

The Transformation of Suffering in Paul of the Cross, Lonergan and Buddhism

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Abstract

This paper explores St. Paul of the Cross's passion-centred spirituality as a context for avoiding the distortions of such spirituality and promoting proper praxis. These distortions are not the legacy of Paul of the Cross himself, but the fact that his contemplation of the passion was primarily performative and mystical, along with the lack of a systematic theology on the passion-death-and resurrection, there remains a context wherein distortions of passion-centred approaches can occur. The paper then presents some aspects of Bernard Lonergan's thought on *lex crucis* and also from his Trinitarian work in order to provide a theological framework (*orthotheoria*). This framework can help prevent the distortions of such a passion-centred spirituality and guide orthopraxis of passion-centred spiritualities. In the final section we explore some insights from Buddhism that are consonant with both Paul of the Cross's spirituality and Lonergan's *law of the cross* as fruits of the Spirit and seeds of the Word.

Keywords

Paul of the Cross, Passion, Lonergan, Suffering, Buddhism

'Your crosses, dear God, are joys of my heart.'

Paul of the Cross

'But the power of God and the wisdom of God are to be discerned in Christ crucified.'

Bernard Lonergan

'The peacock eats poison to obtain brilliant colors in its plume.'

Pema Chodron

A. Introduction

The Passion and death of Jesus Christ is a central tenet of the Christian faith. As a source of contemplation, it can help Christians move to a greater compassion and charity for others. For some, the contemplation of the passion of Christ becomes a central animating charism of their vocational lives. Such was the case with the founder of the Passionist Congregation, Paul Danei (1694–1775), better known as St. Paul of the Cross.

Paul of the Cross, however, was a mystic and not an intellectual. His ideal of the contemplation of and participation in the sufferings of Jesus was performative rather than theoretical—lived out concretely in his everyday life, expressed in his compassion towards others. Nevertheless, there are distortions of passion-centred spirituality that Paul of the Cross would not have intended, nor would it be fair to lay the blame at his feet since the origins and practices of such distortions are more complex and varied. I believe that performatively and mystically, Paul of the Cross authentically lived out a passion-centred spirituality and so he stands as a representative figure of it in the history of Christian spirituality. Still, as he is a major representative of passion-centrism, the lack of a fully thematized theology of the passion makes his thought, and others like his, vulnerable to being used to justify such distortions. The latter distortions occur insofar as the contemplation is not sufficiently viewed in light of Jesus's resurrection or the larger context of God's divine plan of salvation. Consequently, such contemplation can lead to morbidity and sadistic-masochistic emphases.

Another way of formulating the problem is that the orthodoxy or correct teaching of the Passion does not always translate into orthopraxy, or sound practice. What can help is the explication of the middle term, an *orthotheoria* or right theory, expressed in a systematic theology, which presupposes the correct teaching and simultaneously guides sound practice. Formulated systematically, this would be to ask 'How do Christians contemplate and participate in the passion of Christ and what are the fruits of such contemplation and participation?' For Bernard Lonergan (1904–1984) these questions can be addressed by exploring his notion of *lex crucis* or the *law of the cross*, and by viewing the paschal mystery in terms of systematic theology derived from his Trinitarian theology—a methodological starting point that lies at the heart of Lonergan's systematic theology. A further question follows naturally as to how *lex crucis* may be present invisibly in other religious faiths as fruits of the Spirit and seeds of the Word. For example, there are certain practices in Buddhism that give concrete examples of orthopraxis and, from a theological point of view, invisibly express the fruits of this law.

The purpose of this paper is to explore the role of passion-centred spirituality with specific reference to St. Paul of the Cross and to explicate some theological insights from the work of Lonergan in order

to provide the theological context that can prevent the distortions of passion-centered approaches and guide a more sound praxis. In the final section, I will reference some concrete practices from Buddhism that are consonant with the emphases of both Paul of the Cross and Lonergan.

B. Paul of the Cross and Passion-Centrism

Paul Danei founded the Passionist Congregation in 1741 in Italy. Inspired by a vision of the Blessed Mother appearing to him wearing the black of one who mourns (*Mater Dolorosa*), the charism of the order he founded would be devoted to ‘grieving’ the death of her son, that is, to contemplating the passion and death of Jesus Christ.

He donned the black clothing of a hermit and retired to a forty day retreat of prayer and fasting under the local bishop’s guidance at Castellazzo. Under inspiration, he wrote the first draft of what would become the rule for his order. Subsequently, he traveled to Rome for approval and was just as quickly rebuffed and turned away by the papal palace guards. He went to the Basilica of St. Mary Major and prayed in front of the famous icon of Our Lady. There he made a vow to her that, if his dream of the congregation was to be realized, he and his followers would make a special fourth religious vow to the contemplation of the passion of Christ. The final version of the Rule was accepted by Pope Pius VI in 1775. The unique mark of the Passionist order remains the black habit with the distinctive sign in white print they wear on their breasts—a heart with the Greek and Latin words ‘*Jesu XPI Passio*’, The Passion of Jesus Christ. The image of the heart includes a cross mounted on the crest with three nails at the cusp of the image. Passionist spirituality includes a life of prayer, penance, evangelical poverty and solitude, but one with an apostolic commitment, especially to the poor, in a life of community with common prayer.

The foundation of the Passionist charism, according to Paul F. Spencer, is rooted in the mystical experiences of the founder, who in turn, emphasizes the experience of the passion of Jesus Christ in one’s heart (*Passio in cordibus*): ‘the community he founded was intended to promote the experience which he [Paul] himself had undergone: a deep encounter with the Crucified Christ in prayer, leading to a direct, passive, and hence, mystical experience of the Passion.’¹

The fourth vow flows out of this and comprises what is often referred to as the Passion-centrism of Paul of the Cross. The founder states: ‘you must know that the main object in wearing black, according to the

¹ Paul Francis Spencer, ‘Elements of Passionist Spirituality’, *Studies in Passionist Spirituality* 29 (1992), p. 10.

special inspiration that God gave me, is to be clothed in mourning for the Passion and Death of Jesus. For this purpose, let us never forget to have always with us a constant and sorrowful remembrance of him, and so let each of the Poor of Jesus take care to instill in others meditation on the suffering of Jesus'²

Paul of the Cross went on to establish a contemplative order of nuns dedicated to living this charism out in a cloistered monastery in 1771 in Tarquinia, Italy. By contrast, the men's order acquired more of an apostolic expression, although they sought to retain the contemplative primary dimension. Among some of the famous Passionists include Bl. Dominic Barberi (1792–1849), famous for his role in the conversion of John Henry Newman,³ St. Gabriel (of Our Lady of Sorrows) Possenti (1838–1862) who died young and St. Gemma Galgani (1878–1903), although never formally a member of the community, received the stigmata along with various mystical revelations.⁴ She also died young.

Passion-Centered Spirituality

Before addressing the spirituality of passion-centrism more deeply, and because Lonergan, whose theology we will be examining below, was a Jesuit, it is worth pointing out some parallels between Paul of the Cross and Ignatius Loyola.⁵

Although unknown to each other, both Paul of the Cross and Ignatius of Loyola share similar experiences. Both undergo short stints in the military, albeit Paul's is much shorter and he does not get the opportunity to prove his bravery in battle as Ignatius does. Both men undergo retreats where they receive mystical experiences and direction, Paul for forty days at Castellazzo and Ignatius for eleven months at Manresa. Both make ritual vows to the Blessed mother, Paul in front of the icon at Mary Major Basilica and Ignatius in front of the statue of Our Lady of Montserrat. Both experience initial rebuffs when taking their cause to Rome. Both establish orders with an additional vow, Paul's order with the fourth vow of contemplation on the Passion of Christ, and Ignatius' Society a fourth vow of obedience to assist the pope when called upon.

The contemplation of the passion of Christ lies at the heart of both charismatic leaders. However, for Paul, the passion is a way of life

² Cited in Spencer, 'Elements', pp. 11–12.

³ Roger Mercurio, CP, *Passionists* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), p. 57.

⁴ See chapter 15, Mercurio, *Passionists*.

⁵ The Passionists were established as an order by the Papal Bull *Supremi Apostolatus* (November 18, 1769); Although they are unrelated events, it is perhaps ironic that the same pope, Clement XIV (1705–1774), who confirmed the establishment of the Passionists as a religious order was the one who suppressed the Jesuits.

always to be present in mind of his followers. By contrast, the third week of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius is devoted to contemplating the passion of Christ in very vivid detail by reading the biblical accounts and practicing imaginative prayer. The fourth week of the Exercises is animated toward living a life in the resurrection through apostolic service in accordance with God's will for the individual retreatant beyond the Exercises. While the contemplation of the passion comprises one week of the Exercises, the fruits of the contemplation are sublated into the living out of one's vocation beyond the retreat in mercy and compassion towards others.⁶

It has been argued that a more substantial similarity between Paul of the Cross and Ignatius Loyola is their respective emphases on conforming one's will to God and the role of discernment in that process. However, therein lies a distinctive difference. Whereas Ignatius of Loyola emphasizes discernment in order to carry out the will of God in a more active manner (*voluntas signi*), Paul of the Cross emphasizes the conformity to the will of God from a more passive dimension (*voluntas beneplaciti*).⁷ The former is represented by examples such as the response of the disciples by Jesus to leave what they are doing and follow him (Matt 4:18–22; Mark 1:16–20; John 1:35–42) and the latter is exemplified in the Marian *fiat* or her acceptance of Gabriel's message (Luke 1:38). In a similar way, Frederick Crowe distinguishes between the *via receptionis* and the *via motionis* of the will based on his reading of Thomas Aquinas.⁸ This twofold aspect of the will he terms *complacency* and *concern* respectively. The former does not mean what its English meaning might intend but rather speaks to the receptive aspect of the will or deliberative operation of consciousness. Likewise, *concern* refers to the active aspect of deliberation and choice. For Crowe, the passive aspect of the will is often neglected and he wishes to recover it as an integral part of deliberation, evaluation, decision and action. For the purposes of this study, we can apply the same distinction to understand the difference between discernment of the will of God in Paul of the Cross and that of St. Ignatius. For Ignatius, one discerns the will of God in order to carry out one's life work. It is a discernment that orients and directs one to action, and usually this action is concretized in some apostolic work. Contemplation is important but it occurs more periodically and its purpose is more for the sake of

⁶ On the *Spiritual Exercises* see David L. Fleming SJ, *Draw Me Into Your Friendship: A Literal Translation and a Contemporary Reading of the Spiritual Exercises* (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996).

⁷ Gregory Lenzen, CP, 'Spiritual Discernment in the Diary of St. Paul of the Cross,' Sandra Harper (tr). (Whitesville: KY: www.passionistnuns.org, 2004), p. 8.

⁸ Frederick E. Crowe, 'Complacency and Concern in the Thought of St. Thomas,' in *Three Thomist Studies*, Supplement to Boston Workshop, Vol. 16 (Boston: Boston College, 2000), p. 83.

reflection, evaluation and further refinement one's own apostolic work. In scripture we find examples of this in Jesus' life of active teaching and ministry, in the disciples' response to Jesus' calling and their being sent forth, and in their response to the Spirit's abrupt entrance into the upper room at Pentecost (Acts 2).

By contrast, for Paul of the Cross, the discernment and acceptance of God's will is more passive or animated primarily to a resignation of the will. One's will becomes like water finding its way flowing to the bends in the river guiding it. In scripture we find instances of this type of discernment in the *fiat* of Mary, in Jesus' agony in the Garden (Matt 26:36–46; Mark 14:32–42; Luke 22:40–46) and the Beloved Disciple and Mary at the foot of the Cross in John's gospel (John 19:26–27).

The Treatise on Mystical Death

The call to contemplate the passion of Christ is a charism that was imparted to Paul of the Cross and the Passionist order he established. On the one hand it is not a spirituality for everybody, while on the other hand it *is* insofar as everyone by virtue of their humanity, suffers and hopes for a transformation of such suffering. Paul of the Cross states, 'In the depths of one's heart there is a certain hidden and almost unfelt desire to be always immersed in suffering of one kind of another.'⁹ The motto for the Passionists remains to this day 'May the passion of our Lord remain always in our hearts.'¹⁰ Such statements as these are the reason his spirituality is described as passion-centric. One is reminded of Ezekiel 36:26: 'I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.' It is the fruit of compassion that enlarges one's heart through contemplation of mystery of Christ's passion. The embrace of such suffering and the compassionate fruits are not unlike the Buddhist notion of *bodhichitta* or 'tender heart' as I will point out below in the final section.

This emphasis is present in Passionist spirituality, especially through the exemplary text the *Treatise on Mystical Death*. This work was often ascribed to Paul but its authorship has been doubted in recent scholarship, although it is reflective of the spirituality of his age.¹¹ Nevertheless, it is clear that he saw the *Treatise* as exemplary of the spirituality of the order he founded. The *Treatise* reads like an extensive pledge or manifesto for those who desire to conform themselves to the mystical death of Jesus Christ in their lives and witness.¹²

⁹ Paul of the Cross, *Spiritual Diary*, quoted in Martin Bialas, *Mysticism of the Passion in St. Paul of the Cross* (1694–1775) (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), p. 276.

¹⁰ Spencer, 'Elements,' p. 9.

¹¹ Bialas, *St. Paul of the Cross*, p. 291ff.

¹² David Colhour, C.P., 'Introductory Comments to the Treatise on Mystical Death,' *Studies of St. Paul of the Cross*, www.Passionsist.org (October, 2009).

The notion of mystical death in Paul of the Cross' thinking is one that comes to him after his discovery of the spirituality of John Tauler (1300–1361).¹³ Paul cites the *Treatise* in several letters, including one wherein he draws upon the analogy of mystical death in reference to the anniversary of the solemn vows of a nun with whom he corresponds. In a different correspondence, he refers the *Treatise* to a novice master but cautions that it should not be given to novices immediately and then only in a manner of graduated contemplation.¹⁴ It is important to keep this special vocational aspect of the contemplation of the Passion in mind in order to avoid some of the distortions of spirituality that can flow from such misinterpretations, which I will mention below.

Just as the origin of the *Treatise* is uncertain, so too is the timeframe for when it actually fell into Paul of the Cross' hands. Moreover, it was lost for 192 years only to be rediscovered in 1976.¹⁵ The theology of the *Treatise* concerns the conforming of one's life completely to the will of God. Given its emphasis on the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience¹⁶ in conforming one's life to the passion of Christ, it was quite likely written by a vowed religious for other vowed religious members in a community. Consider the ideal ascribed to poverty: 'I will seek to imitate Jesus, who was poor in everything . . . I shall always try to become poorer so as to be conformed to the very poor Jesus. May I die poor on the cross like You!' (*Mystical Death*, XI). One dies to oneself in order to do the will of God more singly and purely. Surrender and complete trust in God is the pledge of the *Treatise* in the context of the sufferings of Christ:

I will try with all my strength to follow the footsteps of my Jesus. If I am afflicted, abandoned, desolate, I will keep Him company in the Garden. If I am despised and injured, I will keep him company in the Praetorium. If I am depressed and afflicted in the agonies of suffering, I will keep Him company faithfully on the Mount, and in a generous spirit I will keep Him company on the cross, with the lance in my heart. Oh, how sweet it is to die! (*Mystical Death*, IV)

Such commitment, although an ideal, perhaps points to what Bernard Lonergan would call an exercise of vertical liberty,¹⁷ but rather than

¹³ Bialas, *St. Paul of the Cross*, p. 125ff.

¹⁴ Bialas, *St. Paul of the Cross*, p. 304, n. 87;

¹⁵ *Ibid*; Colhour and Bialas do not raise the question of female authorship but the only two exemplars mentioned in the *Treatise* are Blessed Clare of Montefalco (1268–1308) (par. IX) and Sr. Magdalene de Pazzi (1566–1607) (par. XVII). Both women came from wealthy families and both died at roughly the same age Montefalco (age 40) and de Pazzi (age 41). Pace Bialas, it is unclear why this does not raise the possibility of a female abbess or some spiritual authority in a women's community authoring or redacting the text (See Bialas, *St. Paul of the Cross*, 304, n. 87).

¹⁶ *Mystical Death or Holocaust of the Pure Spirit of a Religious Soul*, trans. Silvan Rouse, C.P., www.Passionsist.org (2009), XI.

¹⁷ Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 40.

occurring in the sense of Ignatius of Loyola's three moments of election, as an event *per se*, it is meant to be lived out in a prolonged vocational manner. The author states: '... like a deer thirsting at the font of Divine Providence in total abandonment to You. I allow myself to be guided as You will. I do not seek myself but only what is pleasing to God Himself.'¹⁸

C. Distortions of Passion-Centred Spirituality

In his book, *Reclaiming Theodicy: Reflections on Suffering, Passion, and Spiritual Transformation*, Michael Stoeber makes two important distinctions pertinent to this discussion. First, he distinguishes between destructive suffering and transformative suffering.¹⁹ Second, he distinguishes three kinds of responses to human suffering: 1) apathy, 2) the distortions of empathy into either sadistic or masochistic dispositions, and 3) the compassion proper to the normative Christian teaching as modeled by the passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ.²⁰ I would apply these distinctions and argue that the distortions of passion-centred approaches perpetuate destructive rather than transformative suffering and bring about the negative fruits of apathy and sado-masochistic dispositions. As we will see below, Lonergan's notion of *lex crucis* emphasizes the transformation of suffering with the positive fruits of compassion and charity.

With Stoeber's distinctions in mind, there are three emphases that are a legacy of a passion-centrism, not directly attributable to Paul of the Cross, but ones that nevertheless present potential distortions of his spirituality and others like it. The first one is the potential towards a negative or morbid contemplation of the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ that includes an emphasis on the violence and suffering he experienced. A dramatic example of this occurs in Mel Gibson's film *The Passion of Christ* (2004). Gibson's film sought to portray the sufferings of Jesus in a very graphic way. His movie feigned historical accuracy by placing the original languages in the mouths of the characters. It is perhaps ironic that in trying to portray an historical account, his movie reflects a more modern Hollywood obsession with violence in our day, not unlike *Godspell* and *Jesus Christ Superstar* were expressing the

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Stoeber argues: 'So there is a distinction here between (1) destructive suffering, which diminishes and hinders the person in some way or another and for which there is no transformative impetus or response in the person (but there will, we hope, be healing or recovery) and (2) transformative suffering—that which contributes positively to personal growth—what we might call redemptive suffering.' Michael Stoeber, *Reclaiming Theodicy: Reflections on Suffering, Compassion and Spiritual Transformation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 61.

²⁰ Stoeber, *Reclaiming Theodicy*, p. 44.

dominant images in the popular culture of their day. Unfortunately, the fruits of Gibson's endeavor runs the risk of perpetuating and glorifying the violence Jesus suffered. Theologically, his account fails, among other reasons, because of the hermeneutic emphasis he places on the scourging in the pillar. It has the effect of detracting from the actual death of Jesus on Calvary. While Gibson does succeed in humanizing Jesus's relationship with his mother Mary, portraying tender moments between the two of them, in general his portrayal of Jesus as a kind of superman who can endure endless suffering drifts, perhaps unwittingly, toward the Arian heresy insofar as it portrays Jesus as a 'superhuman' capable of inordinate suffering that ordinary human beings could not endure. Moreover, the graphic and morbid emphases on the suffering and death of Jesus can be a distraction from its wider message: the hope of the resurrection. Finally, in light of Stoeber's reference to sadism as the enjoyment of another's suffering, one wonders if there is not a strain of sadism portrayed in Gibson's version of the relentless sufferings of Christ.

In the authentic expression of Paulocrucian spirituality this morbid emphasis on violence, in theory, is prevented by a theological emphasis on the resurrection. In his study of the mysticism of the Passion in Paul of the Cross, Bialas emphasizes precisely this aspect of Paul of the Cross's spirituality. He admits that Paul does not explicitly emphasize the resurrection often enough, but he argues that it is implied in the transformative effect on the heart, signaled by an increased compassion and love in the person who contemplates the passion. He states:

It is true that the Passionist founder speaks only of the pain and passion of Jesus without mentioning expressly his resurrection. Yet, when the resurrection of Jesus is primarily considered as confirmation of the love of God for humankind, then the experience of this love (about which St. Paul of the Cross speaks with such interiorly responsive and profound words) is nothing else than a share in the *dynamics of resurrection*. One could cite many passages wherein he speaks of participation in the love of God in the context of the *passio Domini*. For this reason, we can conclude that Paul's passion mysticism, which is largely a glorification of God's love for the human person, is placed on the solid foundation of a resurrection theology, the principles of which – even though not reflected upon by the saint – [sic] implicitly present and powerfully active.²¹

Bialas emphasizes that Paul of the Cross does not succumb to a 'dismal dolorism' but rather Paul mines the message of hope in the passion and crucifixion in the transformed heart of the believer.²² The message of the cross is that God's love shines through it and the fruits

²¹ Bialas, *St. Paul of the Cross*, p. 332.

²² Bialas, *St. Paul of the Cross*, p. 327.

are sown in the love of the believer and his/her increased capacity for compassion and charity.

The second potential distortion of passion-centred spirituality is related to the first distortion. It is the tendency to misappropriate the fruits of such contemplation, namely to fail to see the point of the so-called redemptive or transformative suffering, which is to help others overcome suffering, including one's enemies. As Bialas emphasizes, 'the desired goal is not suffering but a greater degree of love!'²³ This includes, as Bialas' translation of the *Treatise on Mystical Death* claims:

I will be charitable to all and especially to those toward whom I may feel some antipathy. About those who have shortcomings, the impatient, and the proud, I will say, 'Lord, this is my reward.' This is my peace — to conquer myself by returning good for evil, love for hatred, humility for contempt, patience for impatience. A dead person does not feel resentment; this is what I want to do. The more charitable I am toward my neighbor, the more love Jesus will have for me; I am not mistaken in this. Charity conquers the heart for Jesus. In this way, I can become a great saint. Yes, I want this: I want to die by dying to myself (*Mystical Death*, XVI).²⁴

The fruits of an authentic participation in the passion of Christ are the increased compassion, as an imitation of Christ's compassion²⁵ and one that has political and social implications.²⁶ As we will see, this is consonant with Lonergan's notion of the *law of the cross*.

The third potential distortion of passion-centred spirituality is its misuse as a justification for self-flagellation. Self-hatred, an aspect of what Lonergan would call dramatic bias refers to the *scotoma* or blind spot where one is unable to see the positive aspects of oneself and instead spirals in a cycle of a distorted self-concept, unreasonable judgments, and self-destructive decisions.²⁷ The distorted aspects of passion-centred spirituality serve to bolster and reinforce the negative self-concept as part of a destructive habituated psychological complex. A non-critical reading along with the rhetorical style of the *Treatise on Mystical Death* lends itself to such distortions at points. Consider the passage 'I will annihilate myself by doing His will and marveling within myself how God wills to receive such meager pleasure from a miserable creature, full of so many faults and sins' (Prelude); or 'I will reflect that I ought to remain in hell deservedly because of my enormous

²³ Bialas, *St. Paul of the Cross*, p. 332.

²⁴ Cited in Bialas, *St. Paul of the Cross*, p. 316.

²⁵ Stoeber *Reclaiming Theodicy*, p. 46.

²⁶ Stoeber *Reclaiming Theodicy*, p. 39ff.

²⁷ See John Dadosky, 'Healing the Psychological Subject,' *Theoforum*, 35/1 (2004): 73–91. On dramatic bias See Lonergan, Bernard Lonergan, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, CWL 3, ed. F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 214–15.

sins' (III). Although these statements are reflective of a bygone era, still, there are traces of such negative messages that remain in some corners of Christian attitudes and practices. Related to this, as Stoeber states: 'The masochistic form of pathological passion leads the empathetic person to wallow narcissistically in his or her suffering.'²⁸

The psychologist Edmund Berger argues that everyone has these self-destructive tendencies to greater or lesser degrees and that this constitutes a kind of 'deadly flaw' (his appropriation of Freud's death instinct-*Thanatos*) within the individual.²⁹ To come to terms with these unconscious self-destructive tendencies requires a sustained ongoing psychological awareness and identification of the patterns in order to reverse them. As an analogy, I am reminded of a comment by Thomas Merton: 'If you want to find your true self begin by facing your own falsity.'³⁰ The awareness of the deadly flaw is the awareness of the false self; one contrary to our true nature which is a basic goodness as persons created in the image of God, albeit a basic goodness that is often clouded over by the propensity of human beings toward sin.

The question becomes not only one of orthopraxis and orthodoxy, but an exigence remains for another aspect, namely the correct understanding of a teaching,³¹ an *orthothoria* or theoretical articulation of doctrines of the paschal mystery as faith seeking understanding in a way that lends to orthopraxis.

While it may be true that a life-sustained commitment to contemplate the passion of Christ is the vocational call of a few, the question arises: to what extent is this aspect of Christian spirituality to be a part of the broader community of the ordinary faithful? In other words, to what extent are all Christians called to contemplate the passion of Christ and how is this to be carried out? No doubt the answer to such questions involves an analysis that is beyond the scope of this paper, however, I would like to highlight a couple of aspects from Lonergan's theology that might assist in clarifying this from a theoretical point of view in order to guide the orthopraxis of living out the passion of Christ. As the adage goes 'Good theory is practical' and good theology (*orthothoria*) can help prevent the distortions that can occur, especially to the extent that Christian spirituality is always to be in some sense passion-centred.

²⁸ Stoeber, *Reclaiming Theodicy*, p. 45.

²⁹ For a comprehensive and accessible critical overview of Bergler's theory See Peter Michaelson's *Why We Suffer: A Western Way to Understand and Let Go of Unhappiness* (Kindle Edition, 2011); The volume is overwritten but it provides a very accessible overview—one that has received positive recommendations from Berglerian practitioners.

³⁰ Comment made in a recorded lecture while on retreat at Gethsemane. Reference unknown.

³¹ In Lonergan's review of Gibson Winter's book *The Social Ethic*, he was impressed by Winter's argument to place an ethics in between social theory and social praxis. I am taking my clue from this although the content of my application is different. See 'The Example of Gibson Winter' in *A Second Collection* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), pp.189–92.

The proper spirituality of the Cross is through the imitation of Christ arising out of a desire to align one's will unreservedly and wholeheartedly to God's will with the fruits of love and compassion towards oneself and others, especially one's enemies. There are two such aspects of Lonergan's systematic theology that can assist in providing the basis for this theology. In Lonergan's notion of the *law of the cross* there is an understanding of the fruits of Christ's redemption in the potential to transform evil and suffering into a greater good and benefit to others. In the so-called *four-point hypothesis*, a term coined by Robert Doran, S.J., which Lonergan articulates near the end of *Triune God: Systematics*, one can further explore what it means for a Christian to participate in the sufferings of Jesus and how this can be articulated from the standpoint of systematic theology.

D. Lonergan and the Law of the Cross

The reader may have heard of Lonergan's notion of the *law of the cross*, but what exactly does he mean by it? Lonergan writes about the *law of the cross* in several theses towards the end of his Latin treatise on Christology³² and in a separate theological supplement 'on the Redemption'. Charles Hefling suggests that the latter supplement places the *law of the cross* within a broader perspective.³³ The *law of the cross* is answered in Lonergan's own question: 'Is the proper Christian ethic the law of the cross, i.e., the transformation of evil into good? Does law "use good to defeat evil" (Rom. 12:21)?'.³⁴

In short, the *law of the cross* is the principle ennobled by the teaching, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that provides an ongoing solution to the problem of suffering and evil for those who adhere to and practice this law of self-sacrificing love.³⁵ Lonergan states:

This is why the Son of God became man, suffered, died and was raised again: because divine wisdom has ordained and divine goodness has willed, not to do away with the evils of the human race through power, but to convert those evils into a supreme good according to the just and mysterious Law of the Cross.³⁶

³² Bernard Lonergan, *De Verbo Incarnato* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1964), p. 552, tr. Charles Hefling, cited in Robert Doran, 'Nonviolent Cross', *Theological Studies* 71 (2010), p. 46.

³³ Charles C. Hefling, 'Lonergan's "Cur Deus Homo": Revisiting the "Law of the Cross" in *Meaning and History in Systematic Theology: Essays in Honour of Robert M. Doran, SJ*, pp. 145–166, ed. John Dadosky (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University, 2009), p. 152.

³⁴ Bernard Lonergan, *A Second Collection*, p. 9.

³⁵ The *law of the cross* can also be invisibly present in the hearts of non-Christians, a topic I will address in the final section of this paper.

³⁶ Lonergan, *De Verbo Incarnato* (Rome: Gregorian University, 1964), p. 552, tr. Charles Hefling, cited in Robert Doran's 'The Nonviolent Cross,' p. 46.

In other words, to invoke Michael Stoeber's distinction, *lex crucis* effects not only the movement from potentially destructive suffering to transformative suffering but promotes the emergence of compassion in contrast to apathetic or distorted notions of empathy.³⁷

For Lonergan, 'The law of the cross is the intrinsic intelligibility of the redemption . . . we find this intrinsic intelligibility is not mere possibility or idle speculation. In Christ our head, we find it is a fact'.³⁸ Paul of the Cross' focus was on the contemplation of the 'fact' of Christ's suffering, but his emphasis was performative rather than intellectual. For Lonergan, the *law of the cross* is the principle to be gleaned intellectually from the paschal mystery, and precisely because it is a mystery and not something to be discovered by our rational intellect alone, but rather revealed to us in the exemplar of Jesus, it is worthy of contemplation and imitation. Lonergan states: 'By such contemplation we can, with human sensibility and feeling, consider the relation of divine wisdom and goodness to the mystery of human evil.'³⁹ The fruits of such contemplation simultaneously provide a basis for further contemplation and a proper praxis for avoiding the distortions listed above.

What is the alternative to the *law of the cross*? Writing in the mid-twentieth century Lonergan points out how the emphasis on the cross was seen as weakness and servitude by Nietzsche, while Marx eschewed the idea of Christianity because for him the latter served as an ideological weapon by the ruling class in the historical class struggle: 'And so our age has a new gospel that preaches not love of one's enemies but hatred and class struggle, not the cross but violent revolution. The fruits of this tree are very obvious: widespread wars and whole nations reduced to servitude'.⁴⁰ In this compact quote we see Lonergan compares the tree upon which Christ is crucified with the tree of political ideologies. Specifically this parallels the distinction between the gospel of Christ and the 'new gospel' of political ideology, where the former preaches the love of one's enemies in contrast to a hatred perpetuated by political ideologies, and, still further, the cross is juxtaposed to violent revolution.

When referencing scriptural passages relevant to the *law of the cross* Lonergan cites the following passages:⁴¹ 'He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let

³⁷ Stoeber *Reclaiming Theodicy*, p. 61.

³⁸ Bernard Lonergan, *De Verbo Incarnato*, Thesis 17, p. 527, quoted in Jean Higgins, 'Redemption,' in *The Desires of the Human Heart: An Introduction to the Theology of Bernard Lonergan*, ed. Vernon Gregson (New York: Paulist, 1988), pp. 201–21 at p. 220.

³⁹ Ibid, quoting Lonergan, *De Verbo Incarnato*, p. 507.

⁴⁰ Bernard Lonergan, 'Supplement [to *De Verbo Incarnato*] *De Redemptione*,' [The Redemption] unpublished manuscript, (tr) Michael Shields (Lonergan Research Institute: Toronto, 2010), p. 136.

⁴¹ Lonergan, 'The Transition from a Classicist World-view to Historical Mindedness' in *Second Collection*, pp. 8–9.

them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it” (Mark 8:34–35). He cites the parallel passages of these in Matthew, Luke and John.⁴² He then quotes at more length from the Sermon on the Mount: ‘Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.’ (Matt 5:11–12). This extends to the love for one’s enemies:

You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matt 5:38–48)

This law is not a law in the juridical sense, as Raymond Moloney points out, but rather ‘a precept’, one that the historical Jesus does not establish but serves as exemplar, ‘but it only becomes an effective force for human living as a result of the concrete history of its supreme exemplar, our Lord himself, in his death and resurrection.’⁴³

It should be added that the power of Jesus’s message is backed up by his example on the cross when he states ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing’ (Luke 23:34). This powerful witness is pivotal for people like René Girard who views this event as the beginning of an historic reversal in the cycle of violence.⁴⁴

In his analysis of Lonergan’s *law of the cross*, Hefling emphasizes that Lonergan’s view corrects an imbalance in theology that tends to view the work of Christ narrowly with the work of the cross. A similar imbalance occurs with respect to the tendency to view grace as strictly healing instead of also as elevating. The result is a tendency to focus on

⁴² Matthew (16:24–25), Luke (9:23–24) and John (12:25–25).

⁴³ Raymond Moloney, ‘Lonergan’s Soteriology,’ *Irish Theological Quarterly* 78/1 (2013), p. 34.

⁴⁴ See Doran ‘The Nonviolent Cross,’ pp. 46–61.

grace solely in its relation to the forgiveness of sins rather than also on how it elevates humans to greater acts of love and self-transcendence.⁴⁵ According to Hefling, the *law of the cross* is inextricably linked to the person of Christ and the reason for the incarnation is to mediate divine friendship. Hefling states: ‘God became human to befriend humankind, and in the process of befriending them, expressed his sorrow and hatred for their sins.’⁴⁶ Hefling’s analysis is quite provocative and creative especially for articulating the aspect of the *law of the cross* that seeks to imitate the Father. We love our enemies because we have a duty or commitment to befriend the friends of our friends even if their friends happen to be our enemies. We strive to love as the Father loves with Jesus as exemplar.

Still, as we turn to the four-point hypothesis, we find that friendship is not the only analogy to express our graced participation in the divine relations, but as we will see in the next section, to participate in the passion of Jesus, to bear the cross in one’s own life, is to participate in the relationship of divine sonship. That is, to be brought up into the Trinitarian family as adopted children of the Father. While ‘friendship’ and ‘family’ are both ways of expressing our intimate relationship to God through sanctifying grace, it is the adoption that expresses more intimately our close relationship with the Triune God and the ties that bind us together.

The Systematic Theological Basis for Understanding Participation in the Passion

In this section I explore how Lonergan would understand a Christian’s participation in the passion and death of resurrection from the viewpoint of systematic theology.

There are many ways in which Christians understand and live out, imitate and participate in the passion of Christ: sacramentally in baptism and in the Eucharistic celebration of the Mass; liturgically during Holy Week; spiritually as in the third week of contemplation in the Ignatian Exercises; and in rarer instances, physically, for those who suffer martyrdom, or rarer still, mystically, for those who receive the wounds of Christ or the stigmata. However the question becomes how can we understand our participation in the passion of Christ from a theoretical, theological point of view (*orthotheoria*)?

⁴⁵ Charles C. Hefling, ‘Lonergan’s “Cur Deus Homo”’: Revisiting the “Law of the Cross,” in *Meaning and History in Systematic Theology: Essays in Honour of Robert M. Doran, SJ*, ed. John Dadosky (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University, 2009), p. 161. See also Charles C. Hefling, ‘A Perhaps Permanently Valid Achievement: Lonergan on Christ’s Satisfaction,’ *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 10 (1992): pp. 51–76.

⁴⁶ Hefling, ‘Cur Deus Homo?’, p. 161.

In chapter 5 of Lonergan's *Triune God: Systematics* he puts forth what has come to be known as the four-point hypothesis.

... there are four real divine relations, really identical with the divine substance, and therefore there are four very special modes that ground the external imitation of the divine substance. Next, there are four absolutely supernatural realities, which are never found uninformed, namely, the secondary act of existence of the incarnation, sanctifying grace, the habit of charity, and the light of glory. It would not be inappropriate, therefore, to say that the secondary act of existence of the incarnation is a created participation of paternity, and so has a special relation to the Son; that sanctifying grace is a [created] participation of active spiration, and so has a special relation to the Holy Spirit; that the habit of charity is a [created] participation of passive spiration, and so has a special relation to the Father and the Son; and that the light of glory is a [created] participation of sonship, and so in a most perfect way brings the children of adoption back to the Father.⁴⁷

With this in mind, from the point of view of this systematic theological premise, we can begin to situate what it means to participate in the passion of Christ by virtue of a participation in the sonship or filiation of the Triune God, and so this participation in filiation has a special relation to the Father. Likewise, the 'external imitation of the divine substance' that follows would be a participation in the *lumen gloriae*, the light of glory. To contemplate the mystery of the passion with a view towards a transformation of suffering and death would be a participation in divine sonship. As Lonergan states in his Supplement on the Redemption: 'God the Father extended his love for his own Son to those members united to the Son, to bestow upon them the adoptive filiation and send the Spirit of his Son into our hearts crying, "Abba, Father!"' (Gal 4:5–6).⁴⁸

Elsewhere I have argued that this lays the groundwork for not only ecclesiology but for Mariology as well. The scriptural basis for this adoptive sonship lies in the passion account of John's Gospel (John 19:26–27). The mutual donation of Mary and The Beloved Disciple instituted by Jesus at the foot of the cross is the establishment of a community. Mary is now the adoptive mother of The Beloved Disciple, traditionally held to be John himself, who, as *anima ecclesia*, represents

⁴⁷ Lonergan, *The Triune God: Systematics* pp. 471, 473. "For the brackets within the quote I follow Robert M. Doran who coined the phrase 'four-point hypothesis'. See his *What is Systematic Theology?* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), pp. 65–66."

⁴⁸ Lonergan, *The Redemption*, p. 156.

all Christians (little-Christ) as the adoptive child.⁴⁹ This provides the scriptural basis for the theology of Mary as mother of the church.

In terms of the *four point hypothesis*, the sufferings that the adopted children of the Father experience would be *de facto* placed in the eschatological component of the four-points. This includes participation in the divine relation of filiation, a special relationship with the Father, one to be fully realized in the light of glory or beatific vision when we will see God face-to-face (1 Cor. 13:12; DS 530).

The significance of the four-point hypothesis in terms of systematic theology is that the participation of the just in the divine relation of filiation—that is, their adoption by the Father—means that they also imitate the Son in his passion and sufferings and by virtue of this it also means that they imitate Jesus in the resurrection. The way the hypothesis is stated, and its potential basis as a starting point for systematic theology would provide an intellectual surety of the passion anticipating and conjoining with the resurrection. This could guide an orthopraxy in order to prevent a one-sided focus on the morbidity of the passion or ‘dismal dolorism’ as it has been called.

Moreover, such imitation would extend via the *lex crucis* to follow Jesus in the forgiveness of his persecutors and the expansion of one’s heart in understanding and compassion, which is, among other things, the basis of the Church’s social mission. Third, the participation in the filiation of the divine relations and the adoption by the Father, effectively means that the Father loves the just with the same intensity, love and generosity of which he adores the Son. In addition to our dignity inherent in being created in God’s image (Gen 1:27), this *theosis* elevates the dignity of human beings into a transformative love that is intimately brought up in the heart of divine reality. To invoke the tag attributed to St. Augustine, ‘God loves each one of us as if there was only one of us’. Hence, the self-hatred and self-flagellation that can reflect distortions of passion-centred spirituality are nullified by the reality of such elevation.

Here, I would like to take a moment to mention a corollary. If Clement of Alexandria can be credited with getting the early Hellenistic mentality to move beyond an anthropomorphic view of God,⁵⁰ I think the work of René Girard can assist to move the Christian mindset beyond

⁴⁹ See John Dadosky, ‘The Official Church and the Church of Love’ in Balthasar’s Reading of John: An Exploration in Post-Vatican II Ecclesiology.’ *Studia Canonica*, 41 (2007): 453–471; The work of Hans Urs von Balthasar and Adrienne von Speyr have laboured to bring this dimension into the church’s self-understanding. I would wager that this passage should be considered as equally constitutive as the passage in Matthew’s gospel concerning Peter as the founding rock (Matt 16:18). It is the official church upon which Peter is the foundation and it is the church of love that is founded at the foot of the cross. These two passages should be held together as key constitutive passages in any ecclesiology albeit not exclusively so. There may be more.

⁵⁰ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 307.

penal substitution theories that anthropomorphize God into a punisher of his own son. However, where Girard focuses on God's consistent 'No!' to violence as exemplified in the events of the cross reversing the cycle of violence, there remains a need to match that interpretation with a corresponding positive loving image of God. God has nothing to do with apathy, hatred, anger and violence. We have to apply a hermeneutic of suspicion to our own theologies in order to weed out the traces of these negative images of God, especially the images of the Father. Girard's hermeneutics shores up the continuity between the two Testaments, because he sees the Old Testament already demonstrating the beginning of the end of violence, as for example, in Joseph's refusal to play God by retaliation (Gen 45:1–15). He forgives his brothers who had expelled him.⁵¹ More succinctly, if Girard condemns a conception of God that requires violent sacrifice, then what also follows from this condemnation is the release from any conception of a punishing god.

E. The Cultivation of 'Awakened Heart' or *Bodhichitta*

In the closing lines of his work on Paul of the Cross' spiritual theology, Martin Bialas suggests the fruitfulness of an ecumenical engagement between the former's thought and one from another Christian confession.⁵² And if this can be fruitful, perhaps one may also extend this engagement within the wider ecumenism of the other religions. In select practices and teachings of Buddhism there are teachings that seem to embody the spirit of the *law of the cross* and serve as concrete examples of orthopraxy for members of any religious tradition. Such embodiment from a Christian theological point of view perhaps points to the fruits of the Spirit and the seeds of the Word at work in the religious other.⁵³ The emphases are upon the possibility of the transformation of suffering of individuals, the expansion of a growing heart of compassion and the alleviation of suffering in oneself and others.

Many with even a cursory knowledge of Buddhism are aware of the idea of the *bodhisattva* who puts off his/her enlightenment in order to help others obtain enlightenment and to alleviate suffering. Embodied in this ideal is a principle analogous to the self-sacrificing love and charity that are the spirit of the *law of the cross*. Certain Buddhist practices aim at cultivating compassion through the teaching of the *four immeasurable minds* or limitless qualities and the *tonglan breathing* as

⁵¹ See René Girard, *I See Satan Fall Like Lightning* (Maryknoll: NY, Orbis Books, 2001), p. 118.

⁵² Bialas, *St. Paul of the Cross*, p. 395.

⁵³ John Dadosky, 'Ecclesia de Trinitate: Ecclesial Foundations from Above,' 94/1049 *New Blackfriars*, (January, 2013), p. 77.

part of the Lojong teachings for the alleviation of suffering for oneself and others.

The four immeasurable minds or limitless qualities address the alleviation of suffering, the expansion of charity and including the relations with one's adversaries. The first of these is called love or loving-kindness (*metta* or *maitri*), the second, compassion (*karuna*), the third, joy (*mudita*) and the fourth, equanimity (*upekkha*). There is a fourfold exercise for expanding one's connections with other people to increase one's ability for compassion and consideration for others. Concerning these Thich Nhat Hanh says: 'If you learn to practice love, compassion, joy and equanimity, you will know how to heal the illnesses of anger, sorrow, insecurity, sadness, hatred, loneliness and unhealthy attachments.'⁵⁴ Further, he insists that these practices should occur within one's own tradition and he especially mentions Judaism, Christianity and Islam: 'Preserve . . . your roots . . . if you are cut off from your roots, you cannot be happy.'⁵⁵

For each of the four immeasurable minds one is encouraged to develop a consciousness of interrelatedness with the other as demonstrated in the following formula using the example of compassion practice (*karuna*): 1) 'May I be free of suffering and the root of all suffering'. 2) 'May (name of someone you are grateful for) be free of suffering and the root of all suffering'. 3) 'May (name of someone you are fond of) be free of suffering and the root of all suffering'. 4) 'May (name of someone who is neutral in your life) be free of suffering and the root of all suffering'. 5) 'May (name of a difficult person in your life, enemy or antagonist) be free of suffering and the root of all suffering'. 6) This is followed by a phrase called 'breaking down the barriers': 'May I, (someone I am grateful for, someone I am fond of, someone who is neutral in my life, a difficult person, 'enemy' or 'antagonist') be free of suffering and the root of all suffering.' Finally, 7) 'May all beings be free of all suffering and the root of all suffering.'⁵⁶

In addition to the four immeasurable minds, there are also ancient teachings called the *Lojong* teachings that were brought to Tibet by Atisha Dipamkara Shrijnana (982–1054).⁵⁷ He had traveled to Sumatra, Indonesia and acquired the teachings directly from Serlingpa. The teachings were originally handed down in secret from teacher to disciple. A greater synthesis of the teachings occurred by Yeshe

⁵⁴ Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching: Transforming Suffering into Peace, Joy and Liberation* (New York: Broadway Books, 1999), p. 170.

⁵⁵ Hanh, *Heart of Buddhist Teaching*, p. 169.

⁵⁶ Adapted from Pema Chodron, *The Places that Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times*, (Shambhala Classics, 2010) Kindle Edition, pp. 206–7. On the Four Limitless Qualities See also Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching*, pp. 169–176.

⁵⁷ See Traleg Kyabgon, *The Practice of Lojong: Cultivating Compassion through Training the Mind* (Boston & London: Shambhala Publications, 2007), pp. 1–15.

Chicawa, who organized the teachings in a more systematic way in his *Seven Teachings on the Mind*. This latter work has provided the basis for many commentaries including a resurgence in contemporary times due to the proselytizing efforts of Chögyam Chenpa Rinpoche (1940–1987).⁵⁸

One of the breathing practices of the *Lojong* teachings can help to expand one's heart of compassion or *bodhichitta*. A specific practice for overcoming suffering is that of *tonglan* breathing. At the heart of the practice, when suffering from affliction or negative emotions, the practitioner is encouraged to 'breath in' or inhale for all of those people who might be experiencing the same emotion globally in the same moment. On the exhale one is encouraged to 'breath out' relief to all of those who might suffering simultaneously with the same affliction or negative emotion. The practitioner often feels immediate relief and is able to overcome the afflicting emotions. The practitioner also retains a growing conscious connection with those within his/her world. The continual training in this form of breathing helps increase the compassion for the other in the depths of one's heart. Pema Chodron states: 'As expressed in the *Lojong* teachings, that fundamental change of attitude is to breathe the undesirable in and breathe the desirable out. In contrast, the attitude that is epidemic on the planet is that if it is unpleasant we push it away and if it is pleasant we hold tight and grasp it'.⁵⁹

One can only imagine the positive effect that a collective of practitioners might have in a community locally or globally. Of course this type of practice is not just for the healing of afflictions and desolate emotions but one is also encouraged to do the same for positive emotions as well. When experiencing joy one breathes in an awareness of one's good feeling and one breathes out this good feeling to others, however one chooses to channel the thought.

Through these practices, the heart becomes a more expansive and tender heart (*bodhichitta*) as one develops conscious connections with all the relations within one's horizon of intersubjectivity. One develops the ability to 'put oneself in the shoes' of another especially an antagonist or enemy. Chodron explains: 'The *Lojong* teachings say that the way to help, the way to act compassionately, is to exchange oneself for other. When you can put yourself in someone else's shoes, then you know what is needed, and what would speak to the heart'.⁶⁰

With respect to its analogy with the *law of the cross*, one takes on the suffering of others and at the same time one seeks to alleviate and

⁵⁸ Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, *Training the Mind*, (Boston & London: Shambhala Publications, 2010).

⁵⁹ Pema Chodron, *Start Where You Are: A Guide to Compassionate Living* (Boston: Shambhala Classics, 2011) Kindle Edition, p. 103 (location 1656).

⁶⁰ Chodron, *Start Where you Are*, p. 101 (Kindle, # 1621).

transform it into compassion. This includes taking on the suffering of a difficult person in one's life and practicing the breathing in order to transform those feelings into more positive ones.

Finally, to perhaps bring our thoughts full circle, it is worth pointing out that the notion of the interconnectedness of human beings in Buddhist practices along with the greater connection with all living beings within the created order, is harmonious with recent developments in contemporary Passionist work, which have taken a surprising turn from the sufferings of Christ to the suffering of the planet.

The work of Thomas Berry, CP, and one of his successors Stephen Dunn, CP have been on the forefront of addressing Christian theology in terms of ecological concerns.⁶¹ And it is here that we can only speculate how a spirituality based on contemplating the sufferings of Jesus can be so formative in shaping these contemporary Passionists' views by bringing the 'suffering of the Earth' if you will, to the attention of the theological community. After all, the well-being of the planet is inextricable to the well-being of humankind. The interrelatedness and the transformation of suffering seem to go hand-in-hand for the Passionists and the Buddhists, while both express the ideal and the fruits of the *law of the cross*.

F. Conclusion

We have been investigating the role of passion-centric spirituality as inherited through the mystic St. Paul of the Cross in order to address some of the possible distortions of such spirituality in the tradition, though not all are explicitly attributable to him. In some cases, such distortions can lead to morbid contemplation or self-flagellating practices. The issue becomes one of distinguishing between destructive and transformative suffering, and the transformative aspect is the fruit of the *law of the cross*. Likewise, I have argued that Lonergan's notion of the *law of the cross* and placing the contemplation of the practice within the imitation of the four divine relations, particularly filiation, can provide the theological 'theory' in order to guide right practice of contemplating and participating mystically in the sufferings of Christ.

In addition, I have suggested some aspects of Buddhist practices that are analogous or harmonious with the principle of the *law of the cross* in its ability to expand compassion and particularly for the antagonists

⁶¹ See Thomas Berry, *The Dream of the Earth* (San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 1988) and *The Great Work: Our Way Into the Future* (New York: Random House/Bell Towers, 1999); Thomas Berry and Thomas Clarke, *Befriending the Earth: A Theology of Reconciliation Between Humans and the Earth* (eds.) Stephen Dunn and Anne Lonergan (New London, CT: Twenty-Third Publication, 1991).

or enemies in one's life. Such practices speak of the invisible mission of the Spirit.⁶²

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⁶² Dadosky, '*Ecclesia de Trinitate*', pp. 74–8.