

The Ricci Paradigm of Dialogue and Catholic Social Teaching in and for China

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Dedication: We dedicate this piece to our beloved colleague and friend, Professor Yang Hengda (Renmin University, Beijing), with whom we were privileged to carry on dialogue inspired by the Ricci Paradigm. Yang passed away on July 12, 2023, and we miss him very much.

【 Abstract 】 This article focuses mainly on the spiritual world and dialogue of Matteo Ricci, a boundless traveler who navigates culture, philosophy, spirituality and natural science. This article looks at this spiritual world from the perspective of the modern Chinese situation to provide an in-depth explanation of the most important concepts and cases of Catholic Social Teachings: such as the theory of shared values, the consumer movement, fair labor conditions, respect for the interests of all stakeholders, trust and reliability of critical choices, and anti-corruption. According to Matteo Ricci's spirit, today's Catholic Social Teaching can definitely point out a direction for China, which is passing from economic development to sustainable economic development.

Recently, during his visit to Mongolia from 31 August through 4 September 2023, Pope Francis made a statement developing his thoughts on interreligious and cross-cultural dialogue where “he called himself one of the ‘humble heirs’ of ancient schools of wisdom and quoted the Buddha.”¹ At the gathering for Catholic Mass attended by “leaders representing Mongolian Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, evangelical and Orthodox Christians, Mormons, Hindus, Shintos, Bahais and shamans,”² he stressed “harmony” as the outcome of interreligious and cross-cultural dialogue. Clarifying the meaning of such harmony, Pope Francis declared that it is “that special relationship born of the creative interplay of differing realities, without imposition or amalgamation, but with complete respect for their differences, in view of a serene life in common,” and contrasted it with “narrowness, unilateral imposition, fundamentalism and ideological constraint [which] destroy fraternity, fuel tensions and compromise peace.”³ Genuine dialogue seeks the opposite of these outcomes:

“The Church today offers the treasure she has received to every person and culture, in a spirit of openness and in respectful consideration of what the other religious traditions have to offer. Dialogue, in fact, is not antithetical to proclamation: it does not gloss over differences, but helps us to understand them, to preserve them in their distinctiveness and to discuss them openly for the sake

¹ Philip Pullella, “Pope Francis and Mongolia’s Catholics under one roof at papal Mass,” *Reuters*, 3 September 2023: <https://www.reuters.com/world/pope-quoting-buddha-urges-religious-dialogue-fight-fundamentalism-2023-09-03/>.

² Philip Pullella, “Pope Francis and Mongolia’s Catholics under one roof at papal Mass.”

³ Pope Francis, “Ecumenical and Interreligious Meeting: Address of his Holiness,” 3 September 2023:

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2023/september/documents/20230903-mongolia-incontro-ecuminter.html>.

of mutual enrichment. In this way, we can discover in our common humanity, blessed by heaven, the key to our journey on this earth.”⁴

Pope Francis praised the openness to religious diversity that has been characteristic of Mongolian culture, back to the days when Genghis Khan ruled from Karakorum. He described “the patrimony of wisdom” that can be learned from Mongolian culture, praising ten aspects of that patrimony:

“[A] healthy relationship to tradition, despite the temptations of consumerism; respect for your elders and ancestors – today how greatly do we need a generational covenant between old and the young, a dialogue between grandparents and grandchildren! Also, care for the environment, our common home, another great and pressing need, for we are in peril. Then too, the value of silence and the interior life, as a spiritual antidote to so many ills in today’s world. Also, a healthy sense of frugality; the value of hospitality; the ability to resist attachment to material objects; the solidarity born of a culture of interpersonal bonds; and respect for simplicity. Finally, a certain existential pragmatism that tenaciously pursues the good of individuals and of the community. These ten aspects are some elements of the patrimony of wisdom that this country is able to offer to the world.”⁵

His discernment of Mongolia’s legacy of values resonates with key points that he has presented throughout his papacy, for example, his emphasis on cultivating “the interior life,” as in *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), or “care for the environment, our common home,” as in *Laudato Si’* (2015),

⁴ Pope Francis, “Ecumenical and Interreligious Meeting: Address of his Holiness.”

⁵ Pope Francis, “Ecumenical and Interreligious Meeting: Address of his Holiness.”

and “the value of hospitality,” and “the solidarity born of a culture of interpersonal bonds,” as in *Fratelli Tutti* (2020).

In what follows, we hope to explore further the roots of Pope Francis’ understanding of dialogue, particularly following in the footsteps of the Jesuit missionaries to China and east Asia. We see in Pope Francis’ exhortation in Ulaanbaatar, a further development of what we call “The Ricci Paradigm” in honor of the pioneering leadership of Matteo Ricci, SJ, who in the 16th century first made similar efforts in China. In Ricci’s dialogues with the Confucian literati whom he encountered there, he expressed similar admiration for “the patrimony of wisdom” he discovered in the Chinese people and the moral teachings of Confucius. Exploring this patrimony, we will argue, remains a promising way to show the harmony that exists between the basic principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) and the Confucian ideal of moral leadership, the *Junzi*. From this common ground, these two traditions, eyeing each other with mutual respect, may continue their dialogue about the Way forward for China’s development.

Part One:

The Ricci Paradigm of Cross-Cultural Dialogue and its Origins

Over the course of his mission in China (1583-1610), Matteo Ricci engaged in various dialogues with Chinese *literati*, including prominent Buddhists. He reconstructed these conversations in his essay, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, written in Chinese and first published in 1603. The eight chapters of that essay are properly regarded as a “pre-evangelical dialogue” since they feature exchanges that “allow for philosophical consideration, explanation, or proof—such as the existence of God, nature and the act of creation, the difference between the human soul and the souls of birds and animals, and the immortality of the human

soul.”⁶ From *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, one can infer what Ricci meant by dialogue, what he hoped to accomplish through dialogue, and its limits.

Elements of The Ricci Paradigm

The “Ricci Paradigm” is an attempt to highlight the chief features of Ricci’s practice of dialogue, as evident in *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (1603). Here is an outline of them:

- Dialogue is based on trust or mutual respect. The parties to a dialogue must be sincere in the classical Confucian sense.
- Dialogue is meant to pursue the truth, on the assumption that goodness can be enhanced through the mutual recognition of truth.
- Dialogue ultimately therefore is about self-cultivation. The recognition of truth is transformative. It is not about winning an argument for the sake of winning an argument.
- Dialogue embodies civility even at points when disagreement cannot be overcome.
- Dialogue seeks to achieve consensus about the truth which is mutually recognized.
- Correct philosophical reasoning involves not only the verification of empirical facts, based on observation and inference, but also in cases where basic principles must be clarified, it also involves appeals to common sense, as well as to practical experience.

⁶ Matteo Ricci (1603), *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, ed. Menard, T., trans. D. Lancashire and Hu Kuo-chen, P (Boston: Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies, 2016), p.7.

- The recognition of basic principles may involve appeals to logic, particularly the demonstration of the absurdity (*reductio ad absurdum*) of false assumptions, faulty metaphysical speculations, whose errors can be seen by examining their practical consequences, that is, their tendency to subvert morality and the practice of virtue.
- Ricci's practice of dialogue thus may be recognized as Socratic, involving many points of insight like those evident in Plato's dialogues.
- Dialogue, in the Ricci paradigm, thus is an exercise in self-cultivation, undertaken by friends who trust each other enough to mutually expose fallacies of self-contradiction, wishful thinking, and uncritical acceptance of traditions that need to be questioned.

Following The Ricci Paradigm Today

- Ricci's actual dialogues appeal to the Confucian classics, to detach them from what he considered the metaphysical errors of Buddhism and neo-Confucianism. He sought to define the common ground shared by Confucian and Roman Catholic morality.
- Following in Ricci's footsteps, the dialogue today should focus on the convergences between Catholic Social Teaching and the retrieval of Confucian values evident, for example, in discussions of Confucian Entrepreneurship.
- In what follows, we will outline the convergences that our work in China has identified.

Part Two:

Catholic Social Teaching Insights/ Vocation of the Business Leader

Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

Catholic Social Teaching (CST) does not become a major theme until nearly 400 years after Matteo Ricci's mission in China. It is the Church's response to dramatic social changes in Europe, provoked by the Protestant Reformation, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and their aftermath. Initially, the Church was resistant to such changes, but with the progressive success of the Industrial Revolution even in countries still counting a Catholic majority, such as Italy and Spain, Pope Leo XIII pioneered a different approach, starting with his encyclical letter, aptly named *Rerum Novarum* (1891).

In this encyclical letter, Pope Leo XIII recognized that modernization was a mixed blessing that required constructive engagement if European societies were to avoid disintegration. *Rerum Novarum* began a process in which the basic tenets of Catholic moral teaching were to be applied creatively to solving the pressing social issues, beginning with the question of organized labour. *Rerum Novarum* was so significant that its anniversaries became the occasion for further encyclical letters, (for example, *Quadragesimo Anno* 1931, *Mater et Magistra* 1961, *Centesimus Annus* 1991, etc.) updating its teachings, and broadening their relevance on a range of issues well beyond the labour question and expanding their concern from Europe to the whole world. The latest in this series are Pope Benedict XVI's *Caritas in Veritate* 2009, and Pope Francis' *Fratelli Tutti* 2020.

To be sure, there was remarkable continuity in the principles and values invoked in these milestones of CST. But in 2004, the Pontifical

Council for Justice and Peace issued the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*⁷ which laid out systematically the basic principles animating the teachings of the various CST documents. Here are the principles cited in the *Compendium*: “160: The permanent principles of the Church's social doctrine constitute the very heart of Catholic Social Teaching. These are the principles of: the *dignity of the human person*, ...which is the foundation of all the other principles and content of the Church's social doctrine: *the common good; subsidiarity; and solidarity*.” Here are brief descriptions of these principles:

Human Dignity: “Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone.” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (CCC), 357). Here is Pope Francis’ comment: “My words are not those of a foe or an opponent. I am interested only in helping those who are in thrall to an individualistic, indifferent and self-centered mentality to be freed from those unworthy chains and to attain a way of living and thinking which is more humane, noble and fruitful, and which will bring dignity to their presence on this earth.” (Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, par. 208)

The Common Good: “The sum total of conditions of social living, whereby persons are enabled more fully and readily to achieve their own perfection.” (*Mater et Magistra*, 1961, no. 65). Pope Francis comments: “The coronavirus is showing us that each person’s true good is a common good, not only individual, and, vice versa, the common good is a true good for the person. If a person only seeks his or her own good, that person is selfish. Instead, a person is more of a person when his or her own good is

⁷ Pontifical Council Justitia et Pax, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 2004: https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html.

open to everyone, when it is shared. Health, in addition to being an individual good, is also a public good. A healthy society is one that takes care of everyone's health." (Pope Francis, General Audience, 9 September 2020)

Solidarity: "[Solidarity] is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all." (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 1987, no. 38). Here is Pope Francis' comment: "Understood in this way, solidarity represents the moral and social attitude which best corresponds to an awareness of the scourges of our own day, and to the growing interdependence, especially in a globalized world, between the lives of given individuals and communities and those of other men and women in the rest of the world." (Pope Francis, World Day of Peace, 1 January 2016)

Subsidiarity: "A community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to co-ordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good." (*Centesimus Annus*, 1991, no.48). Again, from Pope Francis: "Everyone needs to have the possibility of assuming their own responsibility in the healing processes of the society of which they are a part. When a project is launched that directly or indirectly touches certain social groups, these groups cannot be left out from participating – for example: "What do you do?" – "I go to work with the poor," – "Beautiful. And what do you do?" – "I teach the poor; I tell the poor what they have to do." No, this doesn't work. The first step is to allow the poor to tell you how they live, what they need: Let everyone speak! And this is how the principle of subsidiarity works." (Pope Francis, General Audience, 23 September 2020)

The application of these four principles is guided by the Church's understanding of the four Cardinal Virtues, inherited from classical Hellenistic philosophy. Notable for CST are Prudence – “the virtue that disposes practical reason to discern our true good in every circumstance and to choose the right means of achieving it” (CCC, 1806) – and Justice – “the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give their due to God and neighbor.” (CCC, 1807). The *Compendium's* recognition of the indispensable role of cultivating “moral and social virtues” (Compendium, 19) for practicing the principles of CST is one of the points where CST and Confucian teaching converge. The notion of leadership expressed in the Confucian ideal of the *Junzi*, as we shall see, clearly resonates with CST's vision of how society may be transformed through the consistent observance of these principles.

CST's Application of its Principles

A recent document of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development (formerly known as the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace), published in 15 languages including Chinese, *The Vocation of the Business Leader: A Reflection* (2018), is a useful example of how CST applies its principles, in this case its hopes regarding moral leadership and its practical implications for business.⁸

The Vocation of the Business Leader (VBL) is offered as a “*vademecum*” for businessmen and women, and a handbook for instruction in schools and universities, promoting CST's practical principles for those who would exercise leadership in achieving the common good. The

⁸ The convergences between CST's understanding of Vocation and Confucian Teaching is explored in Dennis McCann's essay, “Christian ‘Vocation’ and Confucian ‘Tianming’ (天命): Negotiating the Boundaries of Transcendence and Immanence in International Business Ethics,” published in *Purushartha: A Journal of Management, Spirituality, and Ethics*, Vol V, No 2 (2012): pp.17-33.

document is structured following the model of the Catholic Action Movement (See – Judge – Act), offering a coherent vision of the challenges faced by business leaders today, and the choices they make in responding to them. “Seeing,” of course, refers to the process of discerning the trendlines of development occurring in our world. “Judging” means identifying the challenges discerned and referencing the moral principles indispensable for addressing them. “Acting” means developing practical strategies that will improve the situations highlighted. Here are the most salient of these points:

Seeing: Globalisation

“Globalisation has brought efficiency and extraordinary new opportunities to businesses, but the drawbacks include greater inequality, economic dislocation, cultural homogeneity and the inability of governments to properly regulate capital flows.” (VBL, p.4)

Seeing: Communications and computing technology

“Communications and computing technology have enabled connectivity, new solutions and products and lower costs, but their amazing velocity also bring information overload and rushed decision-making.” (VBL, p.4)

Seeing: Financialisation

“Financialisation of business worldwide has intensified tendencies to commoditise the goals of work and to emphasize wealth maximisation and short-term gains at the expense of working for the common good.” (VBL, p.4)

Seeing: Environmental awareness

“Environmental awareness has brought a growing ecological consciousness within business, but there still exists a growing consumerism and “throwaway” culture that damages nature both in its physical and human dimensions. (VBL, p.4)

Seeing: Cultural changes

“Cultural changes of our era have led to increased individualism, more family breakdowns and utilitarian preoccupations with self and “what is good for me.” As a result, we have more private goods but are lacking significantly in common goods.” (VBL, p.4)

Judging: Business leaders are called to...

“produce goods and services that meet genuine human needs and serve the common good, while taking responsibility for the social and environmental costs of production and the supply chain and distribution and watching for opportunities to serve the poor.” (VBL, p.5)

Judging: Business leaders are called to...

“organise productive and meaningful work by recognising the dignity of employees and their right and duty to flourish in their work (work is for the person rather than the other way around), and by structuring workplaces with subsidiarity that designs, equips and trusts employees to do their best work.” (VBL, p.5)

Judging: Business leaders are called to...

“use resources wisely in order to create both profit and well-being, to produce sustainable wealth and to distribute it justly (a just wage

for employees, just prices for customers and suppliers, just taxes for the community, and just returns for owners).” (VBL, p.5)

Acting:

“The Church calls upon business leaders to receive—humbly acknowledging what God has done for them—and to give—entering into communion with others to make the world a better place. Practical wisdom informs their approach to business and strengthens business leaders to respond to the world’s challenges not with fear or cynicism, but with the virtues of faith, hope, and love.” (VBL, p.5)

Part Three: The Risk of Living a “Divided Life”

The VBL document begins to personalise the insights developed in the “See-Judge-Act” method by contrasting the faith and action of a good business leader with the risk of a divided life:

“Obstacles to serving the common good come in many forms – corruption, absence of rule of law, tendencies towards greed, and poor stewardship of resources – but the most significant for a business leader on a personal level is leading a *divided life*. This split between faith and daily business practice can lead to imbalances and misplaced devotion to worldly success.” (VBL, p. 2)

A “divided life” is a life that is fragmented morally and spiritually: “The divided life is not unified or integrated: it is fundamentally disordered, and thus fails to live up to God’s call.” (VBL, p.8) Signs of a “divided life” are evident when the leader is increasingly alienated from family and other

essential relations, symptoms of which are “the split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives.” A “divided life” consists in a person being internally caught in a conflict between their desire to lead and the constraints of “business-as-usual”:

“Compartmentalizing the demands of one’s faith from one’s work in business is a fundamental error that contributes to much of the damage done by businesses in our world today, including overwork to the detriment of family or spiritual life, an unhealthy attachment to power to the detriment of one’s own good, and the abuse of economic power in order to make even greater economic gains.” (VBL, p.7)

The VBL document compares the divided life to the Biblical story of the Israelites’ worshipping “the golden calf,” in their anxiety over future prosperity, once they had been liberated from slavery in Egypt. (Exodus 32: 1-35) The VBL document recognizes that idolatry is a perennial problem, to which people easily succumb, even in modern times:

“There are many surrogates for the golden calf in modern life. They emerge when ‘the sole criterion for action in business is thought to be the maximization of profit;’ when technology is pursued for its own sake; when personal wealth or political influence fails to serve the common good; or when we appreciate only the utility of creatures and ignore their dignity. Each of these ‘golden calves’ amounts to a kind of fixation, usually accompanied by rationalization.” (VBL, p.8)

The VBL’s warning about “the divided life” clearly indicates an important convergence between CST and Confucian moral philosophy, which was always aware of the pitfalls of business success. In what follows,

we will indicate other salient resonances between these two wisdom traditions.

Part Four:

Exploring Convergences between Catholic Social Teaching and Confucian Moral Philosophy

Confucianism in the Perspective of Matteo Ricci

Ricci allied himself with those Confucian scholars who wanted to restore the teachings of the Chinese classics attributed to Confucius, namely, the *Analects*, the *Great Learning*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean*, as well as the *Mencius*. Such a restoration would cleanse Confucian teaching of all Buddhist innovations which were perceived as distortions by Matteo Ricci. He believed that these Buddhist concepts not only subverted the critical realism that Zhu Xi had advocated, but also the moral clarity of Confucian teaching, which he regarded as most resonant with the Western *philosophia perennis* of Plato and Aristotle that the Jesuits taught in the shadow of St. Thomas Aquinas. Ricci believed that a critical approach to Buddhism would result not in a narrowly materialistic agnosticism but would clarify the significance of the Lord of Heaven in grounding all that is true and good in Confucian teaching.⁹

Once the Confucian literati had been persuaded to recognize the true meaning of the Lord of Heaven, Ricci felt that the Way would be open to

⁹ It is debated whether Ricci's critique of Buddhism, is a violation of his pioneering understanding of dialogue. Historical research needs to focus on what Ricci's actual experience of Buddhism was in the early 17th century, how it was viewed by his dialogue partners among the Chinese literati, and how he understood his Christian mission in China. Ricci may have been correct in his assessment of Buddhism then, but such conclusions may not be valid in judging Chinese Buddhism today.

consider the Biblically based Gospel proclaimed by Christian missionaries, whom he felt had a clearer understanding of the Lord of Heaven and the Way, the Truth, and the Life that Jesus had revealed to humanity. The immediate task, then, in opening the Way to Christian faith and practice, was to help the Chinese focus on Confucius' authentic moral teachings, once purified of any extraneous (Buddhist and Daoist) elements that obscure them. In fact, the Christian faith was presented as the consistent framework of doctrine and life which, among other benefits, embodied key values of Confucianism especially truthfulness, integrity and basic respect.

Ricci therefore emphasized the basics in Confucian moral teaching, starting with the principle of Reciprocity (恕 *Shu*) and the Golden Rule, as these are to be observed throughout the Five Relationships (the *Wulun*), the proper understanding of which emerges from the practices of self-cultivation undertaken in each of the Five.¹⁰ Animating each of these relationships is the spirit of *Xiao* (孝 Filial Piety), first apprehended in one's own family. Since that spirit is all-too-often ignored, Confucius advocated the Rectification of Names (*Zhengming*), a Confucian approach for restoring moral clarity in each of the Five Relationships, the result of which would be a society characterized by virtuous behavior at all levels, contributing to an overall sense of social harmony.¹¹ The *Datong*, the social ideal projecting a "Great Unity," appeared in the "*Lǐyùn*" (禮運) chapter of the *Book of Rites*. It is the ultimate expression of the social significance of Confucian moral teaching, envisioning a world in which everyone is

¹⁰ Cf. Hengda Yang, "The Spiritual Principles Indispensable for the BRI Construction," in *Dialogue with China: Opportunities and Risks* (Singapore: World Scientific Press, 2022), pp.23-4. The essay originally was published in the *Macau Ricci Institute Journal*, Issue 4 (June 2019): pp.88-97.

¹¹ Hengda Yang and Dennis McCann, "The Ideal of Junzi Leadership and Education for the Common Good," in *Dialogue with China: Opportunities and Risks* (Singapore: World Scientific Press), pp.81-82. The essay originally was published in the *Macau Ricci Institute Journal*, Issue 3 (November 2018): pp.15-25.

striving to follow the Way of the *Junzi*, thus achieving the optimal level of social harmony.¹² But there are other resonances that also need to be noted:

In today's world, CST and Confucian moral philosophy agree on the centrality of the cultivation of virtue, which is clear in all forms of Confucian *Rújiā* (儒家), including contemporary discussions of the ideal of a Confucian Entrepreneur (儒商). This ideal of becoming virtuous – or, in Benjamin Franklin's words, “doing well while doing good” – is rooted in an inherently social human nature, which manifests itself in social relations. Nevertheless, some skeptics regard Confucianism as a “Monumental Ruin” (Erik Zürcher). They wonder whether it has a chance to survive in the corrupt and highly competitive world of business. To properly counter such a pessimistic view, it seems necessary to point to the profound resonance between Confucian moral philosophy and Catholic Social Teaching about the core values such as honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, filial piety etc. The risk of reducing these values to a “monumental ruin” may also derive from the fact that in the version of Confucianism the reference may have been too abstract and far away from any thought how to implement these principles. One of our Chinese students, for example, admitted that he learned quotes from the *Analects* by heart but did not really understand their meaning.

Here are some convergences that may help overcome such skepticism and discover the profound link between the core values that Confucianism and Catholic Social Teaching advocate:

Confucian quotation 儒家見解: “‘Your majesty,’ answered Mencius, ‘What is the point of mentioning the word ‘profit’? All that matters is that there should be benevolence and

¹² Hengda Yang, “The Spiritual Principles Indispensable for the BRI Construction,” pp.22-23.

righteousness.”¹³ Here we recognize a convergence with CST/VBL (共鳴): “Business leaders may be tempted, whether from self-centeredness, pride, greed or anxiety, to reduce the purpose of business solely to maximising profit, to growing market share or to any other solely material good. In this way, the good that a market economy may do, for individuals and for society, can be diminished or distorted.” (VBL, par. 12). The point is that Confucian criticism of profit-making is not a rejection of doing business as such, since there were successful businesspeople among his disciples (for example, Zi Gong), but rather a warning that profit-making so readily is corrupting, reducing its practitioners to *Xiaoren*, that is, the small-minded person contrasted with the moral leadership ideal of the *Junzi*.

Confucian quotation 儒家見解: “The Master said, ‘Hui is perhaps difficult to improve upon; he allows himself constantly to be in dire poverty. Su refuses to accept his lot and indulges in money-making and is frequently right in his conjectures.’”¹⁴ Resonance with CST/VBL (共鳴): “The Church acknowledges the legitimate role of profit as an indicator that a business is functioning well. When a firm makes a profit, it generally means that the factors of production have been properly employed and corresponding human needs have been duly satisfied.” (*Centesimus Annus*, par. 35) Zi Gong’s success suggests that it is possible to make a profit while also practicing the Way of Confucius.

¹³ Mencius, *The Mencius*, trans. D.C. Lau (London: Penguin Books, 1970) Book 1A, Number 1.

¹⁴ Confucius, *The Analects (Lunyu)*, trans. D.C. Lau (London: Penguin Books, 1979) Book XI, Number 19.

Confucian quotation 儒家見解: The Master said, ‘The gentleman (君子 *junzi*) is easy of mind, while the small man (小人 *xiaoren*) is always full of anxiety.’”¹⁵ Resonance with CST/VBL (共鳴): “Leaders in large or small firms are greatly helped by the practice of personal virtue, those life-enhancing habits and qualities of character essential to any profession.” (VBL, par. 63)

Confucian quotation 儒家見解: “The Master said, ‘The gentleman (君子 *Junzi*) is easy to serve but difficult to please. He will not be pleased unless you try to please him by following the Way (道 *Dao*), but when it comes to employing the services of others, he does so within the limits of their capacity.’”¹⁶ Resonance with CST/VBL (共鳴): Business leaders “influence larger issues such as international regulations, anti-corruption practices, transparency, taxation policies, and environmental and labour standards. They should use this influence, individually and collectively, to promote human dignity and the common good and not merely the particular interest of any one stakeholder.” (VBL, par. 77) Demonstrating leadership by exercising social responsibilities is an ideal common to both traditions.

Confucian quotation 儒家見解: “Confucius said, ‘A man has no way of becoming a gentleman (君子 *Junzi*) unless he understands Destiny (命 *Ming*); he has no way of taking his stand unless he understands the rites (禮 *Li*)....’”¹⁷ Resonance with CST/VBL (共鳴): “To live out their vocation as faithful stewards to their calling, businesspeople need to be formed in a familial and religious culture

¹⁵ Confucius, *The Analects (Lunyu)*, Book VII, Number 37.

¹⁶ Confucius, *The Analects (Lunyu)*, Book XIII, Number 25.

¹⁷ Confucius, *The Analects (Lunyu)*, Book XX, Chapter 3.

that shows them the possibilities and promise of the good they can do and ought to do – the good that is distinctively theirs.” (VBL, par. 87) The Way is knowable in both traditions.

Assessing Convergences and Divergences

Like Pope Francis in our own time, Matteo Ricci knew that convergences or resonances would not be enough to secure recognition of their Master, Jesus Christ. Divergences would have to be acknowledged in dialogue, if only to achieve clarity about where each party stood, and what challenges each would have to face. Confucian teaching within the Ricci Paradigm is not to be identified with CST, as if they were really saying the same thing. If that were true, the Jesuit mission that Ricci and his followers represent would be superfluous. Ricci hoped to clarify the true meaning of “the Lord of Heaven” (天主, *Tianzhu*), a term that he and Michele Ruggieri coined to distinguish their vision from Chinese references to *Tiān* (天, “Heaven”) and *Shàngdì* (上帝, “Supreme Emperor”). *Tianzhu* was emphatically personal and involved in the affairs of this world (unlike *Tiān*); on the other hand, *Shàngdì* was perhaps too personal, too easily confused with the all-too-human Emperor of China. *Tianzhu*, then, was an attempt to acknowledge convergences as well as divergences.

The dialogues through which Ricci and his followers attempted to present their case to the Confucian literati, as recorded in *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (*Tiānzhu Shíyì* 天主實義), could only go so far. Ricci appealed to reason, critical reflection on common human experience and the assured conclusions of sciences, as needed, to open the minds of his dialogue partners. If the dialogue succeeded in creating a common ground for further sharing, the Way forward toward a discussion of Christian claims about Biblical revelation and the Heavenly mission of Jesus Christ would be open. This is clear from the last of the eight dialogue chapters in the

Tiānzhǔ Shìyì.¹⁸ The possibility of conversion, Christian faith and baptism, remain open at the end, but their threshold is not crossed in this book. Nevertheless, what Ricci established through his appreciation of Chinese moral philosophy, and its sincerity in following the Way, is common ground enabling further dialogue between Confucianism and CST.

Part Five: Converging Insights

Pope Francis' contribution to CST with *Evangelii Gaudium*, *Laudato Si' and Fratelli Tutti*

CST appears to have crossed another important threshold under Pope Francis' stewardship. Having first evolved as a tradition marked by the publication of encyclicals and other key documents, CST risked becoming another cottage industry for academics who would study these to discern any changes in Vatican policy toward the great issues facing humanity. Such study might yield some intellectual *tour de force* that in turn would provoke still further developments in the tradition. We have already noted one major change in CST, the shift from a diachronic to a synchronic understanding of the tradition. The *Compendium*, as we noted, is systematic in a way that the series of encyclicals in the tradition of *Rerum Novarum* is not. The documents after *Rerum Novarum* were meant to update CST and its applications to contemporary events, but only the *Compendium* dared to offer a systematic presentation and explanation of its principles. There is a timelessness to the *Compendium*, as if it were meant to set the terms for any future interpretation of CST.

¹⁸ Matteo Ricci (1603), *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, pp.335-373.

But Pope Francis' statements imply that something is missing, something even more important than systematic presentation. Clearly, Pope Francis is not the only Pope in the history of CST to appreciate the importance of spirituality, that is, the cultivation of interiority that must animate and inspire anyone who would take the instructions of CST seriously. In his letters, especially if one starts with *Evangelii Gaudium*, the question of interiority and its cultivation seems foregrounded. Spiritual convergence, what he described as “harmony” in his statement on interreligious dialogue in Mongolia, is the one thing necessary, if the aspirations toward social justice and peace nowadays heard from so many different religious leaders is to take hold and bear fruit in transformative action. An inkling of the “harmony” that Pope Francis seeks is clearly present in the Confucian ideal of the *Dào* (道), the object of the *Junzi*'s practice of self-cultivation, which becomes the basis for his hope that CST and Confucian moral philosophy can work together to make progress on environmental issues and other pressing social questions.

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【摘要】 本文主要關注利瑪竇的精神世界和對話：利瑪竇，一位無疆的行者游刃文化、哲學、靈性及自然科學。本文從現代華人境況的角度來看這個精神世界，以深入詮釋最重要的天主教社會理論的概念和案例：比如共同價值觀的理論、消費者運動、公平勞動境況、尊敬所有利益相關者的利益，信任與可靠度的關鍵選擇、反腐敗。按利瑪竇的精神，今天天主教社會理論在華人境況中，必定能指出從經濟發展到可持續經濟發展的方向。