other’, that is the communist or the ‘religious others’, but also from the Christian and the Catholic world within the Western hemisphere”.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 172.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 173.

This is the overall spiritual and hermeneutical context in which the message of *Fratelli Tutti* is preferably read. This is the theological and ecclesiological root of the non-ideological assessment of the common good which his critics against both *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti* have deliberately overlooked. It is also precisely insightful for Asian churches, especially the Chinese, to re-evaluate how their cultural traditions may be repositioned to fit into the new polyhedral model of the global church which Pope Francis is moving toward. In the Chinese case, the intercultural and interreligious dialogues between Chinese civilization and Christianity have been mostly overshadowed by the Eurocentric, pre-Vatican II, and to be more precise, post-Vatican II until the election of Pope Francis. The hermeneutics of intercultural and interreligious dialogue is reshaped by this new spiritual and intellectual geography and new paradigm of the return of the keeper of the common good as the “Good Samaritan”.

To move away from the center to look back at the center is typical of Chinese wisdom tradition especially Daoism which goes beyond the concept of the model of a sphere. The dynamics of *yin* and *yang* and the values of *yuanrong* (圓融) of the Buddhism and Confucianism open new horizon of understanding of the spiritual and cultural potentials which the polyhedral model of the global church envisioned by Pope Francis. It is not relativism (*FT* 206). Diversity is not pluralism. Universality is not universalism. *Laudato Si'* reiterates that “creatures exist only in dependence of each

other, to complete each other, in service of each other” (*FT* 86). *Fratelli Tutti* recalls the principle that “differences are creative; they created tension and in resolution of tension lies humanity’s progress” (*FT* 203). “A heart open to the whole world” does not have borders and limits, be they physical, cultural or imaginary (Ch. 4). This is completeness and fullness in the process of interdependence and interaction amid diversity, tension and creativity bringing out the deeper meaning in the Chinese term of *yuanrong*.

The Chinese did not have the term of “ecology” as created by Ernst Haeckel, a German natural scientist in 1866. The wisdom tradition which the Chinese civilization has been evolving without interruption until the impact of Western civilization with military power and violence in the second half of the 19th century. For the dialogue to be hermeneutically located, taking into consideration of this new paradigm of ecclesiology of globalization and polyhedral modelling of the global church, the understanding of Chinese cultural wisdom as a strategic partner to promote this vision of integral human development has to be repositioned as well. Hence, it is more appropriate to translate the term “integral” into Chinese, not as 整全, which literary means putting together, but 圓融 with the Chinese wisdom of synergistically embracing the whole but keeping the uniqueness of the parts.

This is an insight which the value of the common good may be more appropriately placed in the Chinese context

in which the individual and the collective, the self and the other, community and society are to be interpreted differently from the perspectives evolved from the Greco-Roman and Enlightenment perspectives. How the evolving Chinese civilization of the 21st century absorbing Christianity in general and Catholicism in particular can find a new horizon in the vision of Pope Francis' pontificate. The liminal characteristic of Pope Francis' papacy as masterly analyzed by Faggioli may well compared to another insightful re-interpretation of Daoism and Daoist "Green Religion" in which James Miller comprehensively describes the "liquid ecology" of Daoist religion in the "porosity of the body" merging with nature as a whole.²⁰ The feature of liminality is flexibility and blurriness to border and boundary. One of the main features of the Chinese cultural tradition, especially in its early period, is its fluidity and dynamism as a process of interconnectedness between heaven, earth and humanity, between the "individual" and the "collective". The analogy is the lights from different light bulbs with different colours being turned on in a room with light fully merged, sources being separate and independent, yet becoming fully integrated. The new spiritual and ecclesiological mapping of the global Catholicism with the polyhedral reality projects an image of *yuanrong* in which differences and commonalities are in a constant interconnected mode of interaction where the individual and the whole are separately

20 James Miller, *China's Green Religion: Daoism and the Quest for a Sustainable Future* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

and collectively at the same time. The future of Christianity in the evolutionary process of Chinese civilization is best viewed from this process of *yuanrong shengming fazhan* (圓融生命發展), a hermeneutical preference of translation of the present author to the term “integral human development” advocated by Pope Francis in 2016, inheriting and expanding the vision initiated by Paul VI and continued by Benedict XVI.

Pope Francis, in fact, explains his deep and broader understanding of the concept of integral human development in *Fratelli Tutti*. Such understanding of human development should go beyond just the materialistic dimension of life. Human dignity and spirituality are fundamental. The vision of “a universal love that promotes persons” (FT 106-117) emphasizes the “intrinsic worth of their beings” (FT 107). Persons are not just to be put together as “associates”. “Unless the rights of each individual are harmoniously ordered to the greater good, those rights will end up being considered limitless and consequently become a source of conflicts and violence” (# 111). Harmony is essential not only materialistically, but morally and socio-spiritually. “Nor can we fail to mention that seeking and pursuing the good of others and of the entire human family also implies helping individuals and societies to mature in the moral values that foster integral human development ... This is an attitude that ‘wills the good’ of others; it bespeaks a yearning for goodness, an inclination towards all that is fine and excellent, a desire to fill the lives of others with what is

beautiful, sublime and edifying” (*FT* 112). This goes beyond the generally adopted meanings of the term “integral”.

The Chinese terms of 整全、整體、全面 which may be used to translate “integral” can only cover partially the full and complex meanings of “integral” in the concept of integral human development. The vision of fraternity and social friendship as well as the heart and love for the strangers on the road are grounded on the values of ultimately the harmony of the physical and spiritual realms of human life, between different sectors of society, nature and God. This set of deep meanings may be more adequately expressed by the culturally saturated term of 圓融. Especially with the Chinese cultural interpretation of the concept of ecology, “integral” ecology (圓融生態) goes beyond environmentalism as the Chinese cultural resources may enrich the appreciation of *Laudato Si*’.