

## GUEST EDITORIAL: GLOBAL CATHOLICISM AND THE CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

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In this special issue on “Global Catholicism and the Catholic Charismatic Movement”, two characters impress me deeply. On the one hand, there is the Nigerian priest Ejike Mbaka, who, with his “Pentecostal” style while remaining strongly anchored in African Catholicism, expresses the very dynamic of indigenization of the Catholic Charismatic movement. On the other hand, there is Cardinal Léon Joseph Suenens, who, with his “Roman” and moderate style of being Charismatic, has contributed significantly to the legitimization of the movement within the Catholic Church. Despite the fact that they are two very different figures, I believe they substantially summarize the historical trajectory of the Catholic Charismatic movement and its dynamics of globalization: from north to south, from the periphery to the centre – and then, vice versa, from the centre to the periphery – from local to global.

Although the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR) has been the subject of several academic studies over the last few decades – consisting mainly of sociological surveys and historiographical, more or less apologetic “insider” works – much remains to be investigated: how has this transnational movement been rooted in the diverse geographical contexts? How has it related to the local religious milieu? How has the interaction between Catholic Charismatics and the ecclesiastical hierarchy and the papal magisterium taken place? In a multidisciplinary way that combines history, anthropology, and sociology this special issue tries to answer to these questions presenting new research on the Catholic Charismatic movement with an effort to offer a worldwide scenario. In fact, its contributions cover the United States and the Vatican (Ciciliot), France (Mercier), Réunion Island (Aubourg), and Nigeria (Duniya).

What brings together these works is a similar periodization of the development of the movement which is divided into three general phases: the first phase of spontaneity and experimentation in terms of ecumenism, spirituality, and organization – with, however, significant differences depending on the geographical contexts; the second phase of legitimization that soon turned into a process variously described by our authors as centralization, normalization, Catholicization, or disciplining; and finally the third phase of re-appropriation of indigenous traits without bypassing the Roman Catholic signposts (outside Europe) and recovery of autonomy, both spiritual and organizational, albeit within the ecclesiastical structure (in Europe).

The first phase covers the 1970s when the CCR spread mainly from the United States to other continents. It was a period of spiritual excitement and organizational experimentation where the renewal was imported primarily by local people and not exported by missionaries in an expansionist mode. However, whilst in Europe and in the United States during this period the movement challenged denominational boundaries by promoting a certain type of ecumenism and mixed meetings (Catholics, Evangelicals, Pentecostals, and Charismatic Protestants) that often attracted ecclesiastical concerns, the situation in other parts of the world, such as in Réunion, was very different. Ecumenism was perceived as inappropriate and counterproductive in religious contexts of missionary competition and very soon diocesan authorities cast the CCR “in the role of a ‘counter-fire’ to stop the spread of the Pentecostal blaze” (Aubourg). The Charismatic movement thus turned out to be an effective method of regaining control over the Pentecostal offer – and similar dynamic appeared in several countries in Latin America and Africa as well.

My attention goes above all to the second phase, in the 1980s, which is noted and depicted using a shared language despite the diverse academic viewpoints and the different geographical contexts contained in this special issue. In Réunion Island, for example, the 1980s corresponded to a “normalization” of the Charismatic movement “which brought its practices back into the Catholic fold” (Aubourg). In fact, it gradually began to change its characteristics in order to be accepted by the church and in particular by the parish priests who previously were hostile. That resulted in leaving aside overly Pentecostal aspects in favour of devotions and organization closer to the diocesan structure. In France, as another example shows, the desire of Charismatic communities to be fully recognized by the Vatican “met the will of Cardinal Cordes to ‘Catholicize’ the

renewal” (Mercier), since it was his vision that only a structural and cooperative (Charismatic) movement could be integrated within the church. Though it is safe to say that local Charismatic groups and communities at a certain point looked for being recognized by ecclesiastical authorities, I wonder to what extent their legitimization was a bottom-up development rather than a top-down process set up by the ecclesiastical hierarchy. In other words, was it the Vatican’s acceptance of bottom-up drives that demand visibility and integration that results in a Catholicization of the movement, or was it the Vatican that pushed for a forced institutionalization through the use of the Pontifical Council of the Laity in order to normalize ecumenically and ecclesiolegically ambiguous situations? The answer is certainly complex and not univocal, and an interweaving of local and global perspectives is needed to seek joint responses.

Finally, in the third phase, a sort of recovery of Charismatic spiritual autonomy and indigenous cultural elements commenced from the late 1990s. Whereas outside of Europe this was an indigenization process – in south Réunion it came alongside creolization and in Nigeria led to a more sympathetic attitude toward African traditional and Pentecostal traits, as examples – in Europe, it was more of a cooperative and reciprocal adjustment between Catholic Charismatic and diocesan structures according to a “policy of recognition of diversity” (Mercier) where Charismatic communities and groups could express themselves without a forced uniformity. Given this recent turn to autonomy and indigenization, it is probably not by chance that Pope Francis has promoted the study of the first Malines documents which were conceived by Cardinal Suenens in the late 1970s as theological and pastoral guidelines to help Charismatics settle within the church rather than later statements and recommendations.

What seems to emerge clearly from this historical overview is that it is impossible to study the local dimension without taking into account the global institutional one, especially in the framework of a strongly hierarchical church such as the Catholic Church and, vice versa, the ecclesiastical and magisterial context without connecting it to precise geographical circumstances. The contributions in this special issue accomplish precisely this: using different academic methodologies they reveal the interplay between geographical dynamics, centrifugal and centripetal forces, local and global dimensions.

The issue starts with my article “From the United States to the World, Passing through Rome: Reflections on the Catholic Charismatic Movement”, which is an attempt to condense three-year research on

the origins of the CCR funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie action. It is a historical overview over the development of the Catholic Charismatic movement from its US-American beginnings in the late 1960s to the late 1980s during John Paul II's pontificate, which focuses on two key figures of the movement, Cardinal Léon Joseph Suenens (1904–1996) and Cardinal Paul Josef Cordes (b. 1934). This historical trajectory advanced through different stages, from what has been called “Romanization” to a disciplining or Catholicizing process: while the US Catholic hierarchy initially distanced itself from Catholic Charismatics, this approach was later superseded by their legitimization, which was achieved through Suenens's mediation between the CCR and the Vatican, and eventually through the centralizing effort pursued by Cordes and the Pontifical Council for the Laity, which followed the Wojtylian ecclesiology. The diversity of approach between Suenens and Cordes could be meaningful to understand the changes of the Catholic Church as a whole from the immediate end of Vatican II to the late 1980s and 1990s. This indeed supports the idea that the Catholic Charismatic movement is an important lens through which to explore Catholicism in its global dimension.

The second article, “Institution vs Charism? The Emmanuel Community, the Catholic Church and John Paul II's World Youth Days” by Charles Mercier deals with the relationships between Charismatic communities and ecclesiastical structures in the 1980s and 1990s. The author analyses the Emmanuel Community (EC)'s participation in the first World Youth Days in order to understand the place of the Catholic Charismatic movement's networks related to the geographical structures of Catholicism. As a matter of fact, the rapid development of new movements (what the Vatican defines as “new ecclesiastical movements”), including those within the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, has widened the gap between spiritual affinities and territories, and between leaders of movements/communities and ecclesiastical authorities such as bishops and priests. Since the EC is the second largest system of the Catholic Charismatic groups in the world, this survey at the diocesan, national and global level significantly contributes to the academic debate about the dualism Catholicism appears to have, with Charismatic movements “living in autarky while pledging allegiance to the pope on the one hand, and institutional structures on the other”, thus creating a sort of a parallel system, a parallel church. If at first Mercier's contribution seems to support the hypothesis of the Charismatic movement forming a parallel

system – and in fact, EC built a strong relationship with the Roman Curia and was poorly integrated into the French Catholic Church in the 1980s – a second hypothesis, that of inclusion, better describes the situation in the 1990s, when the Vatican “forced” a coexistence and EC and French dioceses had to find a *modus vivendi* to be within the church together.

Moving out of Europe but staying in a French-speaking country, Valérie Aubourg looks at the ways in which the CCR has interacted with local religious and cultural practices in Réunion Island from an anthropological point of view. Her article lucidly shows how the birth and development of the CCR have been inseparable from the cultural and political context in which the movement has evolved. Her contributions entitled “The Three Waves of the Charismatic Renewal in Réunion Island: Interactions with Local Religious and Cultural Practices” also describes the relationship between Catholic Charismatics and Pentecostals. Their link consists of rapprochement and distinction, collaboration, and competition. On one hand, the CCR borrowed elements from Pentecostalism, but on the other hand, it was favored by the hierarchy to counter the growing influence of the Assemblies of God in the island. Over time, it was the CCR itself, which was normalized in order to be legitimized by the Vatican, that reactivated and reinforced Catholic practices to clearly distinguish itself from Pentecostalism.

Finally, the article by Reuben Duniya and Joel Duwai, titled “Charismatic Catholicism, Pentecostal Prophetism, and the Question of Influence in Nigeria: Ejike Mbaka as Case Study”, adds something more about the relationship between Catholic Charismatics and Pentecostals in the African contest. The authors argue that a more complex framework is needed when scholars discuss the reciprocal influences of these two groups. As an example, the Nigerian Catholic Charismatic movement is not simply the result of Pentecostal influences since it is also characterized by its own global and local history. Yet, the rising form of prophetic engagement with the political within Catholic Charismatics in Africa – exemplified by Ejike Mbaka’s case – shows “how the contemporary use of prophecy to influence Nigerian politics by Pentecostals has helped facilitate a Pentecostal influence on the country’s Catholic Charismatic movement through the use of prophecy as a way of influencing politics.” This research also confirms how the globalization of the Catholic Charismatic movement, albeit within a strongly hierarchical reality such as the Catholic Church, has not been imposed from above but has flourished in adapting to local religious conditions: in Nigeria, the movement arrived via US American Catholic priests, but its similarities

with Nigerian Pentecostalism draw on the shared cosmology of African Traditional Religion (ATR) as well. That's why, according to the authors, similarities between Pentecostals and Charismatics can be explained with reference to the shared cultural and religious background. In fact, the pneumatocentric and pragmatic emphases of the Charismatic/Pentecostal movement resonate with the traditional African culture known from the study of ATR. Differences between Pentecostalism and the CCR, however, lay in the centrality of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, in general, but also in overseeing the exercise of spiritual gifts, particularly in the office of the prophecy, which for Catholics is an office given to all believers, whereas for Pentecostals, it is one of special calling, anointing, and mentorship.

All articles clearly demonstrate the usefulness of studying the interconnections between the global and local dimension of the Catholic Charismatic movement. In order to truly understand the transnational dynamics of this movement it is imperative to study it from both the institutional vantage point (as is the case in the analyses of the relations between the Vatican and Charismatic leaders) and from a local, individual point of view (as is the case in the study of a Nigerian Charismatic priest). Only when combined do these investigations disclose the complexity of the phenomenon. Although this truly global approach to the Catholic Charismatic movement needs development and employment in further research, I hope that this special issue will provoke scholarly debate on the subject and significantly contribute to the studies of global Catholicism.