

Robert LaSalle-Klein. *Jesus of Galilee: Contextual Teaching for the 21st Century*  
Maryknoll, 2011

14

## JESUS OF GALILEE

HOPE FOR A GLOBALIZED WORLD IN DESPAIR

Mary Doak

*Gaudium et Spes*, the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World issued by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), observed already in 1965 that the world had become more deeply interconnected, a fact that confronts humanity with the questions of how people will interact with one another and to what purpose. Will humanity develop economic systems that facilitate the sharing of the world's resources and better assist those in need? Or will humanity develop a global system of hierarchy and domination, allowing a privileged few in the world to appropriate even more of the world's resources? In a strikingly prophetic passage, *Gaudium et Spes* starkly warned that "the modern world shows itself at once powerful and weak, capable of the noblest deeds or the foulest. Before it lies the path to freedom or to slavery, to progress or retreat, to brotherhood or hatred."<sup>1</sup>

Although written nearly fifty years ago, this surely remains an apt description of humanity today. "Globalization" is now the common term used to describe the unprecedented human interconnectedness at the beginning of this new millennium, with economics, technology, finance, communication, and politics increasingly integrated worldwide. Foreign exchange and capital markets are globally linked, operating twenty-four hours a day and across national boundaries. At the same time, new communication technologies, including the Internet, cellular phones, and media networks, facilitate not only an international economy but also a global culture predicated on the instantaneous sharing of information and entertainment. This unprecedented degree of human interaction influencing the conditions of life throughout the world is a force that can be used for greater good and for greater evil than was before possible.<sup>2</sup> Globalization gives us the resources to foster human solidarity and support internationally, even while we see

evidence that our interconnectedness also increases the possibility of violence and domination. The choice before us, as Daniel Groody insightfully observes, is whether we will steer our common ship toward a more peaceful and just world or be shipwrecked on the icebergs of selfishness and greed.<sup>3</sup>

The evidence thus far is that globalization has been anything but an unalloyed good. Inequality among nations has risen dramatically in the past fifty years: whereas the income difference between the richest and poorest countries was 35 to 1 in 1950, the income difference was 72 to 1 in 1992 (and continues to grow). As Groody has noted, "the three richest persons have more assets than the combined GNP (Gross National Product) of the poorest forty-eight nations, a quarter of the world's countries."<sup>4</sup> It is sobering to consider that what people in Europe and in the United States spend altogether on luxury items is almost ninety times as much money as the amount needed to provide basic sanitation and safe drinking water to all those in the world who currently lack these necessities.<sup>5</sup> The desperation of those excluded from the benefits of the global market is fueling world-wide migration, with over 200 million international migrants and nearly four times that number who have migrated regionally.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, international media and marketing undermine the cultural patterns that sustain local communities, and the increased proximity of ethnic and religious groups that could lead to mutual appreciation often results in violent conflict instead. The technological advances of the twentieth century improved longevity and quality of life for many, but they also made possible the horrific violence of "world" wars and genocides.

One might expect to find a positive outlook on the current situation among those who benefit most from access to the world's resources and who dominate the global economy as well as international politics. After all, this internationalized economy has brought an unprecedented standard of living to the developed nations, and globalization has dramatically increased the diversity of goods available. Yet in the United States one finds little optimism among those currently enjoying the luxuries provided by the global market. Instead, there is a widespread and fearful uncertainty that masks an undercurrent of despair. This lack of hope is manifest in the proliferation of predictions of the end of the world and in the popularity of enraged talk-show hosts whose warnings of doom deeply influence U.S. political discourse.

Perhaps we should not be surprised that fear and the politics of fear are such powerful forces among the wealthy and privileged in a period of great inequality. After all, the wealthy have much to lose. In addition,

control and seem impervious to intentional direction. Even for the affluent, the conditions of their well-being depend on complex international systems in the face of which human agency seems insignificant.

Where, then, can people find the hope necessary to overcome fear and to resist the temptations to selfishness amid the globalized systems that are so hard to control even while they determine many of the conditions of life today? As a Catholic theologian, an educated U.S. citizen, a wife, the Anglo mother of a Mexican daughter, and a feminist committed to an international ethic of care in service of the common good, I am deeply concerned with what might inspire those of us who benefit from the current global economy (yet seem none the happier for our privilege and wealth) to join those without adequate food and shelter to work together for a world of greater sharing rather than greater selfishness. More pointedly for privileged U.S. Christians, can we find in our Christian faith the resources to live confidently and joyfully amid globalization's complex of possibilities and problems, acknowledging the potential for violence yet placing our hope in mutual support and community?

To answer these questions, I return to the significance of Christianity's origins in the hope brought by a Galilean rabbi to a people and a world marked by imperial domination, also a violent and oppressive situation in which there was much reason to despair. Yet, instead of proffering hope in our time as Jesus did in his day, established Christian churches are often as fearful as the rest of society, divided among ourselves as we fight over how best to retain whatever privilege and position we have achieved. At the same time, newer Christian movements evince an energetic otherworldliness eschewing hope for this world in favor of apocalyptic visions of destruction. Christian eschatology too often functions in this way: not as a source of hope for human history but as a reason to turn away from the world and its problems. If Christianity is to provide hope for a world in the grip of fear and despair, we need to put again at the center of Christian life the hope that Jesus brought in his life and ministry, the hope that survived the crucifixion and was spread throughout the world by people filled with the joy of his resurrection.

In this essay I will argue that the hope that Jesus inspired, a hope not yet fully realized in his death and resurrection, must become historicized through forms of Christian praxis that globalize hope in the current context of globalized economics, communication, and politics. Rather than relegating eschatology to the "last things," as arcane details on the margins of Christian life, I argue that eschatology must be brought back to the center of Christian life. Followers of Jesus of Galilee ought

to embody an eschatological hope that faces and resists the horrific violence and systems of violence that dehumanize all involved. This must be a hope expansive enough to encompass the many nations of the globe, yet grounded enough to attend to the particular sufferings of specific persons and peoples, especially those deemed insignificant by the power players in the global market and in international politics.

### The Hope of Jesus the Galilean

Although many Christians today emphasize the promise of a personal afterlife of bliss with God, most branches of the Christian tradition officially affirm a broader and more communitarian goal for human life. This more adequate—and more biblical!—Christian hope anticipates a union of all peoples and nations in God, a union that includes not only a complete harmony among a reconciled humanity but also, as is increasingly recognized, a unity with God's entire creation. This ultimate goal is not, however, a uniformity that unites by eliminating differences; what is envisioned here is instead the unity of a good creation that celebrates its diversity. Indeed, our ultimate goal is existence within the loving relations of the Trinity, as part of a divine life enriched by the differences incorporated within this perichoretic community of love.<sup>7</sup>

On the one hand, the Christian tradition acknowledges that this hoped for unity-in-diversity will not be fully achieved within sinful human history. On the other hand, this Christian eschatology is not offered solely as an otherworldly hope, irrelevant to life in this world. Indeed, the unity with all in God is manifest and grows in this world, in the lives we live here and now. Thus, as noted in *Gaudium et Spes*, humanity will find perfected in the afterlife what it achieves in history, and the grace that is bringing people into communion with God also enables people to see beyond present divisions and to seek unity now with all of God's creation.<sup>8</sup>

The life and ministry of Jesus as a Jew were certainly formed by the hope for a just society in harmony with God and nature as envisioned in the Torah and the prophets. However, Jesus was experienced as something more than another prophet calling people to return to the Law and to a way of life consistent with hope for the reign of God. Jesus was understood instead to be the in-breaking of this reign of God in the midst of history, making possible a new degree of harmony with God and others in this life. A closer look at the life and ministry of Jesus of Galilee reveals the hope for reconciliation and harmony historicized in his life, death, and resurrection. The teaching and ministry of this

Galilean laborer inspired people with a vision of the reign of God captivating enough to cause them to leave their homes and their work, and eventually to carry this vision throughout the world. What was so attractive about this ideal and the hope that it expressed? What did people experience in their encounters with Jesus that was so inspiring and empowering?

To answer this question, we need to look more carefully at the ministry and message of Jesus in and around Galilee, where he began. As recorded in the gospels, Jesus proclaimed the advent of the reign of God in Israel, and more specifically, in Galilee. Jesus' manner of living God's reign was demonstrated in his open table fellowship, eating with all people including (most notably) the prostituted women and Roman collaborators with whom no decent Jew would interact publicly. Jesus further compounded this disregard for the social boundaries legitimated by religious laws when he insisted on healing by touching those whose skin diseases rendered them untouchable; in doing this, he made himself as officially untouchable as they had been.<sup>9</sup>

While there is much that remains puzzling about the reign of God in its startling and complex challenges to the ordinary assumptions of Jesus' time and of our own day, the descriptions of Jesus' teaching and actions leave no doubt that Jesus understood this reign to involve inclusive human communities that reject the normal stratifications separating the socially valued from those of little worth. Jesus lived the eschatologically envisioned harmony of the reign of God and called others to do so as well. His practice of open table fellowship embodied his message that God's reign overcomes social divisions and is centered among those usually most despised or devalued by society.

From a contemporary U.S. perspective, we may grasp more deeply the liberating power of Jesus when we consider his social location. Jesus is described as the son of a *tekton*—a carpenter or, perhaps better translated, a craftsman. If John Dominic Crossan is right, as a craftsman Jesus came from a group that had been squeezed out of the peasant class and was only one step from being destitute.<sup>10</sup> In any case, John P. Meier, N. T. Wright, Gerd Theissen, and a variety of other historical scholars agree that Jesus was clearly not a member of the privileged classes, in what was undoubtedly a highly stratified society.<sup>11</sup> People in Jesus' vulnerable socio-economic situation could reasonably be expected to focus on maintaining whatever position or privilege they had and to distance themselves from the thoroughly vulnerable and powerless. Yet with confidence in God as his loving father and the source of all life, Jesus embraced precisely what should have been most threatening to him: fellowship with the lowest classes. Extending inclusion and

dignity to the marginalized and demeaned, Jesus embodied a freedom from preoccupation with socio-economic security, from striving to climb up (as well he might have) or at least to avoid being dragged further down.

To the vulnerable at all levels, from the destitute with little to lose to the wealthy who benefited greatly from the status quo, Jesus modeled a liberating-freedom based on confidence in the love of God and hope in the possibility of communities in which people care for each other. In Jesus' presence, people were empowered to believe in their own value enough to stop clinging to the norms and practices that kept them from slipping further down the social ladder. Instead of fighting to secure their own positions at the expense of others, people were inspired by Jesus to come together in celebrations that erased social location and invited all to participate equally.<sup>12</sup>

Yet this call to communities of mutual dependence included a recognition of the particularity of each person and his or her needs. We see this clearly in the stories of Jesus' response to women who suffered from the regulations and stratifications of their society in distinct ways. It would have been easy for Jesus not to notice the situation of women at all, since his society expected him to interact only with men. Yet Jesus publicly included prostituted women in his community, and he did not recoil from their touch, particularly when that improper touch was all the woman had to offer. Jesus gave life to the son of a widow and to the brother of sisters, ensuring that these women would not also die in a world where women depended on male relatives to survive. Jesus healed the woman with the flow of blood, restoring her to the community from which she had been excluded as untouchable. (She might well have been abandoned or on the verge of being abandoned as unfit for woman's work of providing food).<sup>13</sup> The inclusive community that Jesus formed was not then a gender neutral community in the sense of presuming that all people must or even can be treated as the same. Rather, Jesus embodied a concern to attend to people's differences so that his was a diverse community, as we see in Jesus' attention to the specifically gendered forms of women's poverty, powerlessness, and devaluation in a society that limited their agency yet rejected them for having to survive through prostitution.

### What This Hope Means Today

Jesus' praxis of hope in the reign of God as humanity's future is deeply relevant to our current situation of globalized capitalism. In this situa-

tion, forty-five million people per year die of causes due to poverty, and a mere two days of the world's military spending would pay for the health services that could prevent the deaths of three million infants each year.<sup>14</sup> We live in a time in which greed, desperation, and hopelessness are being globalized, with even the winners nervous about their ability to retain their positions. Insecurity causes us to fear that if we make room for others there will be no room for us, and this fear is surely exacerbated by a competitive capitalism that determines winners and losers on a global scale. Our situation today is not unlike that of the Roman Empire which, in Jesus' time, sought to conquer the world in search of benefits for itself, allowing certain members of local communities to share its power and privilege in exchange for cooperating with the imperial system.

As the gospels indicate, Jesus sought neither to join Rome nor to take Rome's place but rather to build relationships of inclusion, appreciation, and mutual support as an alternative to the dominant practices of exclusion, rejection, and domination. By daring to be vulnerable himself, Jesus embodied liberation, and thus liberated others from the unending struggle for positions of social status and economic security. Can Jesus' example and his empowering spirit inspire his followers among the privileged classes, especially in Europe and the United States, to seek not power at the expense of others but a power shared among us, the power of acting together for the good of all? What would it mean today to live this countercultural hope as a world-wide church in the midst of imperialistic capitalism? Is it possible to construct communities of mutual dependence and diversity rather than competition and hegemonic uniformity, even while working to direct international economic and political systems toward inclusion rather than domination?

Pope John Paul II frequently and eloquently proclaimed that the human person is intended for community and finds fulfillment only in living as a self-gift to others. Yet people are persuaded less by theories than by actions. As Johann Baptist Metz has long argued, the only true defense of faith is a practical one. In other words, the way to demonstrate the credibility of hope is by living according to that hope.<sup>15</sup> Christians will convince others that self-fulfillment is found through the gift of the self only insofar as we Christians ourselves live in joyful commitment to others. If we are personally transformed by hope in Jesus for the reign of God, then we will stop struggling to secure ourselves (and our churches!) in a fundamentally insecure world, and instead risk ourselves in relationships of vulnerability and mutuality. As followers of Jesus, we are called to commit ourselves to developing our churches into vibrant

communities of mutual support, especially for the marginalized, while also learning to put the resources of the ecclesial community at the service of rebuilding communities of mutual support in the larger society.

The emphasis of Catholic social teaching on subsidiarity provides important insights for this effort to live our hope in the reign of God in the context of globalization. The idea that problems should be solved by the most local form of community able to handle a problem adequately is especially important for ensuring in a globalized reality that people are empowered as agents to form and to act within communities in which they take responsibility for each other. People cannot support and welcome each other without community relationships that allow them to know each other. The pressures of globalization toward ever larger, anonymous systems must be counteracted through efforts to revitalize local communities.

Yet one must be careful that subsidiarity does not become an excuse for withdrawal from one's larger responsibilities. As a worldwide church in an interconnected world, Christians must not neglect the international efforts necessary to coordinate the sharing of resources between those who have an abundance and those who have less than they need. Nor do we have the luxury of rejecting involvement with the governmental structures through which global interactions can be directed toward greater mutuality and away from domination and greed. To be sure, until the eschaton arrives, the governments and international organizations of this world will remain unjust and largely in the service of the powerful. Nevertheless, it would be counterproductive and foolhardy to wait for perfect governmental systems in this interconnected world in which all affect each other. Those committed to justice must rather take advantage of whatever opportunities are available now to work toward a more just sharing of the world's resources, the alleviation of suffering, and greater involvement for all in the decision-making processes that are determining the world we live in. "Extending the principle of community to worldwide terms has become the most urgent of all the issues that face our epoch," Niebuhr argued already in the early twentieth century.<sup>16</sup> Only by doing so is it possible to bear witness to the hope in a universal reign of God with the power to transform every aspect of human life.

The test of whether Christians today embody the hope of Jesus of Galilee lies especially in our response to the sufferings of those deemed insignificant and frequently unnoticed in the world at large as well as in our own communities. The specific sufferings of women are often overlooked, even while women are frequently the most vulnerable among the poor. In situations where resources are limited, women and

girls are often the last to be fed, educated, or given medical care (which can lead to appallingly high rates of maternal death and reproductive injuries such as fistulas that leave women incontinent and socially ostracized). In areas already affected by climate change, poor women may work harder and longer to get the water and fuel necessary for the survival of their families. In situations of war, gang-rape of women and girls has emerged as a potent weapon for terrorizing communities. In one of the most disturbing developments of our internationalized economic system, women and girls are being kidnapped and trafficked widely so that the supply of women meets the global demand for sexual services.<sup>17</sup>

What do efforts of U.S. Christians to historicize our Christian hope in the world today offer these women? Jesus of Galilee noticed and responded to the specific sufferings of women in his day, so those who would continue his mission must also be concerned with the suffering of the women who seem to matter little to the rest of humanity. This suffering of the vulnerable in the context of globalization especially challenges privileged U.S. Christians to respond both globally and locally, since every location has its own particular needs yet is part of an interconnected world. Poor women suffering from fistulas in Africa will be greatly benefited by international aid to provide medical help, but poor women in the United States also need better access to prenatal care.<sup>18</sup> Women are trafficked in Cambodia, but also in San Diego and many other cities in the United States.<sup>19</sup> Hope in the reign of God is a hope for the entire world, an insistence that all prostituted women are valued sisters who deserve other options, that all raped and torn bodies are bodies that ought to be healed. As followers of Jesus, we in the United States must join with those around the world who boldly proclaim the joy of community with all of the despised, suffering, and rejected, whether they live on another continent or in our own towns. This community is, after all, the pearl of great price worth selling all that we have to attain.<sup>20</sup>

### The Hope Yet to Be Realized

To avoid the serious mistake of confusing Christian hope with optimism about historical progress, Christians committed to a counter-cultural agenda in the developed world must keep in mind the reception of this hope in Jesus' time. After all, Jesus was not successful in transforming the world of his day. Instead, the world violently rejected the hope that Jesus embodied and crucified him. Jesus died an apparent failure, and yet his disciples proclaimed him risen from the dead.

Though they had been overcome by fear at his arrest, Jesus' followers were empowered after this seemingly total failure with a new confidence that neither death nor the powers of this world are ultimate.<sup>21</sup>

To live as disciples of Jesus amid the unequal distribution of the world's resources today, we cannot forget that Jesus died in Jerusalem in confrontation with oppressive power and exclusionary authority. He opposed but did not defeat this system of domination and marginalization.<sup>22</sup> In our world today, this suggests that Christians must call for an end to structures of oppression, while bearing the double-edged knowledge that although another reality is truly possible, sin will not be completely defeated in this world. Thus martyrdom remains a constant possibility in Christian life. Fidelity to Jesus will not allow his disciples to remain safe with an eschatological hope confined to the margins of society, since the invitation to the reign of God is intended for the whole world. Yet Christians must be prepared for much of the world to continue to reject the reign of God and to defend its structures of power and domination with violence.

The gospels, of course, do not reduce Jesus' ministry to an entirely this-worldly reform project, and neither should we. The reign of the everlasting God is a hope beyond history, a hope that has inspired people to give their lives in witness against the ultimacy of the powers of this world. At the same time, however, the hope for the reign of God is indeed a hope involved in this world, a confidence that God's power can—and someday will—transform all aspects of human life.<sup>23</sup> The reign of God as the Lord of all is not limited to heaven or to earth, to now or to later, to this world or to an afterlife.

This eschatological proviso reminding us that our hope is not fully achievable in history should encourage resistance to all of the oppressive and divisive powers in this world. Looking forward to a goal beyond history frees people to risk themselves, even against the odds, on behalf of others. Knowing that failure in this world is not ultimate or final can be a source of strength especially for those who are vulnerable and weak by the standards of the world. Women who struggle to escape prostitution in a condemning society, who are healing from rape in a war zone where they may well be attacked again, or who have little hope of finding sufficient food to feed their children may find peace and courage in the confidence that the ultimate destiny of humanity in the reign of God is beyond the vicissitudes of this life. Keeping in mind that Jesus' death in failure led to the empowering victory of the resurrection ought to inspire all Christians joyfully and confidently to risk attracting the violence of the world by their commitment to the reign

of God. This non-optimistic but thoroughly hopeful perspective should also inspire those of us Christians who are among the world's elite to risk the loss of our privileged position as we seek a more just and inclusive world.

### The Bearers of Hope

From the perspective of a U.S. Christian striving to follow Jesus in a globalized world, living out such a hope in opposition to the forces of global oppression and exclusion and in the face of inevitable failures requires that we not forget who it was that Jesus chose to be the primary bearers of this hope in history. Jesus began his ministry of table fellowship with rough peasants and with the disreputable and devalued—with prostituted women and collaborators with Rome. As Gustavo Gutiérrez, Virgilio Elizondo, Rosemary Ruether, and so many others remind us, Jesus called despised and uneducated Galileans rather than the intellectual, religious, or political elites of his day to be the central emissaries of his mission. These "insignificant" people, disregarded by the world yet welcomed by Jesus, are the ones who continued the movement after Jesus' death and who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, spread Christianity throughout the world.<sup>24</sup>

Fidelity to the message of hope that Jesus brought requires, then, that those privileged enough to read and write theological articles (such as this one) learn to accept our own de-centering. Middle and upper-class U.S. Christians are not the central actors in spreading God's reign; we are not the most important among Jesus' disciples. All of humanity is invited to relinquish self-centeredness and to enter into a solidarity that shares the vulnerability of the poor, joining together in building communities of inclusion and mutual support. Yet those of us called from positions of privilege are inclined to retain the self-centeredness of believing that we are the primary bearers of God's reign in history. We thus attempt to replicate the hierarchies of this world in the reign of God, while we overlook the hope borne by the "insignificant," the powerless, the destitute, and the despised who continue to affirm life and love, to strengthen relationships and to support each other in the midst of pain and suffering.

Consider, for example, the ways that women among the desperately poor and rejected are bearers of hope as they work to rescue themselves and those around them from desperate circumstances. Some women with little education are starting businesses to lift their families out of poverty, while other women whose fistula injuries have been repaired

are getting enough medical training to be able to repair fistulas in other women. Women from the untouchable caste in India who managed to get an education have returned to the slums to empower other members of their caste. Perhaps among the most courageous are the women who have been gang-raped yet continue to resist the oppression of women in their communities. With few resources and no obvious power, women around the world are doing much to overcome their own desperation and to improve the lives of others as well.<sup>25</sup>

The stories of these women suggest a yet deeper challenge: could the hope of Jesus be embodied in the world and brought to Christians by non-Christians—by Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists, for example?<sup>26</sup> Throughout our history, Christians have repeated the gospel stories suggesting that God's reign is found especially among the poor and usually where it is least expected. Are we able to acknowledge today that the non-Christian poor might be living more fully the hope of Jesus than privileged Christians from developed nations? Such a reality should not be surprising to those who take seriously that Jesus is the incarnation of the Word of God eternally active and eternally manifest in the world. The revelatory power and grace of God remain surprising and destabilizing of our categories, perhaps no more so than when Christians find themselves being invited by non-Christians to join in efforts that Christians cannot help but recognize as continuing the work of Jesus and his disciples.

### Conclusion

The church has spread the gospel of Jesus throughout the world, much as the author of Luke-Acts envisioned. The hope in God's reign traveled with Jesus and his companions from Galilee to crucifixion and resurrection in Jerusalem, and from there to Egypt and Rome, to India and China, and to major cities and small towns in the United States and around the world. The beauty of Jesus' Galilean vision and the anticipatory experience of the reign of God remain an active hope for the transformation of the entire world. This hope is crucified daily among the suffering and impoverished of the world, and it is also frequently co-opted by the privileged to support the status quo. Yet it is a hope that rises again and again as people encounter the power of God and are inspired to risk their lives, giving up security and privilege in order to build communities that recognize the value of all human beings.

In our present context of globalized consumerism, what could be more precious or more desperately needed than a hope that inspires people to strive to live together in relationships of mutual valuing and

support for all? As a privileged U.S. Christian, I experience this hope as a countercultural call to seek something greater than the security of my position of privilege and the opportunity to consume more than my neighbors.

### Notes

1. *Gaudium et Spes*, 9. I am deeply grateful to Robert Lassalle-Klein for his careful editing and suggestions that made this article much better.
2. Reinhold Niebuhr develops this point in *Nature and Destiny of Man*, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), esp. 315–21.
3. Daniel G. Groody, *Globalization, Spirituality, and Justice* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 19.
4. Groody, *Globalization*, 5. See *ibid.* 3–10 for the statistics on income inequality, including those cited here.
5. *Ibid.*, 7.
6. United Nations, *Human Development Report 2009, Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development* (New York: United Nations Human Development Program), 21 (available at <http://hdr.undp.org>).
7. See, for example, the Vatican II documents, *Lumen Gentium*, 1 and 48, *Gaudium et Spes*, 24 and 45, and the Faith and Order Commission's Paper #198, "The Nature and Mission of the Church: A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement," esp. 24–47.
8. "For after we have obeyed the Lord, and in His Spirit nurtured on earth the values of human dignity, brotherhood and freedom, and indeed all the good fruits of our nature and enterprise, we will find them again but freed of stain, burnished and transfigured" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 39).
9. Jesus' open table fellowship and disregard of social boundaries is noted by theologians, biblical scholars, and general readers of the New Testament. See, for example, Virgilio Elizondo, *Galilean Journey: The Mexican-American Promise* rev. and expanded version (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2000), esp. 58–66; John Dominic Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995); and Garry Wills, *What Jesus Meant* (New York: Viking, 2006).
10. Crossan, *Jesus*, 23–26.
11. John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, vol. 1, *The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 282; N. T. Wright, *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, vol. 2, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 147–59; Gerd Theissen and Annette Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (London: SCM Press, 1996, 1998), 171–73.
12. *Ibid.* Drawing on and adding to the research of others, Virgilio Elizondo has developed this point especially well throughout his extensive corpus. See especially his *Galilean Journey*, 120.
13. See Lk 7:36–50; Lk 7:11–16; Jn 11:1–17–44; Mk 5:25–34.
14. Statistics cited in Groody, *Globalization*, 5, 9.

15. Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society: Toward a Practical Fundamental Theology*, trans. David Smith (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), esp. 3–11.

16. Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness: A Vindication of Democracy and a Critique of Its Traditional Defense* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), 153. He further notes that this world community is not only our "final necessity and possibility" but also our "final impossibility" (187), arguing as I have here that the inevitable imperfection and even injustice in governing structures does not justify refusal to cooperate with them.

17. For an excellent discussion of some of the challenges for women in poverty around the world, see Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009).

18. For an excellent assessment of the theological implications of fistula, see Colleen Carpenter Cullinan, "In Pain and Sorrow: Childbirth, Incarnation, and the Suffering of Women," *CrossCurrents* (Spring 2008): 95–107.

19. For further information on trafficking and prostitution, see the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation's website: <http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/civilrights/slavery.htm>.

20. Mt 13:45–46.

21. Elizondo, *Galilean Journey*, 79–82.

22. *Ibid.*, esp. 68.

23. *Ibid.*, 1.

24. *Ibid.*, esp. 53, 83.

25. Kristof, *Half the Sky*.

26. Among the recent books exploring this topic, see especially Peter C. Phan, *Being Religious Interreligiously: Asian Perspectives on Interfaith Dialogue* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004).

## 15

### "RAISED IN JERUSALEM"

Michael E. Lee

Two images from childhood have made an indelible impression on my religious imagination. Since I am a Christian, it is no wonder that they are images of Jesus, but what is surprising is how different the images are and how they reside together in my consciousness.

The first comes from *La Catedral Dulce Nombre de Jesús*, the church of Humacao, Puerto Rico, where my grandparents lived. I visited them on occasional summers, and I recall going to worship in that church as a saturating sensory experience. The dark restful interior was such a contrast to the sunny and often bustling plaza outside. Not that the natural world outside didn't make its presence felt—the many pigeons flying around looking for perches and the occasional stray dog strolling through an open door seemed to be mainstays of any liturgical celebration. Yet, with statuary and stained glass to catch my eyes, the smell of candles and incense, and the sounds of fluttering fans all making a bid for my consciousness, it was the crucifix that captivated me. There was *Jesucristo* hanging on a cross, bleeding profusely from his wounds, *el pobre*. He was horrifying and yet strangely comforting. He evoked sadness, compassion, inspiration, commitment, and a host of other emotions. If nothing else, going to that church would always involve coming before that cross and responding to its call in one way or another.

One thousand miles away in Miami, Florida, the chapel of St. Thomas the Apostle Church and elementary school had a Jesus of a completely different character, but who also became part of the formative vision impressed on my consciousness. He wore a billowy garment that covered his entire body, except for raised hands and extended feet that still possessed nail wounds. This was the resurrected Christ, not nailed to a cross but hovering in front of it as a reminder of what exactly was vanquished in his victory. Though perhaps less visceral, he still evoked emotions of wonder, joy, and awe.

More than any one trait or sentiment derived from these images,