

Challenges of globalization: how to live and transmit the faith

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(I)

Introduction: a present-day phenomenon in time and space.

The major challenge in reflecting upon globalization is the fact that is very much a present-day, in time and space. We are not dealing with past events, but facts that challenge our understanding, without, however allowing us to influence them, change their course, or sow values. What we call globalization on the contrary, is a phenomenon that we are experiencing, and that affects all of us regardless of nationality, belief or lifestyle.

This proximity to the phenomenon has advantages and disadvantages. As regards the disadvantages, the major one is the dynamism proper to the phenomenon, which is changing every day, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. Beside this we can add the difficulty of obtaining a global vision, resulting in our analyses being only partial, incomplete, and needing confrontation with other analyses. Finally since we are dealing with a reality in which we are inserted and with which we are interacting, our analysis demands an existential involvement. When we talk about globalization, we are, in a certain manner, talking about our life, our projects, our options and ourselves. In this case, the risk of an analysis marked by emotions and passions originating in personal experiences is equally big.

However the difficulties of analysis does not exempt is from the challenge of trying to understand what is happening in the world in which we are immersed. The understanding, that is, the exercise of our reason, is inherent to our being human and to refuse it is to leave aside an essential part of ourselves. Also, when we broaden our horizons and use faith as the criterion of action, we perceive that the Gospel in virtue of the principle of the Incarnation unceasingly calls on us to make an effort to understand the reality that surrounds us. From this arises the challenge of understanding globalization. Hence the vast amount of material available and the different approaches and readings of the phenomenon

My point of view

To reflect on globalization it is necessary to choose one approach. To be consistent with what I mentioned at the beginning of this paper, I cannot hope to touch all prisms, because today no one has the possibility of knowing everything, or of being familiar with all the sciences. I choose, therefore, to speak of globalization from the viewpoint of theology. I do this for two reasons: the first is related to the request made to me by the organizers of the Congress, that is to reflect on globalization and Faith. The second reason is connected with my personal and pastoral experience. I am not a sociologist, an economist or an historian. I try to study some theology, and at present am reflecting on the specificity of the God of Revelation regarding the different socio-cultural contexts present in today's world and especially the severely challenging urban context.

With this, I believe I have presented the presuppositions of this reflection. I hope to reflect theologically in respect of this moment in human history that we call globalization. I will, of course, have to take into account political, social and economic aspects to which I will have to refer. I will try to concentrate on the theological dimension, to raise pastoral questions. To do this, I am going to utilize a well known pedagogical method. I will present my ideas with strong emphasis on certain

aspects, perhaps creating an impression that the reality is as clear and as explicit as the observations and conclusions that I intend to present.

(II)

What is globalization: terminological difficulties and metaphors.

There are many theories that try to explain globalization in its origin, relations and consequences. All of them try to understand the configurations, the rhythms and the challenges of the today's society. Being a phenomenon very close to us in time, and with a high rate of change, globalization is usually represented through metaphors and oscillations in terminology¹. The best known metaphors are: global village, global factory, spaceship, new Babel, third wave, global shopping center, global city, global Disneyland, world without frontiers, the end of geography, the end of history. We could present many other examples. The bibliography in this respect is huge and easily accessible². Terms most commonly used, apart from globalization itself, are mundialization or planetarization. In the case of metaphors, the use is much wider. Regarding terminology the tendency has been to consecrate the use of the term globalization, as has in fact happened. In each metaphor and in each term used we perceive the presence of some characteristics of the phenomenon, so that, inductively, the understanding of the phenomenon is built up, as well as the evident interaction with it.

Beyond the details, what is important to emphasize here is exactly the fact that we are trying to describe the phenomenon through terminological reinforcement, metaphors, figures, comparisons and similar means. We know that these resources arise when the categories used to understand, explain and interact with the reality become incapable of realizing this mission. This is an important fact to emphasize: we are facing a new moment in human history, characterized not only by the redrawing of the map of the world but also by new relations that affect every ambit of human life, in an intricate articulation, so that one cannot reflect on this or that aspect in isolation, without, at least in a tenuous way, connecting with all that is happening in the world. Authors indicate that life has become globalized in such a way, that the terrestrial globe has ceased to be simply an object of astronomical interest, and has acquired a full historical-social meaning³. The most significant example is without doubt regarding the possibilities of communication and information opened up by the computer technology. Today, in allowing this process to occur, without obstacles from states or ideologies, everyone is capable of knowing everything regarding everyone.

The fact is that our planet is experiencing a new manner of being, based on accelerated processes, still being developed. These processes affect the principle dimensions of the life of persons and peoples because they imply economic, political, social and cultural recomposition. Is a matter of a deep and wide productive restructuring articulated with the process of the restructuring of society and ethic-cultural reconfiguration. It is a process deeply rooted in information technology, and one that offers daily more and more possibility of contact with new ideas and methods.

(III)

A new moment of capitalism

¹ DREIFUSS, R. A., *A época da perplexidades. Mundialização, globalização e planetarização: novos desafios*, Petropolis: Voces, 1996, 136ss

² cf. ORTIZ, R. *Mundialização e Cultura*, São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1994, 14

³ IANNI, °, *Teorias da Globalização*, Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, (4) 1997, 14

Trying to establish objectives and deep referential points in order to understand this phenomenon, scholars do not hesitate to affirm that we are before a transformation that has occurred in capitalism, which has entered into a process that goes beyond all frontiers: geographic, national, ethnic and ideological, involving in some way all other forms of human organization with special emphasis on the social, political and cultural aspects⁴. If on the one hand, there exists in the essence of capitalism a certain tendency to go beyond the frontiers, on the other hand what we saw in the pre-globalization era was a certain level of respect for the different kinds of frontiers mentioned. In globalization, capital is dissolving all kinds of frontiers so that the market may be favoured and the consumer society be expanded infinitely.

A consequence more immediately visible is in regard to the economic aspect. We perceive the development of what we may call a global economy, globalized or universal, for which national economies, be they what they may, end up being transformed into a type of portion of this economy. For sure all of us have stories to tell. They are examples taken from our pastoral experience which express the incapacity of the local economies to survive for long time without insertion into the global processes. These establish a sort of ceiling for local economies, which, depending on their degree of autonomy and solidity, may push the ceiling a little higher. We are unable to perceive that anyone has effectively avoided or overcome this, on the structural level.

Other transformations

Interacting with this process, we can perceive a parallel transformation of the principle concepts that make possible the meaning of personal and social existence. For example the concept of “space” assumes a new configuration, becoming universalized, planetary. Similar alterations occur with time, which becomes more accelerated. In fact we can affirm that there exists a directly proportional relationship between the acceleration of the rhythms of time and insertion in the processes of the planetarized economy. In globalization, time never stops. It is just necessary to remember the rupture of the traditional and geophysical limits between night and day. The important thing is to be inserted in the network, communicating, making business deals. If it is midday in Rio de Janeiro it will be night in Tokyo. This chronological distinction, however does not overrule the imperious necessity of doing business.

So when we face new configurations in concepts as essential as, for example, time and space, or at least when the common content do not satisfy us fully, it is impossible to avoid recognizing that we are facing a new historic, social, and cultural moment. The present moment, which challenges us so much, presents a characteristic which calls our attention, and which refers to the hegemony of the market and the reduction in importance of other sectors of personal and social life. Some would even use the term “submission”.

So we are talking not only about the universalization of information, but also and above all, the globalization of a certain way of being, the way of the market. We are facing the informatization and the mercantalization of social forms in general, a process that goes beyond all the frontiers that were up to now considered as reference points, whether they be physical, political, social or cultural. Although the process is still developing, which makes it more difficult to treat the subject with a large degree of objectivity, it is already possible to indicate some of its main characteristics.

The supremacy of the *economic factor* over other sectors of human and social life has become more acute, so that life as a whole tends to be organized, based on the maximum use of the instrumental reason and of technology, starting from the principles of productivity, profit and

⁴ Idem, 17

quantity⁵. One notes a certain weakening of *political* power as such, which not rarely falls under the domination of the economic power, and loses a lot of its capacity to influence events.. The Nation-State, typical of previous historical epochs, not only is redefined, but loses some of its economic, political, cultural and social prerogatives, weakening its governing power.⁶ Also, the exercise of government itself, in the measure that the economic-technological basis predominates, tends to lose all controls that don't specifically come from the economic and technological spheres, rejecting political control with effective social goals and more specific ethics⁷.

From the *cultural* point of view, the physical “planetaryisation” is articulated with a certain cultural globalization, because all that composes the cultural references tends to be universalized, non-territorial and, consequently, also to be rootless. If, on the one hand, people and groups have the chance of easy access to information, on the other, not only do they face difficulties regarding the criteria for the evaluation and discernment of the facts, but they are also continually bombarded by contradictory and disparate interpretations, in generally at the service of the economic and technological orders, connected to production and sustained by efficient work of the media. A certain diminishing occurs of the references coming from reality, replaced by ones originating in virtual reality. This way, in globalized contexts, the problem of the cultural industry is accentuated, with the expansion of the means of mass communication and the production of an international-popular type culture⁸.

At the same time, we can verify that such global processes, articulated with the breaking of reference structures, and also tend to prejudice the appearance of other sufficiently coded, firmly rooted referentials. This happens because the recognition of universal concepts capable of expressing and articulating ways of being and thinking is made more difficult⁹. They appear, then, as diverse particular references which, in their turn, become considered universal. As a reaction, nationalisms and nationalities, ideologies, and utopias, the ethnic groups and historical-racial markers, such as religions, languages and dialects, tend to revive strongly and antagonically, generating, on the hand, postures of a fundamentalist tendency from those who defend them, and, on the other hand, taken up in a folkloric way by globalized groups, that is, they become consumer objects, without being able to be questioned. In such contexts, regional identities and national singularities evidently continue to exist and act. Persons and peoples continue to present their singularities and peculiarities, fruits of their lived history and also visibly stamped on the physical structures. However, the degree of autonomy in all basic relationships of human life no longer belongs to them. What begins to prevail, and to present itself as the, constitutive and determining basis is the global culture in which the economic rationale becomes general, becoming the basis for actions, relationships and structures.

With this, there emerges a cultural horizon that is not only diversified and pluralistic, but also in constant and rapid movement, with the possibility even of internal opposition and without the concern of searching for unity. Thus, in the same space, diverse cultural situations may exist¹⁰.

⁵ Concerning the pressure of the economic on the other instances, especially the social, cf.: **FORRESTER**, V – *O horror economico*, São Paulo: UNSEP, 1997

⁶ cf.: **HIRST**, P. & **THOMPSON**, G. – *Globalização em questão. A economia internacional e as possibilidades de governabilidade*, Petropolis: Vozes, 1998, 263ss, where the authors, after they present a brief one historical of State Nations's formation, they present the characteristics of globalization and its effects in the government's of the States-nation capacity.

And: **CASTEL**, Robert – *As metamorfoses da questão social. Uma cronica do salario*, Petropolis, Vozes, 1998, 281s

⁷ cf.: **SASSEN**, S – *As ciasdes na economia mundial*, São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1998

⁸ cf.: **ORTIZ**, R. – *A moderna tradição brasileira (cultura brasileira e Industria Cultural)*, São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1998;

MATTELARD, A – *As multinacionais da Cultura*, Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1976; **IDEM** – *L'internationale Publicitaire*, Paris: La Decouverte, 1989

⁹ **MARDONES**, J. M. – *Postmodernidad y cristianismo. El desafío Del fragmento*, Santar: Sal Terrae, 1988, 59-64

¹⁰ cf.: **GIDDENS**, A – *As conseqüências da modernidade...*, 122ss

On the one hand, there appears a type of cultural broth deeply linked to the consumption of goods. On the other, we meet several forms that are reacting to this cultural broth, either by welcoming it with passivity, or by reacting and affirming other types of behaviour. This process brings within itself a strong dose of ambiguity. On the one hand, there is no doubt that, in permitting the freeing of the referential horizons, be they social or mental, it opens new and different angles for the explanation of reality. On the other, though, it tends to leave individuals and groups in a constant process of mutation and in an acute search for referentials, that ends up by making extremely attractive and acceptable referentials that are more immediate and concrete.

In this perspective, the basis is being built on which the individualism emerges as the criterion for then understanding of the totality, which becomes taken on and assumed and confronted predominantly from the starting point of the individual conscience that is detached from its basic objective reference elements. In this way, in face of such a changing and transforming diversity, individuals and groups, because they cannot live without an agglutinating reference, find it in the “ I”, either individual or group, which becomes the practically definitive criterion for existential postures¹¹.

(IV)

Theological-pastoral Challenges

Globalization brings countless challenges, whose amount is directly proportional to the extent of the phenomenon. Theology cannot flee from such challenges, as it treats of salvation, the deepest realization of all humanity. Because of the Gospel, in which we find as essential element the dynamism of the Incarnation, everything regarding human beings in their historical journeying, should be taken up by theology. And it must do so it starting from its central point, from its identity. As a science that is dedicated to reflection about salvation, Theology is called to consider in which way the historical reality that we opt to call globalization is inserted in the revealed process of salvation and what this same salvific process has to say to globalization. It is clear that Theology does not omit to make pronouncements, for example, about life, especially when life is threatened. After all, if the nucleus of the Gospel is the Resurrection, then it is because the death is not the last word regarding persons and peoples. The last word is always that of life.

However, the theological word becomes even more a word of life when it assumes a specific relationship with human history a specific relationship, one of questioning. Among the richness of the Christian message is that articulating incarnation and eschatology, immersing itself in human history and questioning the same history. The Scriptures are full of quotations that could illustrate well this aspect. But they are unnecessary, not only because they are well know to us, but also because this fertile articulation between an entering in to history and a distancing of itself from it is not just part of this or that section of the Christian message, but of all Christianity. If, on the one hand, the Gospel, in order to be transmitted, takes on cultures, on the other, it cannot completely identify itself with any culture. On the contrary it has to critically dissociate itself from all cultures, identifying what each has which is salvific and what is contrary to Revelation, because the proclamation of the Gospel brings in itself an irrenouncible questioning attitude, without which it loses its identity.

This articulation between the incarnational and eschatological asks the Church for a constant service of questioning and this service is carried out through an attitude of counterweight, where, in

¹¹ cf.: LIPOVETSKY, G. – *La era del vacío. Ensayos sobre el individualismo contemporáneo*, Barcelona: Anagrama 1986, 105ss; VELHO, G. – *Individualismo e Cultura. Notas para uma Antropologia da sociedade Contemporânea*, Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 3ª ed, 1994, 13-54

order not to let history stagnate in certain moments and situations, the opposite attitude must be assumed with all vigour by pastoral action. Now, to the extent that the current moment of human history carries within itself a structural tendency to embrace everything, involving the most diverse instances and realities in only one project, which is the market of the market, it seems a healthy orientation for us to go back a little bit to the eschatological dimension of the Christian message, as a strong questioning force of all the historical proposals which tend to have their end in themselves. In this sense, is the function of evangelizing activity not to let die certain questions, which should be continuously repeated. For example:

- ✍✍ Is it not a real risk to allow the globalized mentality to have attributed to it the characteristic of being the only existent mentality?
- ✍✍ Can Theology and Pastoral Ministry not question the way of thinking and to exist in which everything is valued as merchandise, as an object of consumption?
- ✍✍ Is it possible in the proclamation of the Gospel to accept that even God becomes a kind of merchandise to be consumed in accordance with the needs of the moment?
- ✍✍ Is there not something to be said, regarding what has been verified in several parts of the world, especially in the more urbanized ones, with the appearance, in the religious environment, of the self-proclaimed “agencies of divine cure”, where the efficacy of the encounter with God is measured only by being inserted perfectly into the consumer mechanisms?

The fact is that the current moment of globalization of the economy and of other instances of life demands an eschatological-questioning attitude on the part of theology and of pastoral ministry. It is clear that we do not intend to reject the incarnational dimension. On the contrary, the true questioning comes from the deepest foundations and these are reached only through an effective incarnation. That is why, it is necessary to be immersed in the globalized world, to understand it and to interact with it, discerning the values of the Kingdom of God, as affirmed previously. Here appears in all its importance the thinking of Pope John Paul II, presented to the members of the Papal Academy of Social Sciences, in April of 2001. Whoever knows the text will remember what the Holy Father said:

"Globalization, *a priori*, is neither good nor bad. It will be what people make of it. No system is an end in itself and it is necessary to insist that globalization, like any other system, must be at the service of the human person; it must serve solidarity and the common good".

This is the theological reason for why the Holy Father, not just in the speech to the members of the Papal Academy of Social Sciences, but also on another occasions, has insisted so much on the human person as an irrenouncible criterion for judging any society, any culture. This service to the human person demands from Theology and from pastoral ministry some quite concrete attitudes. At first glance, they may seem distant or even idyllic. However, contact with the Gospel, on the one hand, and with globalized reality and its consequences, on the other, show that we are dealing with something vital for each human being, Christian or not.

In fact, the world has experienced an intense moment of “immanentization” of utopias. In a word, I don’t believe that we are living a time of lack of utopias. On the contrary, I believe that utopias are very much alive among the peoples, societies and cultures marked by globalization. What has been happening in the world can be characterized as an alteration in the contents of the utopias, which ceased to be trans-historical, to become more and more immanent. If, before, we thought about eternal life, salvation of the soul or some other non religious utopia but which was tuned to the future, now, in the places marked by globalization, what matters is the life here, with a strong accent on the corporal and the material. This immanentization of existential goals has

affected even religious preaching. Hence the importance of a theological and pastoral attitude of reaffirming the transcendental.

Is clear that such a statement does not mean, in the style a style of a pendulum reaction, to establish a theology and a pastoral practice that ignore the dynamics and human experience regarding globalization. I wish to recall the importance of the incarnational commitment. I reiterate the importance of assuming human history with its shortcomings and values. But – I repeat – it must be said to history that it does not have the last word. This principle is clear and urgent. Is important to discern how to put it into practice and to this end, some aspects that have been strongly accentuated.

(V)

Pastoral challenges

a) Separation of the aspects:

The first of these aspects is related to the fact that globalization, as an economic, political, social and cultural, structure, tends to shape all reality, as if the globalized style were the only way of living. If, on the one hand, it is inevitable that a part of globalization will exist, on the other, nor everything that globalization presents can be accepted without questioning¹². Inevitable, for example, is the advance of technology and irrefutable are the conquests of information technology. Questionable, however, is the fact that this technological progress has being utilized predominantly from the point of view of the market, and that its human and social price has been very high. That is why the first function of theological reflection and of pastoral practice consists in separating the diverse aspects of globalization, which, in day-to-day life, appear together. Technical globalization is one thing, ethical globalization another. If the world today, repeating the metaphor of Mc. Luhan, is a global village, in the sense that everybody possesses the technological possibility of communicating, that does not mean that the cosmovision that comes with this stage of technology can be accepted pacifically. Between technology and ethics a significant distance exists and it is this distance that should be emphasized.

The Gospel does not simply lead us to reject technology just because is technology. In the name of the salvation brought by Jesus Christ, we cannot preach an attitude of escape from history, with disincarnated programmes, not committed to and detached from the rest of human life. Christian salvation is not reached through ghettos, as experience separated from history. What the Gospel requests us to do is to have discernment on the use the technology. The Gospel, however, is situated in a more ethical dimension, asking and making us ask: at the service of whom do we place all this technological progress?

When we identify, without more ado, these two aspects of globalization, the technical and the ethical, we run a high risk of attributing to it an excessive degree of inexorability, of definitivity and, consequently, of reduced eschatology. Even if the official treatises do not say so clearly, we are faced with a sacralization, although tacit, of a period of the history. For sure, this tendency to sacralize the present is not a privilege of the current globalized moment. However, as we are living in it, it is for it that our attention should be turned.

b) Affirmation of gratuity:

¹² cf.: AGOSTINI, N. – *Ética cristã e desafios atuais*, Petrópolis: Vozes, 2002, 244ss

In second place, let us remember that globalization, as an ample process, brings in itself a certain world vision, that we can call the *mentality of the cause-and-effect*, for which the sum of the existent relationships in the totality of the life is seen as retribution in same coin. There are several examples of this mentality, but some can be cited because we meet them everyday. They are exactly the multitudes of the excluded because they are not part of the productivity processes, that is, they don't present the cause (= they don't participate in the market) and, as consequence, they cannot use of its benefits (= the social benefits)¹³.

Another very practical example of this cause-and-effect mentality shows up in the vindictive attitudes at several levels, often disguised under the name of justice, when, actually, what one wants is punishment and revenge. And I don't just refer to the Septmeber 11th *syndrome 11*, but to a certain way of talking found with a certain facility in daily life and which silently defends the extermination groups of the peripheries of the big cities, that defends openly the death penalty without questioning the possibility of a reintegrative prison system, as indicated by the Gospel which separates sin and sinner and gives a chance for conversion to the latter.

Reality cannot be questioned if the effectiveness of the opposite approach is not shown, and the opposite of the cause-and-effect mentality, in Gospel terms is, without doubt, gratuity. Such is its importance that we can affirm that the identity of the Gospel passes through the attitude of gratuity. It is gratuity that gives meaning to creation, and to incarnation. It is by gratuity that we understand the life of Jesus with its actions, curing and welcoming of those marginalized by the legalist mentality of cause-and-effect. It is through gratuity that we also understand Jesus' words, recommending, for example, to give freely what we received gratuitously (Mt 10,8), or to love enemies and bless those who persecute (Mt 6,38-47). What is to be said of the parable of the workers in the vineyard, at whose conclusion Jesus indicates that the last ones will be the first and the first will be the last (Mt 20,1-11)?

Unfortunately frequently when we mention the criterion of *gratuity*, we are accused of being naive, unrealistic, dreamers. What is disturbing, in these cases, is exactly the dissonance between this radical principle of the Gospel and the globalized mentality. The problem seems not to be that of a combative reaction, but of an indifference that comes from the inability to find meeting points for dialogue between technological-marketing efficacy and evangelical gratuity. We live a little of what St. Paul found in Athens when preaching about the Resurrection (At.17,32). So great is the distance among the criteria for reading reality that the reaction is not even one of questioning, but only one of not considering seriously what is being presented.

IT is clear that I am, as I said at the beginning of this presentation, using a pedagogic resource that reduces nuances and accentuates centralities, because the dissatisfaction in face of the utilitarian criteria is present in different sectors of the globalized human life. Many have been the efforts and the initiatives in seeking a different style of thinking, acting and living. The important thing is to accentuate the need to make more explicit this process, through evangelizing action. The only way of speaking to an unbelieving areópagos, of yesterday or today, or of any time or place, it through witness. We know that giving witness means to realizing concrete experiences that demonstrate the possibility, the reality of what you want to transmit. And, if we want to proclaim gratuity, we are called to testify clear attitudes of gratuity, demonstrating that it is possible to be lived out. And, there, experiences are many and you know them much better than me.

¹³ cf.: **WACQUANT, L.** – *Les prisons de la misère*, Paris: Raisons d'Ágir, 1999, work in which the urban violence in Europe and in United States is analyzed, focusing the attention predominantly on the view of policemen and penitentiaries, as detrimental to a more social prospective one.; **IDEM**, *Punir os pobres: a nova gestão da miseria nos Estados Unidos*, Rio de Janeiro: Freitas Bastos, 2001, 99-112

It is important to highlight that the living out and the transmission of faith in a globalized world passes through, among other aspects, the testimony of lives built on gratuity, where the criteria of profit, of gain, of enrichment are subordinated to the primacy of coexistence and fraternity. I recall some examples that stand out not just in history of humanity and of the Church, but also in recent times and which, without fear of exaggerating, I see as signs of the Spirit amidst a complex reality. I refer, for example, to the volunteer movement, with its ups and down, whose silent efforts have helped so many people and which our Church motivates so well. The volunteer movement is an excellent school of gratuity. In this voluntary work, I highlight, as another example, those that specifically take care of people and situations of acute exclusion, giving them a human and personal touch. I reiterate the validity of work with the poor masses that no longer just exist only in the cities and peripheries, but that circulate in the great city which the whole world is becoming, as for example, the city of São Paulo found out with the new problem of street dwellers originating in other South American countries..

Is clear that one is not going to transform such an intense historical process in a short time, even less with small localized experiences. However, before the lack of clarity regarding other directions, it is by the testimonial affirmation of criteria different from the predominant ones, that history will be kept open to the future.

c) God of the market?

Finally, is necessary to remember that the phenomenon of globalization, in the measure that it reaches all the sectors of personal and social life, doesn't leave out the religious aspect. On the contrary, as it tends to submit and recycle everything according to its axes of understanding, the phenomenon of globalization does the same with the religious dimension. Here is one of the great current challenges for theology and for pastoral ministry. When we speak about globalization, the tendency is always to treat only of the aspects more related to social justice. Such an attitude is not wrong. It is incomplete. It is not wrong because goes back to aspects more directly related with economic predominance and with the social consequences. It is, though, incomplete because it runs the risk of not noticing that the spreading out of the market also ends up addressing concepts of God and relationships springing from this.

Although, through varied nuances, what we see today it is an emergent concept of God as an immediate, fast and magic solution to the problems of imminence.. In other words what is not supplied by the market, we expect God to supply. And so, we invest in a religious practice of cause-and-effect. If, on the one hand, the mechanisms of exchange with the divinity are not a privilege of our globalized time, on the other, the current supremacy and almost exclusiveness of this approach is a fact to which our attention should be called, because, transcending religious frontiers, everything tends to recycle. It is enough to bear in mind that many of the religious proposals of our globalized world are characterized exactly by the promise of patrimonial and/or affective success. Now, what is this if not the immanentization of the utopias?

It is interesting to note that this consumer image of God is not limited to this or that social class. As it is transconfessional, it is also transclass. In this last case, the differences refer much more to how rites and aesthetic elements are configured than to content and behavioural norms. Unfortunately, a good part of the sympathizers of and participants in this kind of religious proposal end up being the masses impoverished by the processes of globalization. And that causes more anguish. Is there nothing left for our impoverished masses other than submission to hope for miracles, which, maintaining the primacy of the market, ratify the cause-and-effect mentality, taking very often exactly what the poorest possess to live? Hurt the poorest in the name of God? Injure the name of God on behalf of the market?