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“I was a stranger and you welcomed me”.
The Papal Magisterium and Human Mobility
from Leo XIII to Paul VI (1878-1978)

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Abstract

This article analyzes the development of the papal magisterium on human mobility during the period that went from the election of Leo XIII (1878) to the death of Paul VI (1978). What emerges from the research is a complex situation, characterized by a consistent thought in which each Pope chose to preserve specific elements while making his own specific, individual contribution to the problem. The article begins with Leo XIII and his concern for the faith of emigrants, it then reviews Pope Pius’ papacy where the tensions due to the Fascist regime characterized the period up to Pius XII. Paolo VI opened the papal magisterium to the new perspectives proposed by the Second Vatican Council as well as the great changes of human mobility that occurred after the second world war. This study, therefore, analyses an important Catholic line of thought in order to understand both the present day situation and the modernity and complexity of Pope Francis’ papacy.

Keywords: Catholic Church, Modern migrations, Popes, Catholic social teaching.

In the XIX century, the topic of human mobility has become increasingly important in the thought of the Popes who have analyzed its many facets, ranging from the economic migrations of populations fleeing wars and famine to mass tourism.

Following the election of Pope Jorge Mario Bergoglio on 13th March 2013, the Roman pontiff re-enforced the interest of Catholics in this topic and it must be underlined that, indeed, it has become one of the main features in Pope Francis’ papacy. In the last five years, the Argentinian Pope has strenuously denounced the tragedy that millions of people crossing the Mediterranean are forced to suffer in an attempt to reach Europe, as well as the risks of those who try and cross the Mexican borders, and he has underlined that the Church is close to all those populations that are forced to leave their native countries because of conflicts, religious persecutions or natural disasters.

Bergoglio's comments on migrations and his numerous criticisms regarding the inability of governmental institutions to deal with the phenomenon adequately have not only been widely reported by the mass media but they have also incremented the discontent of many sectors of public opinion including many members of the Catholic Church itself, to the extent that there have even been posters protesting against the Pope in Rome¹.

This critical front, that ranges from the extreme European and US right-wing populists to the conservative Catholic groups, has accused the Pope of wanting to renew the papal magisterium, in particular the one developed by John Paul II, by replacing the actions promoted by the Holy See between the XX and XXI century aimed at defending the so-called non-negotiable values, including the battle against abortion, with actions aimed at raising awareness regarding the condition of migrants, their problems and their integration in Europe and the United States.

The thoughts of the Popes regarding migrations are, more than ever, relevant to what is happening today and this article aims at analyzing the main interventions carried out by the Popes as regards human mobility, to assess whether Pope Francis is actually changing the magisterium radically or whether his thought, in fact, follows the historical line of thought adopted by the social Catholic doctrine. Although migrations have always been a matter of interest both in the writings of the Church Fathers and in the foundation of various ecumenical Councils like the Lateran Council of 1215². My study, will, however, focus predominantly on contemporary migrations strictly linked to the expansion of a capitalistic society. Therefore, I have decided to start my analysis with the papacy of

¹ A couple of months after Pope Francis was elected, he decided to visit the Island of Lampedusa, the main gateway to Europe for the boats full of immigrants from North Africa. In 2015, Francis proclaimed an extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, where the visits to the refugee camps of Castelnuovo di Porto and Lesbos played a fundamental role. On 4 February 2017, fly-posters were put up all over Rome protesting against what the Pope was doing, accusing him of being understanding and merciful only with migrants and 'decapitating' religious orders like the Franciscan Friars of the Immaculate, 'ignoring' the cardinals 'dubia' of the apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*.

² The Lateran Council IV stipulated that the prelates whose dioceses had populations who professed the same faith but did so with different rites and customs should provide "elementi idonei per celebrare divin iuffici secondo diversi riti e idiomi" (Tassello, 2001, p.20).

Gioacchino Pecci, better known as Leo XIII, who was Pope from 1878 to 1903, the first bishop of Rome to actually tackle the issue in his official documents. The study will conclude with the reign of Paul VI, (1963-1978), who further developed the argument following the revision of the council and the radical social, economic and cultural changes that occurred after the second world war. This brief study regarding the thoughts of the Popes will end in 1978 because, in my opinion, John Paul II's papacy (1978-2005) introduced so many new features regarding this field as, for example, the difficult cohabitation of local, secularized communities with Muslim migrants, the end of the cold war, with the rapidly growing emigration of some of the ex USSR satellite countries like Poland and Rumania, that a specific study on these themes would require a paper of its own.

The study of contemporary human mobility is supported by an extensive bibliography. The analysis of specific themes like the Italian migrations between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were and still are the subject matter for papers and articles which have been summarized by Paola Corti and Matteo Sanfilippo (2009) in the *Introduzione all' Annale XXIV* of the *Storia dell'Einaudi* devoted to this topic. Also the interest in and commitment towards the phenomenon of migration on the part of Catholics were analyzed and the Review “Studi emigrazione” traced as many as 1604 articles published between 1980 and 1997 discussing the topic from many different perspectives and interpretations (“Scienze teologiche”, 1997).

This is why it became necessary to make a selection, which was complicated by the fact that, although the historiography mentioned above was extensive, it underestimated the official role of the Holy See and of the main religious Orders in the organization of pastoral care, nor did it consider their roles in mediating between the dioceses at the ports of arrival and departure. Despite the importance of the topic, historians disregarded it because, as Sanfilippo wrote:

per comprenderne la trama è necessario incrociare i documenti della Segreteria di Stato e dei fondi relativi ad Africa, Americhe, Australia ed Europa nell'Archivio Segreto Vaticano, negli archivi storici dei maggiori dicasteri vaticani (Affari Ecclesiastici Straordinari, Propaganda Fide, S. Ufficio) e in quelli dei singoli istituti di vita consacrata. Ora tale documentazione potrebbe essere setacciata soltanto da robuste équipes internazionali. Invece gli storici della chiesa non prediligono le imprese collettive e non s'interessano di migrazione, nemmeno per quanto attiene alla pastorale per i migranti, mentre gli addetti ai

migration studies non amano la storia ecclesiastica e disdegnano le fonti vaticane (Sanfilippo, s.d., p. 2)

In order to write this article, I consulted some essays which were introductions to collections of texts of the Holy See regarding human mobility, like that of Gianfausto Rosoli (1985) and of Giovanni Graziano Tassello (2001a). In addition, I examined some studies published in collective works or reviews like those proposed by Antonio Aguilar Verdugo (2009), Cardinal Velasio De Paolis (2003; 2005), Agostino Giovagnoli (1986), Donald Kerwin (2004), Gianni Manzone (2006), Lorenzo Prencipe (2010), Tisha Rajendra (2011), Tassello (2001b; 2010), Giovanni Terragni (1979) and Antonio Viana (2003). In order to describe the historical context in which these papal documents were written, I examined other studies that dealt with the topic from different viewpoints: either from a more restricted historical perspective, like the volume written by Philip V. Cannistraro e Rosoli (1979) on the clash between the Holy See and fascism on the Opera Pia Bonomelli or the Acts of the first Congress of the Italian delegates of the dioceses for emigration which show how the Apostolic Constitution *Exsul familia* of Pope Pius XIII was incorporated into the Italian Church (S.C. Concistoriale, 1958) and finally, I considered studies which had a more restricted geographical perspective, like the fundamental study of Aldo Albònico and Rosoli (1994) on Italian emigration to America or the numerous works by Sanfilippo (s.d.; 2001; 2007; 2008; 2011) on the role of the Vatican on human mobility between Italy, the United States and Canada during the Risorgimento.

1. From the Risorgimento controversies born during Leo XIII's papacy to the international conflict against Fascism during the papacy of Pius XI

The Holy See became interested in migration very early and it became one of the principal concerns of the Vatican bureaucrats in the 19th century. In 1820 the migration flows started from Italy to Northern Europe and to America and the Roman curial institutions, particularly the Vatican Secretary of State and the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda fide, feared that the faith of many emigrants would be at risk in the new countries, like the United States which was predominantly protestant or, like France and

most of the Latin American countries, where, during those years, there was a growing anti-clerical tendency³.

Moreover, starting from the second half of the nineteenth century, the Vatican joined indissoluble forces with the Holy See in its tense struggle with the Italian state during the Risorgimento. The Vatican hierarchies firmly believed they could use the masses of Italian emigrants abroad to put pressure on some countries like the United States to help the Pope in his battle against the Kingdom of Italy, particularly in controlling the city of Rome. This plan, however was opposed by the Italian communities abroad which included many exiles who were liberal and anti-clerical and who, in some cases, joined the protestants to spread antipapal propaganda and obstruct the Vatican strategies⁴.

As Matteo Sanfilippo (2011, p. 3) wrote in those years, “*si apre una Questione romana, se non italiana, all'estero*”: Pius IX's church had to respond to the protestant and anti-clerical criticisms by implementing many initiatives for the pastoral care of the migrants, like the St. Raphael-Verein, founded by the German episcopate in 1871 to assist the Catholic migrants leaving Germany to find work abroad, or the establishment of national parishes like the Italian one in London.

Pope Leo XIII, elected in 1878, inherited this complex situation and tried to solve the many problems arising among the local Catholics and the emigrants particularly in the United States and Canada. In North America, the contrasts between the bishops of Irish origins and the Italian Catholic community gradually became more exacerbated, while the Vatican associations found it increasingly difficult to manage the flow of Italian missionaries to North America, who were often involved in financial scandals⁵. The North American bishops were also very surprised about the

³ During the 1840s, for example, the internuncio in Brazil, Gaetano Bedini sent various reports to the Congregation of *Propaganda fide* in which he wrote about his concerns regarding the antipapal propaganda among the Italians initiated by people of liberal and anticlerical tendencies. Bedini also wrote that he had visited the German colonies of Petropolis and he asserted that if they did not send German priests urgently, they would be undoubtedly converted by the German Lutheran missionaries, present in that region of Latin America.

⁴ In 1849, Jeremy Cummings reunited all the Italian in New York in one single parish, but he was stopped by Mazzini's followers and protestants (Sanfilippo, 2011, p. 3).

⁵ Cfr. the report cited by Sanfilippo (2011, p. 10) prepared in 1884 for the auxiliary bishop of New York Michael Corrigan.

numerous divisions within the Italian community living in their dioceses and could not understand why the Italians from northern Italy were hostile and diffident towards their fellow citizens from the south. Moreover, the Italians living in North America were against the Irish model where the parishioners were responsible for the financial needs of their parishes, and, at the same time the bishops prevented Italian parishes from being set up because they thought that they would not receive sufficient financial support from their parishioners through church offerings.

Leo XIII and his curia were well aware of all the problems because, “sin dalla metà dell’Ottocento, la Santa Sede fu informata con regolarità di quanto accadeva oltre Oceano a chi partiva dalla Penisola” (Sanfilippo, s.d., p. 5). To try and alleviate the main problems afflicting Italian emigrants, the Vatican continued to approve the establishment of new religious institutions like the one of San Carlo’s missionaries, founded in 1887 by bishop Scalabrini of Piacenza, who, after two years, promoted the foundation of the Società San Raffaele to assist Italian emigrants at their ports of departure and arrival.

Propaganda Fide accused Scalabrini of not supporting the Vatican against the Italian government. Despite this, his project flourished and by the end of the nineteenth century and 1905, when the bishop died, there were over 40 homes in America. In those years, the Holy See also approved the work of Saint Francesca Saverio Cabrini who exhorted hundreds of nuns to help the Italian emigrants in the USA, without forgetting the European migratory phenomenon where the mission founded in 1900 by the bishop of Cremona Geremia Bonomelli was developing.

As in the case of Scalabrini, also Bonomelli’s activity was weakened by the diffidence with which some Vatican congregations regarded some aspects of the political thinking of the bishop of Cremona. The Roman curia seemed unable to distinguish the problems of the Holy See in Italy from the need to stimulate an organized pastoral care of the migrants. Even the Pope was unable to solve the problem and, during his papacy, a specific document regarding an apostolate for emigrants during Leo XIII had still not been drawn up. The Pope, however, continued to make his thought regarding specific aspects of the issue known.

In the encyclic *Quam Aerumnosa* of 10 December 1888, sent to the episcopate in the United States, Leo XIII (1888, p. 73) ⁶ wrote about the Italian migrations to the American continent, using a pessimistic and critical tone due to “l’infelice e sventurata condizione di coloro che ogni anno emigrano in massa dall’Italia”; however, he was neither fatalist nor resigned. Indeed, the Pope solemnly condemned those who organized the departure of the emigrants from Italian ports to the American ones packing them “come mandrie nelle navi, e trattati in modo disumano [...] lentamente spinti alla degradazione della loro stessa natura”. Pope Pecci also made another solemn criticism against the conditions which the emigrants were forced to endure once they had arrived provided by “chi non pensa ad altro che al bisogno e al vantaggio proprio” and that, according to Leo XIII (1888, p. 73-74), was breeding ground for the development of “sette [...] che di soppiatto assalgono la religiosità indifesa e trascinano molti sulla via che conduce alla perdizione”. The Pope was convinced that the best way to defend the religiosity of the migrants from the attacks was to increase the number of priests who could speak the same language as the migrants, and in the case of the Italians, he invited the American bishops to help the missions of Scalabrini and to set up Italian national parishes which, up to that time, had been ostracised with the exception of the sole Italian parish in Philadelphia. In this document, the Pope introduced an element regarding human mobility which was to remain throughout the papacies up to modern times: the importance of promoting pastoral care through the native culture and language of the migrants. This intuition, on the part of Leo XIII, was not result of nationalistic tendency- on the contrary- his sole aim was to promote the evangelizing Activities⁷.

The Pope often underlined the need to safeguard the cultural identity of the migrants, as in 1894, with the apostolic Constitution *Orientalium dignitatis*, where he established that the Latin missionaries who tried to alienate the Eastern Catholics from their rites would be punishable by excommunication. Leo XIII’s papacy ended in 1903 and, according to

⁶ This quotation, as for all the following ones where indicated, has been taken from G.G. Tassello, 2001A.

⁷ De Paolis (2003, p. 23) wrote that “la lingua e la cultura, pure essendo un motivo fondamentale che dà ragione alla pastorale specifica, non hanno valore in sé, ma rappresentano un veicolo della fede”.

Sanfilippo (s.d., p. 13), represented, in this field, “un’epoca di cerniera nella quale la costruzione di una rete di assistenza per immigrati fu spesso messa in discussione da fattori interni alla comunità stessa osteggiata dalla società ospitante e non sempre efficacemente sostenuta da Roma”. In 1903, The successor of Leo XIII, Giuseppe Sarto, became Pope in 1903 and took the name of Pius X. He is famous, above all, for having undertaken a strenuous battle against modernism and anything that could threaten Catholicism as described in the Council of Trent. As in the previous papacy, the Pope inherited the strong tensions between the Italian emigrants and the North American bishops, who increasingly criticized the bad behavior of the Italian missionaries in their dioceses⁸.

Pius X returned to his predecessor's concerns, underlining the organizational aspects of the problem regarding the massive departure of emigrants, many of whom were Italian – according to Tassello (2001a, p. 23) 900,000 in 1914 alone - making Italy one of the first nations in terms of migrations. Pope Sarto decided to reorganize the structure of the curia, and with the *motu proprio De catholicorum in exteris regionibus* of 1912, he created a department of emigration within the Sacred Consistorial Congregation, whose task was that of providing spiritual assistance to the Catholic emigrants and who had specific powers when granting licenses to the missionaries who accompanied the exiles. This *motu proprio*, together with the decrees *Etnographica studia* of 1914 e *Magni semper negotii* of Benedetto XV of 1918, are the first juridical documents drawn up by the Vatican on missionaries and are important because they remained in force until 1952 when they were reformed by the apostolic Constitution *Exsul familia*. Pius X also promoted the rationalization of the Catholic organizations responsible for the assistance of Italian emigrants in North and South America thanks to the approval of the statutes of *Italica gens* in 1909, which coordinated the activity of these organizations overseas.

Following the outbreak of the First World War and Pope Benedict's XV appointment, the Church was confronted with the new problem of refugees who were forced to abandon their homes because of the conflict;

⁸ The bad reputation of some Italian missionaries in North America went beyond the American episcopate. Tassello (2010, p. 236) cited a letter of 1909, in which the apostolic delegate in Washington, Domenico Falconio, wrote to the Prefect of the Congregation of the Council that many Italian missionaries in the United States were “i rifiuti delle diocesi italiane”.

furthermore, Pope Pius X's reforms had not been able to solve the problems of the Italian communities in America. The Holy See, in fact, continued to receive news regarding the tensions between the North American bishops and the Italian Catholics who were, according to Sanfilippo (2011, p. 10), “percepiti come un corpo estraneo ed abbandonati a se stessi”. The Vatican bureaucrats found it difficult to understand the importance of the migratory phenomenon and proof of this is the 1917 Code of the Canon Law which devoted very little attention to the problem, except for the norm whereby national parishes overseas could only be founded and closed after having received a special pardon from the Holy See (De Paolis, 2003, p. 19). To try and improve the Italian communities' conditions abroad, in 1920, Pope Benedict XV decided to appoint a Priest for Italian Emigration within the Pontifical college, whose role was to instruct and prepare the clergy that would be sent to those countries with the highest number of Italian emigrants. The rise to power of violent ultranationalist dictatorships, like fascism in Italy or Nazism in Germany, which promoted laws against emigration, as well as the introduction of laws in the United States aimed at contrasting immigration, significantly reduced the migratory flows. This is the reason why there are fewer references to this problem in the documents of Achille Ratti, also known as Pope Pius XI, Bishop of Rome from 1922 to 1939. Despite this, he continued to underline how the faith of the migrants was undergoing serious risks, describing how their circumstances had changed, compared to the past. In the encyclical *Firmissimam constantiam* of 28th March 1937, Pius XI (1937, p. 89) made specific reference to the Mexican immigrants in the United States, affirming that being “sradicati dalla loro terra e dalle loro tradizioni, divengono più facilmente preda dell'insidiosa propaganda degli emissari che cercando di indurli ad apostare dalla loro fede”.

During this papacy, with the signing of a new treaty in 1929, the relationship between the Italian state and the Holy See marked a new era. Despite the apparently good relations between the Fascist regime and the Church, there was visible tension regarding the actions undertaken by the Vatican and Catholics in favor of the migrants. In 1928, Mussolini's regime closed the Opera Bonomelli and its work was taken over by an office purposely created within the Consistorial Congregation. In many countries where the Italian communities were larger, the divisions between Catholics who supported and promoted fascism and those wanted to remain neutral

became more pronounced. Competition as to who should lead and manage the Italian circles abroad led to clashes between the missionaries and the consuls, which in turn, caused some important Orders like the Salesians to diminish their presence on the American continent.

2. Pius XII and the Magna Charta of the migrant's apostolate

The Pope, who actually made a crucial and lasting contribution to the Catholic doctrine was Eugenio Pacelli who became Pope in 1939, taking the name of Pius XII. In the encyclic *Summi pontificatus* of 20th October 1939, the Pope dedicated some chapters to the topic of migration, underlining the unbreakable bond of all human beings united within the great family founded on the evangelical truth. When Europe was overtaken by the madness of the Nazi doctrines, also adopted by the Italian government with their 1938 racial laws and with the war about to break out, Pius XII (1939, p. 95) bravely wrote, “tutti coloro che entrano nella Chiesa, qualunque sia la loro origine o la lingua, devono sapere che hanno eguale diritto di figli nella casa del Signore”.

In the same document, Pius XII tried to temper the innovative thrust of this thought⁹, however, the subject of migrations was often cited by the Pope during the dramatic years of the Second World War, during which he tried to create new organizations to help millions of refugees that were moving across Europe. At the same time, he tried to formulate an organized and structured line of thought regarding this issue; as a consequence, Pius XII promoted dozens of Catholic associations founded with the purpose of helping refugees, the most significant of which was, undoubtedly, the Pontificia Opera Assistenza. He also held important speeches on the subject of migrations, as his speech on the radio during the Pentecost of 1941, during which he introduced the idea of migrants being a resource for the hosting country¹⁰.

⁹ Pius XII (1939, p. 96) also affirmed: “E' naturale amare più intensamente e beneficiare di preferenza coloro che sono a noi uniti con vincoli speciali. Anche il divino maestro diede esempio di questa preferenza verso la sua terra e la sua patria”.

¹⁰ The Pope (1941, p. 101) wrote that removing what could have impeded development, “di una verace fiducia tra il Paese di emigrazione e il paese di immigrazione” would have enabled the hosting countries to, “guadagnare cittadini operosi. Così le nazioni che danno e

Pius XII continued to speak and write about the theme of human mobility even when the war had ended and, hundreds of thousands of exiles had been repatriated during the second half of the nineteen forties. In 1947, the Vatican Secretary of State set up an office for migrants and refugees, and, in 1951, the Council for Emigration to coordinate assistance and pastoral care for Italian emigrants was born. During this papacy, also supranational organizations for human mobility, like International Catholic Migration Commission were founded in 1951. As Sanfilippo (s.d., p. 10) wrote, at that point the Italian migratory phenomenon was no longer “il più importante gruppo migrante per la Chiesa”; furthermore, the Vatican bureaucrats intended supporting the global commitment of Catholics to contrast the threat of communism which was becoming more widespread among the migrants.

As I have already underlined, the most significant document regarding Pacelli's papacy is the apostolic constitution *Exsul familia*, published on 1st August 1952, whose importance had already been emphasized in an article in the “L'Osservatore Romano” on 29th November, that same year, which defined it the magna charta of this kind of apostolate. After a long preamble on the history of the works ordered by the Vatican to assist emigrants and refugees, the Pope established some precise rules for the migratory apostolate, thus showing its support for the creation, in the hosting countries, of national parishes aimed at supporting and maintaining the original identity of the community of migrants. If this were not possible, Pius XII urged the bishops to preach the gospel in the native tongue of the immigrants and to entrust the religious assistance to priests who were of the same nationality, defined by Pius XII as missionaries of the emigrants, who had to act as a bridge between the Consistorial Congregation and the dioceses they worked in. Pius XII regarded the work of missionaries as a task which was both extraordinary and temporal and which could not go beyond the first generation, due to the changing and unstable number of migrants in certain countries. The core of this document, moreover, contained a detailed explanation of the competences of the Consistorial Congregation. The Vatican Congregation had a leading role and this was proof of the fact that the Pope did not want to give

gli stati che ricevono, in pari gara, contribuiranno all'incremento del benessere umano e al progresso dell'umana cultura”.

autonomy to the single diocese- but rather, wanted all the decisions to be made by the bodies of the Roman curia.

In the 1950s, the human mobility started changing due to the development of transport, of European integration, of a widening gap between the affluent classes and the working classes and by the outbreak of numerous wars around the planet, for example in Korea. Pius XII was aware of these changes and, in the final part of his papacy, he, once again, outlined his thought as he did in a speech pronounced on 23rd July 1957, when the Pope warned of the difficult situation of migrants who found themselves living in conditions which:

tutto e tutti sembra che congiurino contro di lui, determinando intime crisi di nostalgia e abbattimento! Il clima gli appare avverso, la lingua sconosciuta sembra rinchiuderlo in una penosa prigione; lo sguardo indifferente, e talvolta forse sprezzante, dei nativi l'offende; la scarsa conoscenza delle leggi e dei costumi gl'impediscono di muoversi a suo agio; una specie di incubo lo rappresenta a se stesso quasi naufrago in un'isola deserta. Non di rado gran parte di queste pene non cessano neppure quando egli abbia trovato lavoro e stabilità in una colonia di connazionali (Pius XII, 1957, p. 223).

Pius XII, however, linked this observation to the conviction of the principle of equality where by all humans were united by the joint sense of belonging to the Church which, as the Pope wrote in 1957 (p. 229) “a nessun membro del corpo mistico chiede quale sia il suo passaporto, prima di risolversi a inserirlo nella vita della comunità e farlo partecipe dei propri beni spirituali e del proprio affetto”. Finally, the Pope could see the design of God in the migratory flows because “il fenomeno della moderna emigrazione segue indubbiamente le leggi di Cristo [...] in tal modo umili colonie di lavoratori cristiani possono trasformarsi in vivai di cristianesimo, là dove esso non è mai penetrato o dove forse se n'è smarrito il senso”.

3. John XXIII and the Cooperation Between the Church and the State in dealing with the Migratory Flows

Pope Pius XII died at Castel Gandolfo on 9th October 1958 leaving an important legacy, because, as Cardinal De Paolis (2003, p. 6) observed, the *Exsul familia* was a watershed between two different attitudes of the Church towards the migrants. According to De Paolis, the apostolic Constitution

separated the period that went from the first half of the nineteenth century to 1952, during which the Church had a pragmatic, though not always consistent approach towards this problem, from the following period marked by *Exsul familia*, in which Catholicism adopted a comprehensive and codified strategy.

When Giuseppe Angelo Roncalli became Pope in 1958, he took the name of John XXIII. His papacy, while giving great importance to Pacelli's legacy, also tried to update its principles. In his first encyclical *Ad Petri Cathedram* of 29 June 1959, Roncalli (1959, p. 233) wrote that the harsh conditions immigrants were living in could lead to “smarrimento delle sane tradizioni religiose e morali della loro patria”, and he expressed his fears that male migrants departing to find work abroad could compromise the unity of families. Despite the fact that these concerns were reiterated in other documents by John XXIII, soon after, Roncalli's magisterium introduced a new and important element to the thought of the Popes on the migratory phenomenon. In the documents analyzed previously, the main interest of the Popes was linked to the definition of the role of the Church in the management of the migratory flows. In the encyclical *Mater et magistra* of 15th May 1961, however, John XXIII devoted several chapters to the description of how state authorities regulated the migrations and to the removal of the causes that encouraged emigration - particularly those that the Pope described as being precarious social and economic conditions in rural areas.

With *Mater et magistra*, John XXIII added an important element to the Catholic concept of migration, thus helping the Church become aware of the fact that it was not self-sufficient and needed to work in synergy with public institutions. If the state authorities had to remove the obstacles preventing the integration the immigrants, this did not mean that the immigrants themselves did not have to make their contribution. In his speech on 20 November 1961, Pope John XXIII affirmed that

il migrante – sia all'interno che all'estero – deve fare lo sforzo di superare la tentazione di isolamento che gli impedirebbe di riconoscere i valori esistenti nel luogo che lo accoglie. Deve accettare del nuovo Paese le sue caratteristiche particolari, impegnandosi inoltre a contribuire con le proprie convinzioni e con il proprio costume di vita allo sviluppo della vita di tutti (John XXIII, 1962)

In the following years, the Pope continued to introduce interesting innovations to the papal vision of human mobility, which also included a

view of the developing phenomenon of mass tourism. Roncalli spoke about this during the first International Convention on the Pastoral Care of Tourism organized by the Sacred Congregation of the Council in February 1963. The Lombardy Pope (1963, p. 247) wrote that every person had the right to move freely, both within his own national community, and when “i legittimi interessi lo consigliano ad immigrare in altre comunità politiche e stabilirsi in esse”. After the dramatic events in Europe and the implementation of race doctrines, Roncalli (1963, p. 248) felt the need to urge the political communities to eliminate any trace of racism, and he stated that “un'azione volta a comprimere e a soffocare il flusso vitale delle minoranze è una grave violazione di giustizia”. In *Pacem in terris*, the role of the State acquired an increasing number of competences which, previously, the Popes had attributed solely to the Church, because, according to John XXIII, the state authorities would become guardians of the linguistic and cultural characteristics of the minorities. He concluded with a call for international organizations to act as a balancing force in the distribution of capital, goods and of men.

4. Human mobility in the documents of the Second Vatican Council

The progress made by John XXIII as regards the Papal magisterium on Migrations was recognized and confirmed by his successor Giovanni Battista Montini, who took the name of Pope Paul VI in 1963, and by the Second Vatican Council which took place between 1962 and 1965. The Council Assembly did not produce a specific document on migrations but dealt with the topic in various decrees approved by the Council which officially declared how important this matter was in the daily life of the Church. The dogmatic Constitution *Lumen gentium*, once again addressed Pius XII's ideas on the universal unity of God's people and established the need for cooperation among different countries and national Churches stating that “i membri del popolo di Dio sono chiamati a condividere I loro beni” (*Lumen gentium*, p. 547). The Declaration *Nostra aetate* reaffirmed the condemnation of any racist or discriminatory doctrine, while the *Apostolicam actuositatem* Decree (p. 557) reminded the single national churches that “il crescente spostamento di popolazioni, lo sviluppo di

mutue relazioni e la facilità delle comunicazioni non consentono più ad alcuna parte della società di rimanere chiusa in se stessa”.

The Decree *Christus Dominus* made specific reference to the migrants, encouraging bishops to take particular care:

per quei fedeli che a motivo della loro condizione di vita non possono avvantaggiarsi della cura ordinaria dei parroci o sono privi di qualsiasi assistenza: tali sono moltissimi emigrati, gli esuli, i profughi, i marittimi, gli addetti ai trasporti aerei, i nomadi e altri simili categorie di persone (*Christus Dominus*, p. 552).

This document made reference to the age-long interest of the Popes in linguistic minorities, asking the episcopates to provide the immigrant communities present in their countries with priests who could speak their language, or alternatively, to appoint an episcopal curate who understood and spoke the immigrant’s native language. Moreover, the council’s decree gave much importance to the action of the bishops and, according to De Paolis (2003, p. 6), “insinua già la possibilità che venga rivista la stessa *Exsul familia*” overcoming the power that Pius XII had given to the Bishop’s Congregation.

The pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* was the most influenced by the thought of John XXIII as well as Pius XII, when he clearly affirmed that the Church was the Mother of all people and “non si lega in modo esclusivo e indissolubile a nessuna stirpe e nazione, a nessun particolare modo di vivere, a nessuna consuetudine antica o recente” (*Gaudium et spes*, p. 573). The document of the Council condemned the inequality in the world distribution of wealth, claiming that, all too often, “il lusso si accompagna alla miseria”, but, in this case, the imbalance already pointed out by Pope Roncalli was not only judged to be harmful for the Catholic religion and families, but also for peace itself. These disparities needed to be tackled by building an economy controlled by people for the common good. This would take time but it would be necessary in order to develop a harmonious economic system. The Constitution invited the public authorities:

ad accoglierli [i lavoratori stranieri] come persone, e non semplicemente come puri strumenti di produzione, e devono aiutarli perché possano accogliere presso di sé le loro famiglie e procurarsi un alloggio decoroso nonché favorire la loro integrazione nella vita sociale del popolo o della regione che li accoglie (*Gaudium et spes*, p. 572).

5. *From Past to Future. The changes made by Paul VI to the migratory pastoral*

The Second Vatican Council focused on only some aspects of the Popes' thoughts on migration, for example the linguistic minorities and the role of the states when dealing with the phenomenon, while it did not deal with the potential risks of the emigrants losing their Catholic faith in Protestant or anticlerical societies. Paul VI's difficult papacy focused on developing the pontifical thought regarding the pastoral migrations, adding some new elements and making some corrections, using the preceding magisterium and the Council provisions as a starting point.

Pope Montini was sure that one of the benefits the Council had obtained in this field was also due to the change in perspective as regarded the Catholic's actions towards migrants. These could no longer depend on spontaneous charitable aid but should become a structured commitment on the part of the Church as a whole, based on the missionary vocation outlined by the second Vatican Council¹¹. In his important speech at the UNO of 4 October 1965, Paul VI (1965, p. 256) affirmed that “non si tratta soltanto di nutrire gli affamati: bisogna inoltre assicurare a ciascun uomo una vita conforme alla sua dignità”. Starting from this concept, the Migratory Pastoral became of crucial importance in the social action promoted by Catholics, and, in general, by all men of goodwill, who, as laid down in the encyclic *Populorum progressio* of 26 March 1967, had “il dovere dell'accoglienza [...] che incombe sia alle famiglie, sia alle organizzazioni culturali dei paesi ospitanti” (Paul VI, 1967, p. 261).

Actions in favor of migrants, therefore, would involve all the Western societies which, according to the Pope, needed a clear definition the Church's thought on this topic. Montini undertook this task in *motu proprio Pastoralis migratorum cura* of 15th August 1969. This was followed by the equally significant instruction of the Congregation for Bishops *De Pastoralis migratorum cura* of 22nd August, both published after the apostolic Constitution *Regimini Ecclesiae universae* of 15th August 1967, which, among other things replaced the Consistorial Congregation with the Congregation for Bishops¹². In *motu proprio*, Paul VI, with reference to the thoughts of his

¹¹ This conviction was summarized in the sentence he pronounced in his speech in 1973, when Paul VI (1973, p. 591) affirmed that he was sure that “alla mobilità del mondo contemporaneo deve corrispondere la mobilità pastorale della Chiesa.

predecessors, underlined the importance of safeguarding the spiritual and cultural heritage of migrants, particularly their native language “con la quale essi esprimono i loro pensieri, la loro mentalità, la loro stessa vita religiosa” (Paul VI, 1969, p. 271). Compared to Leo XIII’s papacy, the Church had radically changed and the Pope had to face the numerous controversies and divisions that followed the Council. On 29th June 1972, he was forced to admit that:

Da qualche fessura è entrato il fumo di Satana nel tempio di Dio [...] Credevamo che dopo il Concilio sarebbe venuta una giornata di sole per la storia della Chiesa. È venuta invece una giornata di nuvole, e di tempeste, e di buio, e di ricerca, e di incertezze (Paul VI, 1972).

Montini, therefore, felt the need to reaffirm that the protection of the specific characteristics of single communities of migrants would not threaten the unity of the Church and he explicitly asked the lay community to contribute to the pastoral of the migrants. The *motu proprio* reiterated that the role of the Church was to promote and safeguard human rights. Specifically, the Church had not only undertaken to safeguard the cultural heritage of the migrants, but also their right to emigrate, to settle down with their family overseas and profess their faith publicly. The *motu proprio* inspired the following instructions laid down by the Congregation for Bishops, *De pastoralis migratorum cura*, which was meant to reform the *Exsul Familia* of 1952. The instruction of the Vatican Congregation underlined that migrants had the right to emigrate and to preserve their culture and repeated that, with precise reference to *Mater et magistra* and *Pacem in terris*, the role of the Nations that, “negherebbero ingiustamente un diritto della persona umana, qualora sioptionessero all’emigrazione o all’immigrazione o le creassero ostacoli, salvo che ciò sia richiesto da gravi e obiettivamente fondate ragioni di bene comune” (Istruzione della Congregazione per i Vescovi, p. 277). The instruction eliminated the concept of the insecurity of pastoral migration outlined in *Exsul familia*, because it was clearly written that assistance to migrants should not cease with the second generation but should continue until there was a need for it. Nonetheless, it maintained the importance of including immigrants in mixed parishes to avoid creating ghettos and it recommended some structural reforms, like that of the creation, within the Congregation for Bishops, of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants.

As well as defending the identity of the migrants, the Church had the duty to act as a bridge between the native communities and the immigrants and the document introduced a new, very important concept closely connected to the decree *Christus Dominus* of the Second Vatican Council and to its determination to give greater power to local authorities. It has been observed how, previously, the Popes and Pius XII in particular, promoted a model based on the Roman Curia, while the Instruction, now, reminded everybody that religious assistance to migrants should be adapted to the single dioceses which were directly familiar with: “la durata della migrazione, il processo di integrazione (della prima o delle successive generazioni), le differenze culturali (di linguaggio e di rito), la forma del movimento migratorio” (Istruzione della Congregazione per i Vescovi, p. 279).

The *motu proprio* of Pope Paul VI and the Instruction of the Congregation for Bishops deeply affected the development of the pastoral strategies in local areas. In Italy, for example, the local episcopal Conference created the National Commission for Migrations and the Migrants Foundation to help the bishops further study mobility in depth and adopt effective operative solutions. The Archdiocese of Milan also set up a pastoral office for migrants and approved the establishment of ethnic chaplaincies based on the model of national parishes. These two documents, however, had some flaws as, for example, the fact that they did not take into consideration migrants who were not Christian, or the excessive organization and bureaucracy of the migratory phenomenon which were covered by six out of the seven chapters of the Instruction. The tasks of each Bishop were not always clear, nor was there a clear description of how the Churches of the countries of departure and the Churches of the hosting countries would work together.

During the following years, Paul VI continued to deal with the issue in some chapters of his apostolic letter *Octogesima adveniens* of 14th May 1971 in which he condemned the injustices caused by an incorrect industrial development which risked “nonostante tutte le sue conquiste, di rivolgere contro l’uomo i risultati della sua attività” (Paul VI, 1971, p. 323). He underlined that people had a right to emigrate, writing that: “dovere di tutti, e specialmente dei cristiani, di lavorare con energia per instaurare la fraternità universale, base indispensabile di una giustizia autentica e condizione di una pace duratura”.

On the 6th August 1978, Giovanni Battista Montini died in Castel Gandolfo and on 16th October the history of the Catholic Church underwent another important change, with the election of Karol Wojtyła - Pope John Paul II. Wojtyła came from the other side of the 'iron curtain' and his approach was very different from Montini's, to the extent that his energy, popularity and dynamism perhaps, in the eyes of the public opinion, obscured the precious work carried out by Paul VI during the turbulent decade that started in 1968. However, John Paul II did not underestimate the work done by Paul VI for the pastoral migration and for the proposal of an ecclesiastic model which combined the independence of the dioceses with the unity and indivisibility of the universal Church; in fact, he continued to develop some of Montini's intuitions and ideas which are also relevant today.

Conclusions

After this brief reconstruction of the thoughts of the Popes on migration, I will try to provide some useful elements to answer the question posed in the introduction: are Pope Francis' views on migratory flows towards Western Europe and the United States and on refugees fleeing from wars and persecutions and natural disasters different from the previous magisterium or are they a natural development of the social Catholic thought developed by the Popes starting from the middle of the XIX century?

As a preliminary note, it cannot be denied that it is difficult to fully satisfy every expectation, when comparing two historical periods which are so different and distant from each other. The last document analyzed, the apostolic letter *Octogesima adveniens* was printed forty years before the election of Francis, while the first, the encyclic *Quam Aerummosa* as many as 125 years before the election of Pope Jorge Mario Bergoglio. As well as the temporal distance, there are other significant changes like those of the migratory flows. At the beginning of the nineteenth century and for most of the twentieth, the migrations were above all within Catholic communities, as was the Italian migration to Latin America or within Christian communities like the movements from southern to northern Europe; however, today, there is a significant flow of Muslim believers towards countries where Catholicism no longer influences the political decisions

made by the nations. Francis' Church is following these changes very closely and it can be observed that, while the documents analyzed up to this point, focused on the conditions of the Christian migrants, today, Pope Francis' papacy, as testified by the Pope's heartfelt appeals in favour of the Muslim minority of Rohingya persecuted in Myanmar, wants to safeguard the human rights of all those forced to abandon their homes.

Even the Catholic Church in the twentieth century underwent remarkable changes, whose effects are still visible. As regards human mobility, the papal magisterium is no longer conditioned by the Roman Question or fascism. Nor is it influenced by the struggle against communism, or the Italian migration, which, as mentioned above, were important themes in the development of the Popes' views- from Leo XIII to Paul VI - regarding migratory flows. The Church of Pope Francis, when considering the assistance to migrants, disposes of planned strategies that have modernized and reviewed the 1952 apostolic Constitution *Exsul familia*. The Papacies of Pius XII and Paul VI had planned strategies for the pastoral assistance of migrants but Pope Bergoglio, who interprets the vision of the Second Vatican Council, has tried to diminish the centralization of the Papacy as in *Exsul familia*, in favour of a decentralization, letting local dioceses take on many of the tasks.

Despite these marked differences, in my opinion, it would be wrong to ignore some similarities which distinguish all the ministerial thoughts on migration. As Rosoli observed, in spite of all the differing circumstances, there are some themes characterizing the Church's pastoral care that have remained throughout the ages. Rosoli (1985, p. XX) identified a consistent behavior in its ecclesiastic and migratory mission, because "i fedeli cattolici migrant sono stati visti come dei propagatori della fede" as well as in its effort to preserve the cultures while evangelizing. In fact, the Popes have always been ready to protect the minorities within the single dioceses, supporting the creation of specific facilities for emigrants. There are many points of contact among the Popes on human mobility, to the extent, that some symbolic images, like the New Testament episode of the flight to Egypt, were used by *Exsul familia* and also by Benedict XVI during the World Day of Migrants and Refugees in 2016, to describe the difficult conditions of the emigrants.

In conclusion, answering the initial question is not an easy task, however, I agree with De Paolis (2003, p. 28) who wrote "le origini devono

aiutarci a interpretare il presente e a proiettarci nel futuro”. It is undeniable that the main differences between the papacies examined and the one implemented and developed by Francis are quite considerable. In these past decades, new problems regarding the Church’s position as regards migrants have become more acute. One example is that the approach of local solutions seems to be too fragmentary, as are the divisions among most of the parishes: some would privilege a more missionary and pastoral approach as opposed to others which would be in favour of regulating and reducing the flows. Nonetheless, when facing the problem of human mobility, Pope Francis is the heir of a long-standing ministerial tradition that is laboriously trying to keep up with the times, in order to face the challenges posed by modern times.

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