Original Paper

Transparency Culture & Ecclesial Responsibility: Reflections on Institutional Communications

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Abstract

We aim to provide a theoretical framework for enhancing the Catholic Church's culture of transparency. We therefore define concepts of culture and transparency, stressing some of the institutional consequences due to their interaction. Finally, we apply these principles to the ecclesial institution's fields that are attractive for the public square: the administration of temporal goods, the use of information and the dispensation of sacraments and religious teachings. Defining culture as the setting up of behavioral standards, we realize that the ones regarding transparency have been constantly raised in the last years by society, while the Church has remained stable in its long-term organizational principles. Applying a culture of transparency for the Church would therefore require to understand the dynamic of cultural change within the Church that is essentially united to the preservation of its own spiritual purposes. Also builds within itself a culture that sustains a culture of accountability. Ecclesial institutions as any institution, builds and sustains trust through its diligent and consistent refusal to abuse the power given. The ecclesiastical institution would change its standards of transparency when it is needed to keep up with its original mission not when it is just an exigency of its cultural environment.

Keywords

transparency standards, culture, ecclesial responsibility, information use

1. Transparency Culture for Faith-Based Institutions

We aim to describe the meaning of a culture of transparency for the Catholic Church understood as a hierarchical institution. We will not therefore consider the temporal goods regarding the Catholic

schools, hospitals or libraries, but only those belonging to the ecclesial institution as for instance the buildings of the diocesan curia, parish churches and shrines, etc. Likewise the culture of transparency about the use of information will not take into account the Catholic media, but only what diocesan officers do with the faithful data. And for the same token we think about the dispensation of sacraments and teachings being in the hands of ordained ministers, not other spiritual benefits from religious congregations or movements. The elements left apart are very important for the mission of the Church, but only by delimiting our field of study would allow us to define the specific question we want to answer. We will thus start with the definition of concepts as culture and transparency, and the meaning that their interaction has for the ecclesial institution.

1.1 Defining Culture

Culture is a modern concept that did not belong to Greek philosophers, as for them culture was referred only to the cultivation of land. The concept evolved until the 17th century, when it was understood as an opposition to nature. "We might say that whereas man encounters nature, he creates culture; culture and not nature is what distinguishes him from other living beings" (O'Callaghan 2017, p. 2). The idea of "culture against nature" made of culture a sort of "social inertia" helping us to make things without the difficulty of thinking why we do what we do. It is therefore so hard today to define culture, because for understanding it we would need to think about the roots of our actions, considering why we do what we do. Uncovering our culture is therefore a real challenge.

Nevertheless, culture has an interest for faith-based institutions despite its complexity. Believers would not normally aim to let social trends take their way, although some affirm that opposing faith to culture could become a strategy for Christians in a post Christian environment (Dreher, 2017). Faith rather lead us to change society than to leave it aside, so Christians in their lives focus on the values which make up the ethos of a people, to what is called "living culture", as "the synthesis between culture and faith is not just a demand of culture, but also of faith... A faith which does not become culture is a faith which has not been fully received, not thoroughly thought through, not faithfully lived out" (John Paul II, 1982).

Among the different definitions of culture, one of the closest to the social teaching of the Church observes that creating culture is to establish a series of behavioral standards on which we can develop general agreements regarding our common wellbeing in society (Scruton, 2009, p. 186). According to those standards, what is above the social expectations is accepted and recognized and what falls short is on the contrary rejected and criticized. The sum of behavioral standards constitutes culture in society. In French culture for instance, there are a series of standards of behaving at table constituting good manners that do not necessarily need to be observed in other Nations. For faith-based institutions, cultural standards do not only refer to external actions, but also to desires and aspirations as Christian morality stresses the need not only of doing and saying what is good, but likewise to desire and love it. For Johnathan Sacks, modern standards constituting the ethos of our western culture can be enclosed in

seven values rooted in the Sacred Scriptures. And they are: 1) the human dignity including personal freedom and our real capacity of choosing among different options, 2) the idea that faith is linked to fidelity in human relations, stressing our personal responsibility and the role of our conscience, 3) the respect of the human life as a gift from God, 4) the existence of a culture of justice and guilt in contrast to a culture of honor and glory, 5) having marriage as a fundamental base of society, 6) a covenant-nature of society, referred to solidarity, equality and personal responsibility as principles that are not only individualistic, as actually the fact that our parents' faults are ascribed to us is positive in the Bible and finally, 7) every human power is subjected to the power of God that at the end grounds all social order. Rabbi Sacks understands that these values are nowadays under risk (Sacks, 2016).

They are so because when we accept today behaviors, expressions and desires that some years ago we rejected, we actually change our cultural standards. And when there is a general lowering of the behavioral standards so that morality in society gets lost, the Judeo-Christian culture withers away. In the context of Christian culture, the standard linking with transparency is the one regarding the existence of a culture of justice and guilt, in opposition to a culture of honor and glory. This point is important as in a culture of honor the one who is guilty remains with the fault attached to its person, aiming thus to hide; while in a culture of guilt although we hide, our conscience will always be in place inviting us to clarify our actions and to open ourselves to the help of others (Ratzinger, 2007, p. 21).

So believers measure themselves against their Maker, not against others. And therefore forgiving is essentially biblical while putting people to shame is not. There are some national cultures of guilt, where its members ask for pardon while there are other cultures driven by fear of losing honor, where no one desires ever to be in shame in front others. In the last kind of culture, what matters is society rather than God. And transparency therefore seems to be related to social expectations in western society rather than to our personal identity and morality.

1.2 Defining Transparency in Society

Transparency then is a characteristic of some material realities, which in the last decades has been applied to human institutions for stressing the positive public reception of their clear administration. On the one hand, "transparency has become one of the most cherished and celebrated, yet unquestioned, ideals and aspirations of contemporary society" (Christensen & Cheney, 2015, p. 70) and "it has gained a quasi-religious significance in debates over governance and institutional design" (Hoods, 2006, p. 3). On the other hand, as an influence of the culture of honor, many times just to mention the word does not induce memories that are generally positive, but rather painful and possibly punitive.

Stressing transparency is at the end positive as it allows us to face that when there is material debt in public institutions, very close at hand there is also an immense amount of personal-spiritual debt, so cultivating people's morality matters for society. Despite the raising of transparency standards, not all public institutions can be transparent in the same way. Considering for instance the State, hospitals or ecclesiastic institutions we could observe that there are degrees of transparency and of

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non-transparency that should be respected and maintained in benefit of the common good. "Everyday uses of non-transparency lubricate all the small encounters of life that make society function" (Schudson, 2016, p. 176).

Transparency can also be understood as a practice of good government, having objective elements making of it a social virtue. Therefore the Church's authorities affirm "that traditional principles of social ethics like transparency, honesty and responsibility cannot be ignored or attenuated" (CV, p. 36). Transparency as making better the moral behavior of individuals acting in society helps to resolve common problems according to the truth, distancing themselves from abuses and performing in accordance with the objective demands of morality (CSD, p. 198). The issue is how to apply this principle to the Church in Western Countries.

Looking to one side, "in the last 30 years the Western society has experienced a raise in the right to know", so we live today in a society requiring always more information from social institutions (Schudson, 2016, p. 175). Ours is therefore a society asking for the right to provide others with more information, although sometimes it would not be needed. And sometimes the Church has not changed its standards of transparency, remaining however accountable to its spiritual mission. So the Church's accountability could often fall below current social standards, being for that rejected or criticized in the public square. However, in those cases the ecclesiastical institution is not less transparent as it "has nothing to hide" (Shaw, 2008). Our point is that the cultural standards of transparency have gone up and the Church remained the same, therefore the ecclesiastical institution is receiving a call for transparency and is expected to give an answer. The response that the Church can give regards the ecclesiastic responsibility that is not only pastoral or hierarchical, regarding on the contrary laypeople as well. But, the call for transparency in the Church is still perceived as an urgent one.

Looking to another side a culture, once created, does not necessarily remains alive, cultural inertia many times stops and so inside of the Church there is a growing trend towards transparency. In the case of faith-based institutions, new personal interactions are built around traditions rather than on social expectations, customs or mindsets. The Church is "the building of God" (LG, p. 6), a divine and human institution, whose transparency requires from its authorities governmental, procedural, financial and communication clarity; granting to them also information, participation and stewardship. So the Church requires her ministers to be accountable for what they teach, do and govern (CIC, p. 1279; CCEO, p. 1023), but also to all of the faithful to be accountable of their personal responsibility in regards the ecclesiastic institution. So Church's leaders "are urged to suitably and without interruption perfect their knowledge of divine things and human affairs and so prepare themselves to enter more opportunely into conversation with their contemporaries" (PO, p. 19). However, setting up new cultural standards is not an easy task and so culture changes slowly, it is not possible to change culture in just a few years.

To the specific mindset of believers and the low speed of cultural changes we should add that the relationship among the culture and the Church in the western world is not as it was in the first centuries

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of Christianity. Then it was a totally new cultural change and so the new paradigm was easier to perceive, while current western culture has Christian roots that we likewise observe in the mindset of secular people. The task to establish a culture of transparency is "not so much cognition but recognition, not so much knowledge but acknowledgement, not so much conquest but thanksgiving" (O'Callaghan, 2017, p. 12), so the relationship among Christian and Western culture is the one that parents have with their children. There are several consequences of this cultural shift that we will next need to consider carefully.

1.3 Transparency in the Church

Transparency in the Church is an exigency for its spiritual mission, not just a strategy for better organization. Giving an answer to the call for transparency requires the exercise of practical knowledge regarding the mechanisms or systemic explanation of "the Church's ownership" in practical terms. If transparency is the answer to "the practical question of having temporal and spiritual goods as well as information" then, it is about the communication of ownership-sense to the totality of what is owned, in terms of temporal goods, information and means of salvation. When for instance we have a hammer in our hands, it is in relation with the table we build, and we build it because we need it for our lives as humans (Polo, 1996, p. 43). Likewise in the Church we possess temporal goods as economic means, we transmit information we own through media and we are responsible for dispensing the "efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church, by which divine life is dispensed to us" (CCC, p. 1131). The practical question of having all those means is for the mission of governing, sanctifying and educating in the Church.

Transparency therefore is not immediately good government. The sense and need of having a hammer is the building of a table needed by humans. The sense and need of having means of information, temporal goods and spiritual assets in the Church requires as condition to keep them as means, not as ends. In the Church, we do not move transparency standards according to common social expectations regarding nonprofit institutions (Bowman, 2002, p. 293), but on the needs according to its spiritual mission. So, transparency in the Church grows in a dynamic way more on the need of renewing her evangelization capacity, than on external trends coming from civil society. Which makes the institution adaptable in communicating and governing with clarity its own resources (Zalbidea, 2016, p. 178). It does not only imply the moral responsibility that every public institution has to be accountable, but also the need to be understandable for preserving the Church's original mission. And for being understandable we need time. Only after many years we will overcome the image of secrecy some have forged, but as Gadamer observed time ago, we should not fall in the prejudice of living without prejudices (Gadamer, 2013, p. 339).

Regarding cultural changes the urgent needs are not resolved in immediate actions as we reach real change and constant renovation when we are able to modify the accidental, preserving the essence of long term values and traditions. We do not only want to know how to implement transparency as a

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right—or accountability as a duty—in the Church, because aiming only for transparency laws in the Church would create confrontation. It likewise happens in human organizations with transparency that is not often in place—due to defect—and we could find disagreement with it as a lack of desire—due to fear, knowledge and formation. At the end, having a deformed governance, could give place to bodies ruled out of objective integrity and accountability to its values, just maintaining self-preservation and keeping the status quo.

Religious institutions, and the Church in particular, also on the side of their leaders are quite interested in the pursuing transparency (Francis, 2014, p. 383). Therefore it is not enough to explain the activities the Church carries forward, but also to make clear why it does not carry forward other activities. Not only what we do, but also why we do not do what we do not accomplish matters for instituting transparency. If the institution itself does not freely realize transparency, then it will come to realize that what it compromises is the very thing it longs for in religious freedom. Which is the very soul of each religious institution, as it exists in itself and in the public square.

Finally, focusing mostly on social interactions, leaving thus apart economic and political performances, we observe that transparency is not a technique for solving problems. When an institution sets up strategies to obtain transparency as an answer to a problem, it is too late. Transparency is not the solution, but an important prevention. Transparency, as we understand it, relies on the principle of subsidiarity, communicating the intention of the institution in a prudent and judicious manner (Zalbidea, 2016, p. 74). The task of the Church is "to safeguard and administer its goods in light of the mission of evangelization with special care for the needy" (Francis, 2014b, p. 1).

2. Towards the Control of Intransparency

According to Luhmann, we have been moving always faster since the second half of the past century towards a bigger control of intransparency (Luhmann, 1997, p. 363). Social expectations allowed us to develop medicine under the desire to understand always better the body functioning. We have also grown our understanding of techniques boosting sciences and research on new fields as neurobiology, quantum physics, and particles accelerators. With regards to the intentional behavior of human being, we observe a faster development of psychology and psychoanalysis. The examples could be enlarged to communications technology studied in connection with neuronal inputs, or to stem cells' and cloning research. These efforts aim to maintain the control of intransparency, as many public actors understand that we should necessarily clarify and understand all what we do not know about reality, which would be the only way to move civilization forward.

"Even as a social value, the meaning of the term varies, for example from transparency of past activities and accomplishments, where accuracy and reporting is emphasized, to transparency with respect to future ambitions and plans, where participation, credibility and trust worthiness are central dimensions" (Christensen & Cheney 2015, p. 72).

Society is moving towards the control of intransparency, and therefore we want to understand how our body works enhancing biology and medicine, we want to understand our way of rationalizing and thus we developed psychoanalysis and yoga, we want to establish political and economic controls in order to stop the growth of systems we do not know entirely how they work. The Church is challenged by a society that understands transparency as the natural consequence of social interaction, becoming a balance of information among those making part of the institution and reflecting about the values for their belonging as in tension against those making possible the existence of it. On the one hand, transparency is considered as "an inclusive and appealing word encompassing candor, predictability, integrity, honesty, full disclosure, etc." (Bennis, Golemand, O'Toole, & Biederman, 2008, p. viii). But on the other, for some transparency is to "hold two truths fundamental: all information should be free and that one should mistrust authority and promote decentralization of power" (Saunders, 2011).

The awe and wonder the faithful experience living in society and controlling intransparency needs direction when referred to the ecclesial institution, because the disclosure society leads us to "the world of uberization, one in 'which no one really works for anyone nor owes responsibility to readers or to riders' (Bar,t 2015, p. 24)". Transparency should be provided with education and formation since the beginning. Faithful want to know about financial decisions, information availability and the access to sacraments and religious ceremonies and so the pastors of the Church need to answer in the best possible way.

2.1 Temporal Goods' Administration

Transparency regards the Church's temporal goods (CIC, 1287 §2), and the key principle for it is administering with professionalism. Those are goods that "according to their nature and ecclesiastical law, should be administered by priests with the help of capable laymen as far as possible" (PO, p. 17). Nature refers to the purpose of their use: "for the carrying out of divine worship, for the procuring of honest sustenance for the clergy, and for the exercise of the works of the holy apostolate or works of charity, especially in behalf of the needy" (CIC, 1254 §2). And administration stresses the non-personal property of them and so the responsibility of the faithful, ordained or not, involved in their administration who should always be keenly aware of their responsibility to ensure that these economic resources is always directed to those ends (Miñambres, 2015, p. 586a). So transparency by the Church's nature should be and is an act of responsibility on behalf the public juridical person of the Church owning temporal goods that were provided in freedom by the ecclesiastical community (CIC, p. 1257 §1).

Transparency is about sustainability and is linked to the institutional mission. Institutions need to respond to their mission otherwise in the future they will not get neither information nor financial resources. In the case of the Church, putting in place a right stewardship of temporal goods, will make them flourish by the proper governance and ordering of them, adapting the utilization of technology to benefit her needs to communicate in order to evangelize in full credibility (Young, 2016, p. 204). It

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would tie together the spiritual and temporal responsibility of the Church, "carrying forward the work of redemption in poverty and under oppression" (LG, p. 8). A governance that initiates transparency and accountability would be true to the principles that founded the Church as an institution, and here "the organizational level of analysis is especially important because that is where transparency policies, practices, and images are ultimately manifested and tested" (Christensen & Cheney 2015, p. 72).

Some administrators of dioceses, who happen to be professionals in the administration of enterprises or financial institutions, propose solutions. What about cross training within the organization? Joint commissions? As well as information sharing, as long as it is extremely secure? For instance, the US Government is employing over 12.000 functionaries in the different General Inspector's offices. Only in the 2008, they "conducted investigations that identified more than $4 billion the IGs were able to recover, and produced more than 6.000 indictments, more than 6.000 successful prosecutions, and nearly 5.000 suspensions and disbarments" (Schudson, 2016, p. 253). And that was and is observed as competency and fidelity to the mission of government.

Several questions regard likewise the Church's financial acquisitions: how to operate with property, and what are the implications of these for the poverty that is lived in the Church. How could we ensure that these or any other assets/security should not compromise the Church and Her Mission? Not only for the Holy See, but also for other structures belonging to the local Churches, the maintenance schedules on temporal goods, are essential, they are referred to their budgets but should also be resource sustainable in the long term period. There could be sometimes routine maintenance schedules for larger temporal goods, HVAC, plumbing etc. and the contracts should be re-negotiated (preventative and otherwise) with transparent processes to address possible problems. Transparency is not for solving a problem, but to make prevention of it.

On the one hand some faithful consider reasonable bringing to the consideration of the Bishop if there has been thought of opening up in each Diocese a preferred provider network of vendors whom have provided the due diligence to the local churches, and will cooperate with the Church's mission, providing the best contract per product. That would make faithful aware that we as a Church, both local and universal have purchasing power, so able to demand such things, using a positive leverage in benefit for those most in need. On the other hand, some faithful consider the risk of corruption, where the most power the hierarchical institution has to purchase or to influence in society, the most it needs to answer for it. Although the first initiative could work for the Church in some Nations, for the most cases what would be desirable when aiming for transparency in the Church would be living a healthy subsidiarity where every single body responds for its actions and where the ecclesiastical authority exerts due vigilance.

The measure to judge about a degree of transparency cannot be only subjective though, so depending merely on social expectations. Transparency should respond to the objective reality that is considered for every individual, as "its current pursuit reflects a quest for good governance through new regimes

of global visibility, comparability and legibility" (e.g., Garsten & de Montoya, 2008; Lord, 2006; Tapscott & Ticoll, 2003). Current transparency international standards create difficulties for the administration of the ecclesiastical institution's temporal goods.

On the one hand, institutional cultural standards move towards providing extensive financial reports while diocesan offices could appear in lack of financial explanations. We know that temporal assets are to be transparently made accountable to its members, the People of God, Bishops, Priests, laity, etc. according to the original mission of the Church and that financial information should be communicated to its members at least annually by law, becoming in this case a moral obligation. The legal obligation in industry is between two parties, either individuals or corporate to others, for instance when the annual fiscal report is presented, it could be either with too much information, or not enough. Stakeholders and shareholders of institutions could at first glance look at financial reports and glaze at them with confusion, so not only a lack but also an "excess of financial information" could lead to inefficiency and inoperation (Lamming et al., 2004, p. 299). "The excess of information produced in the name of openness may function to "blind or dazzle the receiver" and in this way be used to hide conditions and circumstances that organizations prefer to keep in the dark" (Christensen & Cheney 2015, p. 81). Often because the manner in which the report is presented leaves little expectation for question and answers.

The Church in some nations responds to this trend providing more financial information. In these cases transparency is in place due to external exigencies as in the case of the Church in Italy for receiving taxes from the Italian State or by the exigencies of historical reasons as the case of the Church in Germany needing to be financially transparent in order to keep up with the several relief services and educational centers linked to the hierarchical Church. Actually the Pope is also stressing "the fundamental directive that it is necessary to separate in a clear and unequivocal way the direct management of the Holy See's patrimony from the control and vigilance over the activity of management". (Francis, 2016, §4).

On the other hand, "there has certainly been a significant increase in the volume of financial reporting over the past century. Yet most of what is produced, however technically accurate it may or may not be, is extremely inaccessible to the average stakeholder" (Henriques, 2007, p. 69). Cultural standards therefore require more and more mediation for getting financial understanding within institutions. "Contemporary transparency systems make citizens and consumers highly dependent on intermediaries—environmental advocates, community representatives, political pundits, investigative reporters, financial analysts, and others—who can translate complex information into more simple formats that allow users to incorporate conclusions easily" (Christensen & Cheney, 2015, p. 83). An acting person in the public square with goods that are temporal, where the immediacy and the accountability fit into the normal public discourse, might find difficulty to understand a lack of financial understanding within public institutions, no matter if they are more value-driven than

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functional to economic, political or social expectations.

In the Catholic Church we often face the similar case. The expectation that organizational leaders would have high training for financial understanding could happen at the most essential level, the parish level or local Church and possibly also at the bishops' conferences, as well as the dicasteries in Rome. For the sake of our conversation we would consider the moral obligation of understanding—while the technical knowledge could be translated by professionals—so what needs further evaluation is to determine when exactly transparency is a matter of what becomes intentional. The key will be to perform some initial systematic forensics to discern whether or not there are defect of intention when "carrying out the activities of monitoring, verification, analysis and offering recommendations (Francis, 2016, p. 1.c). If so, then steps should and will be made to make up what is made lacking personally and institutionally so as to remedy the defect.

There are several initiatives for promoting financial understanding in the as for instance the center for Church management and business at Villanova University in Philadelphia, the Santa Croce Pontifical University program of Church management in Rome or the National Leadership Roundtable in America, to give some examples. They use the terms from which, since the beginning of this century, the economic industry and political groups base their standards in attempt illustrate value where it is lacking. This could be understood as an aim of translation of some of the Church's issues into institutional categories, just as consultants would do when applying solutions from one organization to another, and "the secret of good consultancy is to redefine a problem so that it matches a readily available solution" (Bryson, 2000, p. 159). Their scope therefore is to "recognize" rather than to 'cognize' the elements needed for transparency, aiming for an "absolute transparency that builds authentic collegiality" (Francis, p. 2015).

2.2 Transparency in Information Use

A person's interaction with society and one's self has been intensified with the increase of technology in the last two decades (Romano, Osborne, Truzoli, & Reed, 2013). This change and progression in technology though good, has had an impact on people that was unexpected. In the case of most Westerners, their view or impression of themselves, how they see and communicate with others, the intimacy with which they share their thoughts, etc. is now not kept in their hearts or written in a diary, it is expressed for the world to see. This movement is not anymore called publicity as the economic term would do for products on sale, but "publicness" understood as the social trend of making available for everybody most of our daily behavior, having important consequences (Habermas, 1989, p. 23).

"Established in Sweden as early as 1766 and consecrated after World War II by the United Nations as a human right, freedom of information is an ideal that underscores society's commitment to rationality, justice, and democracy. More recently, the ideal of transparency has been reflected in corporate governance, where the emphasis on corporate ethics presupposes an ongoing attempt to reduce organizational secrecy" (Eldomiaty & Choi, 2006).

On the one hand, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT's) are creating attraction and distraction also inside the Church. Due to the immediacy of wanting to know and the importance given to the present moment, we can observe a movement for contrasting media-distraction aiming for discernment or discretion, self-reflection and privacy. However, the contrasting group is still a minority looking forward for a new culture within the ongoing use of media technology (Li, 2010, p. 205). But ICT's are also very attractive and media information in dynamism would allow the Church to communicate objectively and subjectively who we are and what we do. So the Church understands ICT's as a positive movement and the history of the Church teaches us likewise that every time that there was a need for clarification, councils, synods and similar gatherings have been set up to solve controversy. Transparency should foremost be a beacon of internal and external clarity of mission, able to make the Church legitimate (giving hope) respecting at the same time the objective truth of the organization. So it is not enough with being positive about ICT's but we need to understand how they work and what is the culture leading media attraction and distraction. Therefore we are aware of the real value that media and technology is reaching, as "the Internet does not change out intellectual habits against our will. But change them it does" (Carr, 2010, p. 92).

But on the other hand, the Church is not quite familiar to ICT's development—it does not adjust to their standards—just as it is not very often interested in organizational theories or in communication strategies. These perspectives are falling beyond of the shared interests of the pastors of the Church. The faithful of the Church however—just as any other member of an institution moving towards change—are trying to discuss about intentional and unintentional defects, and how practically to address them, with clergy and laity alike. All parties, even though afraid, have to be willing to dialogue and address communication for overcoming the defect objectively. Transparency does not change the government of the Church or its laws and institutions, but it stresses that faithful are interested in the way in which things are done, decisions are made, funds are used, plans are prepared, strategies are proposed, people are encouraged and developed, the future is thought about, ideas are fixed and created, the faithful are included and so on. And it would also help us to understand that other social actors as other members observe us with equal interests and actions.

Streamlining information security and personnel is essential particularly within the Church, when speaking of transparency as the beginning of eliminating particular silos that could be used to hold leverage not always in full fidelity to the mission of the Church. Therefore we observe that there are some cultural standards in place that could serve as a path for enhancing transparency for the use of information in the ecclesial institution.

First, information means today interaction, not control. So we can require always more information from others. For instance in the last 10 years we passed from 5 to 84 percents of Internet users being enrolled in social media platforms, although today only 20 percents of active uploaders of information to the web are reaching 97 percents of views, and critics observe that they are mostly unknown and

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fostered by the principal net actors: Google, Facebook, Apple and Amazon (Van, 2013, p. 116). But when 60 million of people are getting access to Wikipedia's concepts every day (Jenkins, 2008, p. 279)—although only around 1.200 individuals have configured above 80 percents of those contents (Van, 2013, p. 163)—we should aim to be part of the movement as we know that by participating, we are creating a "global wisdom". The interaction approach would be stress for the Church in some Nations where media are controlled by the State and real information does not appear, which could become a serious issue.

Second, with regards to information availability, recognizing defect is the initial step in addressing transparency. From there is a process of discernment whether intention was pure or not. This facilitates improved communication, also bringing transparency, where there has been either darkness or even disillusionment. Miscommunication or poor communication with personnel is one example of how transparency can have an important impact on an organization, particularly with the Church. For example, a pastor of a parish fails to give his employees a performance evaluation. This would give the impression to the employees that all is good, no news is good news and that they are performing as he sees fit. Not until the next pastor comes and until there is a financial audit does there appear a modicum of transparency. It may appear that there are disgruntled employees, parishioners, false financial being presented, and no employee evaluations. Which does not necessarily mean that the prior pastor was intentional in this behavior. Most often, in the case of the Church, most are very capable as leaders, and are accountable for much, a pastor for all of the people in his parish's geographical area. But sometimes the pastor is not prepared nor did he have the tools to govern, so he need to recognize defect stressing the intention.

And finally, although information use is expensive it is needed for sustainability. The creators of YouTube obtained more than $300 million each by selling their platform only 10 months after its creation (Carr, 2008, p. 130). Google is a company worth 169,38 billion already in 2009 that did not report loses in the financial crisis, actually reaching its highest profit level in 2012, 10.79 billion (Fuchs, 2014, p. 128). Interaction is thus very valuable in the public square. Making the Church information-transparent is not only to provide the web with information, it is also about changing the culture of understanding new technologies inside the Church and that could make the institution sustainable in the long term because information transparency aims for inclusion. This area of transparency opens up a need in the formation of faithful as without transparency there is a tendency in all of us for not reaching the best of our capacity. Making an institution transparent with regards to its public information is not only to organize its public image but to make others aware that they actually belong to it. Up and down transparency could mean personal responsibility or stewardship (Miñambres, 2012, p. 282). Its results are endless. It allows the risk of having a leader surrounding himself by those who only agree with him, instead of those objectively faithful. So, cooperation with the faithful should be a stabilizing force for the local pastor.

2.3 Transparency in Dispensing Sacraments

Western culture stresses that "transparency is required or the public is unable to accurately judge the actions of governments and their institutions" (Dobson & Hunsinger, 2016, p. 224). Transparency in the Church would also be about its members' capacity for understanding—in public—the sense of preserving and dispensing sacraments and religious teachings. It is a recognition or intuition that is the alacrity of understanding not what we can perceive, but the reason of our being involved in worship and sacramental life. Social life is not fully disclosed either, so the challenge is not only for faith based institutions as, "when we insist that legal or legislative processes be 'transparent'," for example, we are usually requesting that nothing is hidden from view. Often, however, we do not know what we are not seeing because we take it for granted in looking beyond. In this way, demands for more information can in some situations be insatiable habits rather than actions likely to yield insight or shared discovery" (Christensen & Cheney, 2015, p. 77).

When transparency becomes an act of individual and institutional freedom directed towards the end of that institution, then it involves self-reflection and examination of the moral actions, purification of institutional memory and accountability for such actions in the public and private spheres. In other words, "the call for transparency is essentially a rejection of established representations" (Christensen & Cheney 2015, p. 77). Only when done in creativity it can avoids dismay and sense of betrayal that could appear when a false image of the institution is projected as the real image (Berry, 2011, p. 7), confusing her transcendent mission with just an opaque chimera of a public presence of religion.

Transparency in this case is not only an exercise where an institution takes into account what it has as assets, liabilities etc. and in the event to benefit or avoid conflict. Transparency as it concerns the Church's spiritual goods applies to and is accountable for more than an institution or corporation in the most general of terms. The scandals regarding priests' morality arise a great exigency of transparency, because the intention of the whole spiritual mission of the Church gets obscured when we doubt about the ministers' personal behavior. And transparency in this case or the intuition of spiritual realities is not obtained with concepts we understand—and that we can likewise reject—but the intuition of reality is perceived through learning about others' lives, as living realities that we can like or dislike but that we cannot describe as false. The way for transparency in this case is to show in public the full sense of the life of those who deeply believe and the consequences of their living for others.

Transparency in dispensing sacraments and religious teachings can be set in place not only with the presentation of pastoral activities, but rather with the clarification of the sense and intention of worship. Ordained ministers act on behalf of laypeople having the right to receive the spiritual fruits through the divine worship and apostolate. The dispensation of spiritual goods passes through the pastors and so transparency in this case refers to the pastor's personal accountability. Transparency in spiritual goods dispensation requires therefore ongoing personal formation of the pastors of the Church. Explaining the plan of ongoing formation at all levels, spiritual, human, professional and when needed psychological,

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would communicate in an effective way the intention of the institution that is about communicating the truth of who the Church is, how She acts, what She possesses (temporal and sacramental assets), lived in Her liturgical life, all revealing through Her members (Hierarchy & laity, n.d.) so that all will see and know that Christ "fully reveals man to man himself" (GS, p. 22).

Those who possess the authority of office from the Church should be trained as a competent transparent witnesses to the Faith that has a unity of intention and purpose of the Church. On-going formation in administration as well as prayer, spiritual direction, teaching and preaching are essential for priests. This also unifies their formation as well as intention that binds the pastoral office. In the case that defect is found in those that are faithful to the Church and not to just human interests, Church's authority should try to give them tools to become competent, if they are willing. It is seems to be pastorally essential. The experience of the last years has thought the authorities of the Catholic Church that if defect is serious, immediately remove the problem. Without hesitation but with prudence and clarity. Document, investigate, and use the due diligence. Question all sides, and look to ensure whether or not one is being deceived. Acting without due diligence or out of fear, comfort, public appeasement will only communicate not charity nor wisdom, but a lack of interior depth of institutional character and faith. Fear of being litigated is not as bad as fear of losing souls. Failure in prudent due diligence not only damages the reputation of the Church, it truly damages the subjective faith of the flock and the shepherds, as well as future on-going evangelization of future vocations due to lack of transparent intent to the objective truth with clarity. Self-preservation should not be an obstacle to the original mission of the Church.

So for putting transparency in place when speaking about its original mission, we should aim for sharing information not for surrendering it. There is no need to answer questions no one has asked about. At the end the issue of transparency is about disclosing the essence of the Church, of not confusing means and goals. The temporal goods we have in the Church might be the result of historical inheritances, perhaps anonymous, and they need to be oriented towards the spiritual mission. Christian culture and social institutions constitute a moral dynamic, as they have not only supported the passing of time but have actually configured the ethos of the whole western tradition (Scruton, 2016, p. 57).

3. Conclusions

Transparency can be learned when it is linked to memory. Aiming for a renewed culture of transparency in the Catholic Church would lead us to consider the sense that accountability and personal responsibility could acquire in the institution preserving her temporal and spiritual goods. Therefore we could acknowledge a series of obstacles for remedy, as for instance memory of errors and punishments that we, as a collective body or as individuals have suffered in the past. The last pontificates have faced serious problems on the moral behavior of ministers of the Church and also in the administration of the temporal goods, the first issues have been addressed courageously especially

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during the pontificate of Benedict XVI and also with Pope Francis. Administrative issues will be more and more present as civil society presses for financial and information transparency.

From the human dimension of the Church, we observe that there is, like in many public institutions as well, fear of change. It is connected to transparency, as we tend to understand it like the result of punishment, rather than a requisite for development. Changing does not mean ignoring the spiritual goals and essence of the institution, but rather a key modeling of the structures for serving the faithful in a better way. Alasdair MacIntyre counted transparency among the secondary virtues, those that "concern the way in which we should go about our projects; their cultivation will not assist us in discovering upon which projects we ought to be engaged" (MacIntyre, 1967, p. 24). Transparency could thus be a social virtue, used by the Church that understands well her spiritual mission. But, changes in the administration of temporal goods and in the custody of information would lead us to improve institutional government.

Transparency should be put in place in freedom—whether it be in secular or religious institutions—not in a manner that is punitive, for this is often how it is perceived; meaning that we set it up too late. This makes the word and process relative to that of removing a tooth or a cancer, painful…, particularly if the memory of the event from the past is painful. Especially when referred to the granting of spiritual goods, transparency begins with an interior conversation personally based on objective and honest expectations that have clearly been communicated. These should be followed up on and have to be reasonable as to the time-frame to be accomplished. It is about communicating the good, not about recalling bad experiences. It is a very positive virtue, used like an interior light of charity to reveal any defect to motivate one to act for the good, in freedom…, and if not, only then remedy and if possible, penalty eventually takes place. This also can be an act of charity, for the good of the person but also for the common good, whether it be for the institution or society as a whole. Transparency in this sense, when used pro-actively in freedom, is to be used as a wonderful tool to enable the person or agency to utilize their freedom to reflect or mirror where they are going, what or if there are any defects and to continue/discontinue so as to progress towards the end of the Institution. For the Church living transparency in freedom, means to be transparent in all aspects of its proposed assets: material, immaterial, temporal, and most important, spiritual. Because the point of transparency is the common good of the individual or members of society and members of the Church.

Transparency allows us to overcome poverty. We could find poor government, where poverty in this sense is what saint Thomas Aquinas used to define as the lack of a due good. We might observe that, generally speaking, there is poverty of information in the Church, while faithful would like and expect to be informed and to inform in a clearer way about for instance the pastoral plans, the election of bishops, the construction of new Churches, the number of vocations, etc. We also could experience poverty of communication, because although we may know some of the key data regarding the development of the Church, there would be reluctance to make it public. Communication in this sense

would mean create communion, even when there are some problems to be faced, according to the information we can know, communicating them in an adequate way could be crucial for their prompt solution.

Finally, we could also experience a sort of poverty of desire, as we observe that the faithful of the Church would rather prefer to follow norms than to imply their own lives for developing the institution. Non-transparency fosters their believing without belonging. Shepherds of the Catholic Church are not aiming to make the non-ordained faithful part of the life of the Church, but they are rather aiming to make the Church part of the life of the faithful. It is only in this second case that the institution would develop not in tension with economic or political improvement, but according to the laws ruling society as it would be a natural part of social development. For that, the Church should not aim to resolve the immediate problems of society, as the essential human solutions are not found in the urgent, but in long-term traditions taking into consideration ideas and institutions.

In this sense, the poverty of desire would not be overcome by proposing attractiveness in the public square but by becoming challengers and inspirational guides of social development, precisely because the last focus in the immediate (political and economic trends), humanity needs someone taking into consideration the long term period of time. As Habermas observed, "Under pure technocracy citizens do not look for a rational consensus on the practical dominion of their own destinies" (Habermas, 2007, p. 39). The Church is to lead and consult by example in humility and steadfast resolution to the integrity of what has been handed on in the Sacred Deposit. Some best practices that could become a map for proposing transparency enhancement in the Catholic Church are:

When you want to offer information for the faithful, define a real default story or teaching and make it available for everybody.

When you want to ask for a contribution, request for a default amount of money or define a specific project, but make other amounts and pastoral projects available if needed. Do not give excess of information.

When you want people to attend a specific course on religion, propose them general relevant contents and make available specific attentions for those who might need it.

For making the financial information transparent, publish the names of the members of the Financial Council of the Diocese.

Be inclusive in information offering, create blogs and options to the official narrative.

Show different options for understanding the pastoral activities of the parish Church or the diocese and make interactive the proposals for the pastoral diocesan plan.

Provide a landline, or someone that faithful could see in full trust, when hoping that the Church is able to give them suggestions for deciding in complex familiar or personal situations. Make the pastors available.

Do not try to explain everything, but rather to make understandable the essential with regards to the

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mission of the Church.

Do not give answers to questions no one has asked for, as all information is used soon or later and not always in full fidelity to the original mission of the Church.

When asking for information from faithful, provide them with active protection, so that they know that you are not using their data for other purposes, besides the pastoral evangelization.

Consolidation is not necessarily transparency, it would be desirable that every ecclesiastical body could present its own financials and be responsible for its own activities.

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