JESUS CHRIST AS COMMUNICATOR: 
A Biblical Perspective
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If we look in the Bible for a model of communication, the image of Paul, the “great apostle,” evangelizer, preacher and writer, might come first to the mind. If we are particularly concerned with the spirituality of communication, it is again Paul who may hold our interest since his letters often turn into an exposition of what drives him on, the power of the Good News, “power of God for salvation of every one who believes” (Rom 1:16). But Paul himself invites us to look beyond him. He does not want to know anything but Christ and him crucified (1 Cor 2:2). He puts above everything “the supreme good of knowing Christ Jesus (the) Lord... to know him and the power of his Resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings” (Phil 3:8.10).

In a particularly revealing verse he opens for us the heart of his message, of his ministry and of his life: “the love of Christ impels us” (2 Cor 5:14). The “love of Christ” should be properly understood. In view of the context, Paul does not speak of the love he has for Christ but of the love that Christ has and embodies, the love that made him to give his life for all. That love motivated Christ and, through the gift of the Spirit, it has taken possession of Paul. It is that divine love abiding in Christ which has Paul in its grip and drives him on his way.

Following his invitation, we better go therefore to the heart of Paul, to Christ as the vital source of the power of communication. For the sake of clarity and of comprehensiveness, we may follow a classical approach to the mystery of Christ and look at him as communicator from the viewpoint of what theologians call High and Low Christology, or, too put it in simpler terms, in terms of Christ, the Word, sum total of communication, issuing from the Trinity, and of Jesus, the Galilean from Nazareth, who proclaimed the Message in words and deeds, life and death.

Part I. Christ the Word and Communication

“High Christology” or “Christology from above” approaches Christ from a Trinitarian perspective. This is what John does when, in the Prologue of his Gospel, he introduces Christ as Logos (Word) coming forth from God (1:1-14). The perspective is interesting since the Logos refers evidently to language and language is communication. From this angle, it can be said that Christ, the logos is the archetype of communication. To follow this line we can have no better guide than the meditation of Pope Benedict XVI on Jn 1 in the beginning of the Pastoral Exhortation Verbum Domini in which he synthesized the input of the 2008 Synod on The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church.¹

I . The God who speaks

The title given to the first part of the Exhortation is significant: “The God who speaks.” Unlike religions which relate with the divine through visual experience, either physical (statues, paintings) or intellectual (Greek theoria, hindu darshana), the biblical God is “truly a hidden God” (Is 45:15; cf Is 8:17). The Bible in general puts a particular emphasis on the impossibility of seeing God. The invisible God manifests himself rather by his Word. Such is the case for instance of God’s manifestation to Moses in the desert (Ex 3) and to Israel on Sinai (Ex 34). Typically the Holy of Holies of the desert Tabernacle or of the Jerusalem Temple did not contain a divine image but the tables of the Law, the Ten Words (Ex 25:16; 40:20). In the narratives of prophetical vocation also, the divine description is minimized (Is 6:1: “the edge of his garment”); relativized (Ez 1:26: “the appearance of the similitude”) or totally absent (Jer 1:4; Is 40:1). Communication with God is through his Word. John the evangelist has put it in a terse way:

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“God no one has seen; the only Son, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known” (Jn 1:18). As St Paul says: “faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes from the word of Christ” (Rom 10:17). But how does God speaks to us? Echoing the Instrumentum Laboris, and following the lead of Jn 1, the Holy Father speaks of a “symphony of the Word,” of a “polyphonic hymn” (VD 7).

1. Voice of creation: “All things came into being through him and without him nothing came to be” (Jn 1:3). “The liber naturae is an essential part of the symphony of many voices in which the one Word is spoken” (VD 7). Cf Ps 19:1-4:

“The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard. Their voice has gone out through all the earth, and their utterances to the end of the world."

The climax of creation is the human being, climax of Creation through “the precious gifts received from the Creator: the value of the body, the gift of reason, freedom of conscience”, the ability to find and abide by the natural law (VD 9).

2. Voice of salvation history: “he came into his own but his own received him not” (Jn 1:10-11): “It is beautiful to see how the entire OT already appears to us as a history in which God communicates his word… He revealed himself in words and deeds as the one living and true God.” A rapid survey of the Old Testament outlines the main stages of the history through which God communicates his word in the promises made to Abraham, the covenant given through Moses, and the ongoing voice of the prophets (VD 11). Pope John Paul II gives universal perspectives to salvation history when he says: “The Spirit’s presence and activity affect not only individuals but also society and history, peoples, cultures and religions.”

3. Voice of Incarnation: God’s self manifestation in his Word reaches a climax when the Word becomes flesh (Jn 1:14). It is a “Christology of the Word” which the Pope presents in a poetical way:

In this symphony (of the Word), “one finds at a certain point, what could be called in musical terms a ‘solo,’ a theme entrusted to a single instrument or voice which is so important that the meaning of the entire work depends on it. This ‘solo’ is Jesus. The Son of Man recapitulates in himself earth and heaven, creation and the Creator, flesh and Spirit. He is the centre of cosmos and of history (VD 13).

4. Voice of the Scriptures The voice of God in the Scriptures is to be viewed in this context. They relay the “words” of Christ, prepared by the Prophets and witnessed by the apostolic Church in written form under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As the Fathers of the Church have put it, the Scriptures represent a kind of Incarnation in which the Word became book in the Scriptures as it became flesh in Jesus-Christ (VD 18). Pope Benedict illustrates this with a quotation of St Gregory:

The body of the Son is the Scripture which we have received… The words of God, expressed in human language, are in every way like human speech, just as the word of the eternal Father, when he took upon himself the weak flesh of human beings, became like them.

5. Voice of Church: A christology of the Word opens on a ecclesiology of the Word: “This is due to the fact that God’s self-communication always involves the relationship of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, whom Irenaeus of Lyon refers to as “the two hands of the Father”” (15). The Spirit who inspires the Sacred Scriptures continues to guide
the believer and the Church in their interpretation. In this connection the Document of the Biblical Commission on *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* recalls the words of Jesus:

> The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name-- he will teach you everything and remind you of all that (I) told you” (Jn 14:26) and again, “I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming” (Jn 16:12-13).

Through the Spirit, the living tradition of the Church “enables the Church to grow through time in understanding the truth revealed in the Scriptures” (*VD* 17).

II. Reflections

This Theology of the Word may lead to a few pastoral reflections on Communication.

1. Communication as expression of divine Logos

Viewed in this perspective, Communication does not belong to the secondary field of “practical applications,” of mere techniques or savoir-faire. Communication means sharing the Word. It is “Word”, *logos*, a term which is rich in philosophical and theological implications.

As human language, the *logos* is no mere abstract principle of intelligibility in the Platonic sense of the term. As authentic language, it is the mould in which is cast and shaped what human beings express have in their minds, hearts and will. It carries and brings into existence their visions and creations, relate to each other in joy, sorrow, aspirations, and purposes. *Logos* is language of which Heidegger said that “it is the house of Being.”

The Bible puts it in simple terms. In the Garden of Eden, Adam is surrounded by animals as one among them. But there is a difference: Adam can give them a name. At His own image and likeness, God has given him his *logos*. He has entrusted Adam with language, with a capacity to name, understand, to put things in order and thereby to control and to exercise a creative management: “See, I give you every plant... and the animals... Have dominion over... them (Gen 2:19; 1:28-29). It is highly significant that, to reveal His identity and interact with the human being He had created, the God of Israel and of Jesus-Christ chose this *logos*, the medium of creative activity and relational partnership. “God created humankind in his own image. In the image of God he created them” (Gen 1:27). When Jn 1 refers to the “beginning” in terms of *logos*, it means that the image and likeness of God consists in the creative and communicative power of language, endowed with authority.

From the same biblical perspective (which is the viewpoint of the Johannine Prologue), the divine *logos* (or Hebrew *Dabhar*) is the manifestation of the all-embracing and almighty divine will and plan as it unfolds in salvation history, through the mighty deeds of God in favour of his people as well as through the words of the Promise, of the Covenant, and of the challenge of the Prophets. Salvation history, with its cosmic and world dimensions, is all along a story of mighty and loving divine *logos*, of effective *dabhar*, in short of communication endowed with power.

Christ the new Adam, is the ultimate expression of this divine image and likeness. He is divine language of divine self-communication because he is the Son who “knows the Father” (Jn 1:18; Mt 11:27). Through words and deeds, options and death, he embodies the language that makes the Father known. His words are divine language. He is the enfleshed divine language of power and love.
2. 

Dignity and Responsibility of communication

Whether it is in oral, visual or auditive form, Communication is language, \textit{logos}. Therefore it participates of the dignity and responsibility of human and divine language.

It shares in the dignity of human language: beyond its technical aspects it emanates from and appeals to the deepest level of human identity and potentiality. It shares in the responsibility of language: it should be authentic language, and not mere babble. It should not be mepty cant but “poetic” in the etymological sense of the term (Greek \textit{poiein}: to make), creator of meaning and thrust. It should be iconic and not made of stereotyped clichés, evoking the mysterious depth of being. It should be dynamic and not lifeless, opening new visions and new challenges and not falling back on worn out repetitive emptiness. In short, it should be the opposite of the tepid broth which is poured out week after week from our pulpits on a hapless laity.

Christian communication shares in the dignity and responsibility of the divine \textit{logos}. It is part and parcel of the mystery of a God who speaks, who, while “hiding his face,” makes Himself known in the polyphony of His Word.

3. 

Authority and fidelity

It shares in the authority of God’s Word: “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword, piercing even to the point of dividing soul from spirit, and joints from marrow (Heb 4:12); “it is a power of salvation for everyone who believes” (Rom 1:16). It is the power of the initial \textit{logos} of the God who said and it was done in Gen 1.

It entails also the responsibility of faithfulness: “We are ambassadors of Christ. It is God who appeals through us” (2 Cor 5:20). Our communication is called to be an authentic echo of the divine Word, the genuine expression of the divine mystery. It has to resound with the voice of the One who said: “My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways… As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways and my thoughts above your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8-9). Jesus gave the ultimate principle of Christian communication when he said:

“Amen, amen, I say to you, a son cannot do anything on his own, but only what he sees his father doing; for what he does, his son will do also… I cannot do anything on my own; I judge as I hear; and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me” (John 5:19.30).

4. In tune with nature and signs of times

Like the \textit{logos} finding expression in cosmos and history, Christian communication is in tune with what Benedict XVI calls the \textit{liber naturae} (VD 7) and the signs of the times. Like Francis of Assisi, it sings the Canticle of Creatures along with Brother Sun and Sister Moon, Brothers Wind and Air and Mother Earth, a song which is now amplified by modern astrological discoveries. Like the book of Revelation, it perceives the advent of the Lord in the cosmic and political upheavals. History seems to be a nonsensical release of obscure forces. But when the Lamb opens the seven seals, the voice is heard that says: “Behold, I am coming soon. … I will give to each according to his deeds. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end” (Rev 22:12-13).

This broad outlook rescues Christian communication from fundamentalist narrow Biblicism. A perception of God’s Word reduced to the letter of the Bible could easily turn into an idolatry of the letter, which would not be better than the idolatry of images. St Paul had already said: The letter brings death; the Spirit gives life” (2 Cor 3:6). “Christian faith is not a religion of the book; Christianity is a religion
of the Word, ‘not of a written and mute word, but of the Incarnate and living Word’” says Benedict XVI.

5. Biblical

However, a one sided emphasis on the signs of the times and of nature, on life setting, as well as a defensive attitude towards the Protestant *Scriptura Sola* may have led the Catholics to a loss of knowledge and appreciation for the Bible, “word of God expressed in human words thanks to the working of the Holy Spirit” (VD 15). It is through the Scriptures that the story of God’s presence among us is communicated to us. Scriptures give the solidity of writing to this story to which we belong. “*Scripta manent*” as the saying goes and the seal of the Spirit is apposed on the solidity of the written record. Voice of the history to which we belong, the Scriptures constitute a kind of cultural environment, a mother tongue in which our faith is expressed. In this context, K. Rahner’s explanation of canonicity is interesting. The Scriptural Canon is no apodictic decision taken one day by a few Council Fathers gathered together. It is rather the outcome of the process in which the Church –and the people of Israel before that–, guided by the Spirit recognized the authenticity of their faith in such books and not in others. The Canon reflects the Spirit moved expression of a faith alive through centuries. It is the expression of a religious milieu to which we belong and which we imbibe. A Christian biblical language is part of our Christian identity as much as a mother tongue is part of our national makeup. Christian communication has to enter this living tradition and foster it. Particularly Catholic communication has to contribute to restore the biblical culture which has been lost to some extent.

6. Christ centered communication

Mostly the Scriptures give witness to Jesus-Christ, the Word made flesh. Not only does he bring the Word like the prophets and the Apostles, but He is “the definitive Word which God speaks to humanity” (VD 12). He is the key to the Christian language, the “‘solo’, theme entrusted to a single instrument or voice which is so important that the meaning of the entire work depends on it” (VD 13). No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known (Jn 1:18. “We have seen his glory” (Jn 1:14). The glory of the *logos* shines in the exalted Christ, where “at the heart of the ‘Christology of the Word’….we can contemplate the profound unity in Christ of creation, the new creation and salvation history” (VD 13). The divine *logos*, fully manifested in Christ, is no narrow sectarian exclusivist claim. It embraces all the dimensions of the cosmos and of history. To which it gives ultimate meaning as “it gathers up all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth (Eph 1:10).

> For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together (Col 1:16-17).

His “plenitude” is inhabited by “the breadth and length and height and depth” of the love of God (Eph 3:18). “To know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph 3:18-19) is at the heart of the Christian *logos*. St Paul puts in a terse formula: “To know Christ and the power of His resurrection” (Phil 3:10).

**Part II. Jesus of Nazareth as Communicator**

Authentic language and therefore poetical and forceful, a genuine echo of the divine mystery, vibrating with the power of the Resurrection: such is the Christian *logos*, the qualities called for by Christian communication. A tall programme indeed. How can a human language meet these demands? A perfect example is given by the way Jesus of Nazareth went about proclaiming the Good News. This brings us to “lower Christology,” to a look at Jesus-Christ from below, from
the concrete setting of a Galilean villager, coming out of his obscure hamlet to spread the eschatological message of the Kingdom all round Galilee, the surrounding pagan territories of Decapolis, Tyre and Sidon and to the Jerusalem authorities.

I. Communicator of Good News

Jesus is eminently evangelizer, bearer of the Good News (Mk 1:14). He applies to himself the prophecy of Is 61:1-2: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring good tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives... to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour” (Lk 4:18-19). “Never has anyone spoken like this!” will his listeners say (Jn 7:46). His departing words will be the Great Commission, the mandate given to the disciples to communicate to the whole world the message they have received (Mk 16:15), the message of peace (Jn 20:21), to be the witnesses of a life liberated by the Spirit (Lk 24:48; Acts 1:8). The Gospels are Good News: communication of the News is of the essence of what Jesus stood for.

II. Authentic language

He makes known his message through words and deeds, through his way of life and his options, through sacrifice and death. He identifies totally with his revelation. This is concretely what John means when he says that Jesus is not only He who proclaims the Word but that He is the Word (Jn 1:14). There is no gap between what he says, what he does and what he is. He is totally authentic.

As seen in Jesus, the communication of the Gospel message rings true. Jesus’ language was powerful because it was genuine language, true to God and true to man.

1. True to man

Jesus’ language is true to man and not to man in abstract but to concrete humanity represented by the common folk, the rural “marginal Jews,” neglected by the Herodian administration and disdainfully called the ‘Am ha’aretz, the “people of the land,” by the Scribes. Jesus is true to this kind of humanity in the thirty years of humble life buried in the small unknown village of Nazareth. This rural belonging continues in the setting of his ministry which leaves aside the cities like Sepphoris and Tiberias, enlarged and beautified in the Roman style by Herod Antipas. The option for the ‘Am ha’aretz appears also in the choice of his rather undistinguished disciples. He addresses the message of true happiness to the poor and his healing powers favour the marginalized, women, lepers, beggars, those whom sanctimonious opinion considered as sinners.

He is true to this option in the rural style of his language. He does not speak of God in the pompous rhetoric of a superficial godliness. God is not spoken of in terms of thrones, palaces, royal court and princely garments. Jesus’ God language is down to earth. Its symbolic range derives from the lowly range of rural activities: sowing, harvesting, shepherding, wages of daily workers, absentee landowners, women at the grinding stone and kneading the dough. It is actually a wonder that one could say God with the resources of such an ungodly linguistic material.

2. True to God

Jesus’ language is equally true to God. God of Jesus is the Father who is intimately close to his poor children. The humility and simplicity of the semantic range of his language evokes a God deeply involved in the occupations and concerns of the common folk, the woman treading the dough or missing her poor saving, the farmer anxious about the harvest, the fisherman hauling in a mixed catch. The divine immanence is expressed in terms which evoke the divine presence in the daily realities of human existence.

At the same time, through the language of humble daily reality,
Jesus does give a genuine expression to God’s transcendence that upsets all human calculations and expectations. The transcendent God is always ahead of human projects and dreams. This divine transcendence is expressed by the unexpected turn taken by Jesus’ stories. In this way, through the medium of ordinary daily life, Jesus is the true voice of an unpredictable God whose surpassing love prefers the sinner to the righteous, the wayward son to the honest but dourly elder son (Lk 15:11-32), whose extravagant preferences baffle standards of accountancy (Mt 20:1-15), whose patient might can face and overcome human failings without uproar and clamour (Mk 4:1-9), whose patience is infinite since it goes by the scale of eternity (Mk 4:26-29).

Parables are not moral lessons but the revelation of an unpredictable transcendent God whose ways are not our ways, whose thoughts are not our thoughts (Is 55:8). “Once more astonished” is the title of an important book on the parables. It could be also the title given to the Sermon on the Mount with the surprising interpretations it gives to the biblical demands. The laborious interpreter of the Torah is left stunned by a radical hermeneutic that reverses the image of a God. The Almighty who was viewed as a stern account keeper of merits is now to be addressed as the Father whose infinite love transcends and upsets all human perceptions and expectations.

“Once more astonished” could be the title given to the revelation of a king-Messiah who is actually a Servant, to his proclamation that service is greatness (Mk 10:34-35), that the last are the first (Mk 9:35), that death is life (Mk 8:34). It is the entire scale of values that Jesus reverses. He does it because he is the Son who has access to the heart of the Father (Mt 11:25-27) and knows him as the great Lover who having given himself totally expects total surrender in return.

Jesus did not speak about God; he reflected a deep filial intimacy. His was powerful language because it was a language of authentic experience. Coming from the heart of a Son, Jesus’ teachings are not theology but theophany.

III. The Cross

This applies particularly to the theophany of the Cross. The Cross conveys the ultimate message of God’s love for humanity. “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends” (Jn 15:13). “Only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us” (Rom 5:7-8).

The message of the Cross is the most authentic language that can be used. It conveys the supreme way of being true to God and true to man. On the Cross, Jesus is true to man by a death which is most physically authentic. It does not even assume the nobility of Stoic indifference. Neither is it the gentle, self-controlled, philosophically analysed death of Socrates. Neither again is it Buddhist nirvana nor Jain Samadhi. Jesus’ death is plain anguished torture. His last words are an agonising cry: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” This is not the language of literature or of pietistic pretence. It is the true distressed cry of all the victims of injustice and cruelty all over the world, all through the centuries.

True to God also is Jesus’ Passion. He manifests his divine sonship by his total identification with the will of the Father. “Abba, Father... Not what I will but what you will” (Mk 14:36). The words of the prayer that Jesus had taught to the disciples are now written in flesh and blood. There cannot be more eloquent teaching. It is the most eloquent sermon of Jesus, the most meaningful parable of God’s love, of life in death.

This is what St Paul called ho logos tou staurou, the language of the Cross (1 Cor 1:18), “a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are called, Jews and Greeks alike, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength” (1 Cor 1:23-25). The Cross is folly because it
means love and love is folly. It is weakness because love is weakness: it makes one dependent of the other. But it is true wisdom and power because, without love there is no life, no meaning, no purpose. Love is the ultimate reality because “love is of God... God is love” (1 John 4:7-8).

The preaching and the letters of Paul, a great communicator, do nothing but articulate this language of the Cross and of the Resurrection. It gave focus and force to his message. Christian communication cannot shirk the paradox of the crucified Messiah, or rather the mystery of the divine plan coming to fulfillment in unfathomable ways. As the book of Revelation puts it, the Lamb in a slaughtered status and yet standing in victory is the key to the Christian vision of history and of the world (Rev 5:1-8).

IV. Silence

In the Gospels of Mt and Mk, but for the last cry of distress, Jesus on the cross is silent. This silence has a deep significance. The most eloquent sermon of Jesus, the ultimate *logos* he bequeaths to humanity, is given in silence. Jesus communicates the Word not only through words and deeds but also through silence. Ultimately it is from the silence of the Cross and in the silence of the tomb that the message of God’s triumphant love is most forcefully proclaimed. On the Cross and through the Resurrection, the jubilant paschal message is proffered to the world without sound of word in its most radical form. Erected upon the world, the Cross of Golgotha silently proclaims God’s victorious love for the world. Challenging all forces of injustice, hatred, oppression and violence, its mute message resounds for ever: “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son” (Jn 3:16).

The value of silence is already noted in ordinary secular communication techniques. The use of pauses is a well known device in advertisement practice: they create an element of suspense which will serve to emphasize the commercial announcement. At a higher level, times of silence are important elements of rhetorical, poetical and musical expression. They bring breathing space to the rhetorical, poetical or musical rhythm.

How much more is silence needed when communication deals with God language. The God who speaks is also the silent God. The theme of silence is frequent in the Bible especially in the Psalms. At times, God seems to remain silent (Ps 22:2; 28:1; 83:2; Hab 1:13) as if he wanted to be encountered in silence (Ps 4:5; 94:17: 121:2; Is 41:1). The God of the Bible communicates also in a negative way, by an apparent absence of communication, which is in fact an invitation *to go beyond any form of communication*. Ultimately what God has to reveal is his mystery, the ineffable realm which lies beyond any image and any formulation. Ignatius of Antioch speaks of Jesus-Christ, “the Word that proceeded from the eternal silence of God” 15 He notes “the three resounding mysteries which were wrought in the silence of God… the virginity of Mary, her giving birth and the death of the Lord.”16 In the same vein, St John of the Cross says: “The Father has said only one Word and that Word is his Son. Now in an eternal silence, he is still saying it forever. The soul must hear it in silence.”17 A faith approach to communication shares in the experience of Elijah on Mount Horeb who heard the coming of the Lord not in storm, fire or earthquake but in “the sound of sheer silence” (1 Kgs 19:12).18 Ultimately faith communication is a matter of perceiving the voice of the Spirit, the echo of the Trinitarian divine language in and beyond the tumultuous expression of human expectations and anguish, joys and frustrations, triumph and agony.

Conclusion

Christian communication is also a matter of putting all the din of the media to the test of the divine Word and particularly of the divine silence of the Cross. It is the silence from which it emerges that gives force to communication. Ultimately true Communication should be pedagogy of silence. As Plutarch wrote long ago, “we learn speech
from men but silence from the gods,” or, in the words of Kirkegaard, in a more modern context,

The present condition of the world is diseased. If I were a doctor and asked for my advice, I should answer: Create silence, bring people to silence. The Word of God cannot be heard in the world today. If it is blazoned forth with all the panoply of noise so that it can be heard even in the midst of all other noise, then it is no longer the word of God. Therefore, create silence.

A faith approach to Communication is not just a matter of utilising modern media to spread the Gospel message. The message must ring true. Communication is effected through words, signs and symbols. But it is also to be accompanied with deeds and be the expression of an authenticity of life. In silence it will find its roots in the depths of the divine mystery and of the human soul.

End Notes


3 Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam 6,33; PL 15,1677, quoted in VD 18.

4 The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church, 1993, Part III, B.


7 Mutatis mutandis a comparison could be made with the Vedic Vach, mother of the Vedas, the eternal vibration associated with Prajapati in the work of creation,


9 VD 8, quoting St Bernard, Homilia super Missus est, iv,11 ; PL 183,86B


11 There is naturally as well a Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Confucean language underlying national languages and interacting with them.


14 J. Lambrecht, Once more astonished: the Parables of Jesus, New York: Crossroad, 1981

15 Magnesians 8.

16 Ephesians 15,19.

17 Punto de Amor 99. See other texts quoted in my Christmas Then and Now, Mumbai: St Pauls, 2000, 134-140.