

Imagination in Catholic Thought and Peacebuilding

Eduardo Gutiérrez González

When Timothy Radcliffe, OP, published *Alive in God* in 2019, he offered a critical reading of contemporary culture, and pointed to secularism and fundamentalism as “the squabbling siblings of our age”: two major forces or tendencies embodied in various forms and constantly fighting for dominance of the world.¹ He suggests that the many faces of secularism and fundamentalism share a common trait: they are “afflicted by an atrophied literalistic imagination,” a *closed* imagination entangled in itself and incapable of conceiving other approaches to the world.² Overall, the book is an attempt to characterize this closed imagination and suggest ways in which a more open imagination, like the one Radcliffe finds in the Christian tradition, offers richer and more stimulating alternatives for contemporary sensibilities.

His overall approach inaugurates a dialogue between diverse forms of the imagination, on the one hand, and Christian approaches to social teaching, violence, and peacebuilding on the other. It is upon this set of topics that I wish to take up one of the challenges Radcliffe offers and build my argument. My objective, then, will be to explore ways in which contemporary approaches to human imagination can enrich our understanding of peacebuilding in general, Catholic social teaching (CST), and the modes of peacebuilding that CST inspires.

I will begin by offering a general sketch of (1) peacebuilding and (2) Catholic social teaching, not in the least trying to be all-encompassing, but highlighting a specific set of traits that will then allow me to (3) describe the transformative efforts taking place in both fields as fundamentally imaginative endeavors. Considering the above, the text will end by (4) revisiting contemporary understandings of the imagination and of the cultural role of social imaginaries, (5)

¹ Timothy Radcliffe, *Alive in God: A Christian Imagination* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), 5.

² Radcliffe, *Alive in God*, 5.

suggesting how they can contribute to enriching what could be called an imaginary approach to Catholic peacebuilding, and (6) conclude with a few final remarks.

PEACEBUILDING

Within the social and political sciences, peacebuilding (PB) has developed as a sub-field and distinct area of study since the middle of the twentieth century. Today, it could be “succinctly characterized as the project of overcoming structural and cultural violence (conflict transformation), in conjunction with peacemaking between conflict parties (conflict settlement) and peacekeeping (conflict containment).”³

This description is useful, inasmuch as it outlines differences between the various technical terms developed within the field in the past few decades (i.e., peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding). However, I would like to highlight that underlying these different concepts, and within PB as well, lies a common *transformative* effort, aiming to overcome social violence and find ways in which non-violent social arrangements can be reached. The transformative goal of peacebuilding, then, is not to attain a conflictless or homogeneous political state in which identity or ideological differences are ignored or dissolved, but to offer approaches and explore cultural practices that enable configuring these differences in an enriching, non-violent way. In a similar spirit, Oliver Richmond has “suggested that [peacebuilding requires] a complex interdisciplinary research agenda, and an openness to hybridity and difference”;⁴ the real problem to be solved, then, is form of *violence*, be it hegemony, domination, oppression, or any other.⁵

The summary of the three elements, I want to highlight in peacebuilding is the following:

1. Peacebuilding can be understood as a transformative effort;
2. This effort aims to overcome social violence; and
3. Overcoming social violence
 - a. does not aim towards the absence of conflict and difference as such;
 - b. does aim towards the absence of *violence*, and approaching divergence of thought and difference as opportunities for dialogue and mutual enrichment; and

³ Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse, and Hugh Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution* (Cambridge, MA: Polity, 2021), 237.

⁴ Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 271.

⁵ Oliver Richmond, *Peace in International Relations* (London: Routledge, 2008), 163.

- c. is, then, an endeavor fundamentally about *articulating*,⁶ that is, connecting and configuring into meaningful wholes.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

There are many approaches to understanding the key aspects of CST. According to John Paul II's *Ecclesia in America*, no. 55, for example, CST seeks to promote social justice in the world, and "rests on the threefold cornerstones of human dignity, solidarity, and subsidiarity." However, just as PB can be described using the structure described above, so too can CST be interpreted as a fundamentally transformative and articulating endeavor. According to Benedict XVI's *Deus Caritas Est*, no. 28, the purpose of social justice is to purify reason and help us acknowledge and attain what is just. In that line, the Church is to play her part through rational argument but needs to "reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice cannot prevail or prosper."

Just as there is a transformative structure in PB processes, CST also seems to follow a similar architecture, although it adds its own unique contributions. Benedict XVI's reference to "spiritual energy" is far from arbitrary: whilst engaging with society as a whole, CST points not only at inter-personal violence, but also at *spiritual disquiet*, and how the presence of Jesus Christ and the cultivation of a robust spiritual life does, in a sense, ground every social change, inasmuch as it provides, nurtures, and protects the spiritual tranquility of all human beings.

There are echoes of this approach in multiple sources of the Catholic tradition, highlighting the link between spiritual life and the pursuit of peace. In what might be one of the most cited peace-related passages in Scripture, Jesus mentions peacemakers in the Beatitudes and says "they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). In both Second Vatican Council documents and recent papal magisterium, the pursuit of peace is understood as a blessed enterprise: one that strongly relies on laypeople's presence in the world (*Lumen Gentium*, no. 36) and is a shared objective and responsibility of church

⁶ The use of the word *articulate* in this context requires a minor clarification. In its transitive use, the verb *to articulate* generally has two meanings. In a first and more common usage, it refers to giving "clear and effective utterance: to put into words." In a second sense, it refers to the act of uniting "by or as if by means of a joint" or "to form or fit into a systematic whole" ("Articulate," *Merriam-Webster.com*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/articulate.) Akin to Judith Wolfe's description of the imagination's fundamental activity, I will use *articulate* in its second sense to describe the act of joining together or integrating previously disjointed elements into a meaningful form or *Gestalt* ("Imagining God," *Modern Theology* [Early View, February 2023]: 1–13, doi.org/10.1111/moth.12846).

(*Fratelli Tutti*) and state (*Rerum Novarum*), as well as of Catholics and non-Catholics (*Pacem in Terris*).

In addition to these primary sources, the Catholic Church also has a rich tradition of spiritual theologies nurtured by its diverse charisms, each with its own Spirit-gifted approach to faith.⁷ Due to their unique way of actualizing the mystery of Christ in more localized and concrete settings, they offer various ways of understanding how the transformations that lead to inner peace are both a cornerstone of spiritual life and a grounding principle for CST and its pursuit of justice. Thus, the fifth century Desert Fathers devote one of the first chapters of the *Apophthegmata* to the pursuit of ἡσυχία—*hesychia*,⁸ St. Benedict of Nursia's *Regula* describes his followers as people who seek after peace;⁹ St. Ignatius Loyola's *Exercitia* refers to *consolatio* and the desirable peace it brings;¹⁰ and more recently, Jacques Philippe understands inner peace as the crux of our road to holiness and the grounding principle for any social initiative seeking to foster love and peace among human beings.¹¹

Just as I did with PB, my purpose here is to highlight how CST seeks a cultural inter-personal transformation—that is, the attainment of social justice. However, CST adds an important intra-personal and spiritual component that serves as a basis or grounding principle for said transformation. From this point of view, the successful integration of the different participants of a given social scenario is somehow linked with the intra-personal, spiritual articulation that brings inner peace.

The summary of the elements I want to highlight in CST, then, goes as follows:

⁷ For a general description of the importance and originality of Catholic spiritualities and charisms, see John Paul II, "Message for the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities," May 27, 1998, www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1998/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19980527_movimenti.html.

⁸ This is a Greek word used in the context of the *Apophthegmata* to describe a state of inner silence: "a tranquil acquiescence in the will of God, producing a 'profound calm and great peace within'" (*The Book of the Elders: Sayings of the Desert Fathers: The Systematic Collection*, trans. John Wortley [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012], xxviii).

⁹ According to St Benedict, his spirituality was meant to be a "school for the Lord's service," where one can "seek after peace and pursue it" (*The Rule of Benedict*, trans. Caroline White [London: Penguin, 2016], 3–6).

¹⁰ For Ignatius, one must treasure the spiritual states of consolation, characterized not only by the "increase of hope, faith, and charity, and all interior joy which calls and attracts to heavenly things," but also by the soul's finding quiet and "peace in its Creator and Lord" (David L. Fleming, *Draw Me into Your Friendship. The Spiritual Exercises: A Literal Translation and a Commentary Reading* [Saint Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1996], 248).

¹¹ Jacques Philippe, *La Paz Interior* (Madrid: Patmos-Rialp, 2022), 13, 15.

1. Catholic social teaching can be understood as a particular case of transformative/articulating effort;
2. This effort aims to overcome spiritual unrest; and
3. Overcoming spiritual unrest
 - a. aims towards the attainment of spiritual peace; and
 - b. understands said inner peace as a grounding principle for social transformation.

TRANSFORMATION AND THE IMAGINATION

The previous sections offered two accounts: one focusing on PB, the other on CST. Both fields were described as transformative efforts. PB aims to include divergent cultural actors into a peaceful social arrangement that avoids violence and allows dialogue, and CST also aims to transform human cultures and re-configure the relations between social actors, especially by aiming to articulate their spiritual lives and cultivate inner peace.

One can ask: how do these intra-personal articulations branch out onto inter-personal transformations? How do these processes and articulations take place? Could we use the structural similarities I have highlighted as a starting point to explore common ground and shared resources between the two fields? And more interestingly: could Radcliffe's intuitions about the role of imagination be somehow hinting at an approach to both CST and PB as fundamentally imaginative processes, that is, as transformative initiatives strongly relying on the powers of human imagination?

Exploring the role of the imagination in the study and practice of PB is not something new. Perhaps one of the most famous of these explorations is John Paul Lederach's seminal book *The Moral Imagination*. Lederach concludes that moral imagination is a necessary—albeit insufficient—prerequisite for PB processes. By moral imagination he refers to the ability human beings can cultivate to use the imagination and re-visualize the world in more peaceful or peaceable ways. Lederach explains how this particular form of imagination he has found operating in the field acting as “the art and soul of building peace” can be briefly described by four fundamental skills or abilities enabling its manifestation in the world. In Lederach's own words:

The moral imagination requires (1) the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies; (2) the ability to sustain a paradoxical curiosity that embraces complexity without reliance on dualistic polarity; (3) the fundamental belief in and pursuit of the creative act; and (4) the acceptance of the inherent risk of stepping into the mystery of the unknown that lies beyond the far too

familiar landscape of violence. ... The essence is found in ... relationship, paradoxical curiosity, creativity, and risk.¹²

I am not focusing on his moral imagination as a direct object of study, but using it as a means to illustrate how there are ways in which the imagination can be understood that surpass the realm of fiction and arts—very easily associated with the term—and have a direct link with the real and non-fictitious world, not just in abstract, but very concrete, localized, and political ways. Lederach's moral imagination also has very useful deictic purpose, inasmuch as it exemplifies how the imagination's social and political role is strongly linked with the formation and transformation of our worldviews in ways that strongly influence the results of any PB process.

From Lederach's perspective, the moral imagination is the means through which new and peaceful articulations of different situations are envisioned by those engaged in PB. That is the reason why he insists on the centrality of human relationships, and the importance of cultivating the curiosity, creativity, and risk-taking habits required to reconfigure them. Now, given the formal similarities already pointed out between PB and CST, it seems reasonable to ask whether that same resource—our imagination—could have an analogous role in the social and spiritual articulations that CST seeks to promote.

IMAGINATION AND THE IMAGINARIES

Just as Lederach thematizes the imagination and places it at the heart of PB, other authors have also recently talked about the importance that the imagination has—and should have—for Catholic thought. We have already mentioned Timothy Radcliffe and his call to further understand and value the advantages of the kind of open imagination he finds in the Christian tradition.¹³ Michael Gallagher, SJ, has also stressed the importance of imagination, not only when dialoguing with non-Christians who are Radcliffe's main interlocutors, but also when engaging with people of faith. In fact, according to Gallagher, the very teaching of Christian theology in universities and seminars requires "retrieving the imagination," especially as a means to counterbalance two non-imaginative tendencies he believes are deeply problematic: "on the one hand ... excessive

¹² John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 5, 34 (adapted numbering).

¹³ Radcliffe, *Alive in God*, 5, 201.

academic system-thinking, and on the other hand ... excessive professionalism concerning ministry.”¹⁴

Although both Radcliffe and Gallagher are moving on strongly theological grounds, one could say that the conversations they open can be phrased in philosophical terms: in a sense, the discussion about the different kinds of imagination and how they can interact (Radcliffe) or about the formal function of the imagination in pedagogical processes (Gallagher) essentially is a conversation about the general role of imagination in our way of seeing the world—a subject matter fundamentally interdisciplinary and epistemological, and, thus, philosophical by nature. Raising the discussion to philosophical grounds at this point may provide the conceptual clarity and the sufficiently broad thematic architecture required to understand the commonalities that ground not only thinkers like Radcliffe and Gallagher. It will also allow us to postulate a robust platform for our understanding of human experience in general and the social and spiritual articulations of CST, in particular.

Among the many philosophical approaches to the imagination, some authors study specific elements *within* imagination and its dynamics.¹⁵ Among them, the concept of “social imaginaries” has been a widely discussed topic. By social imaginaries, they usually refer to the mental constructs articulating our conceptual frameworks, social practices, and affective motivations.¹⁶ Kathleen Lennon is a recent example of such authors. Her ideas on how the imagination works and how the social imaginaries it produces structure human experiences can serve as a useful instrument to outline the advantages of an imaginary—or imaginary-aware—approach to Catholic PB.

Strongly relying on Genevieve Lloyd’s reading of Spinoza, Lennon describes imaginaries as the “affectively laden patterns/images/forms by means of which we experience the world,

¹⁴ Michael Paul Gallagher, “Theology and Imagination: From Theory to Practice,” *Christian Higher Education* 5, no. 1 (2006): 86–87, www.doi.org/10.1080/15363750500382774.

¹⁵ For a rich presentation of multiple disciplinary approaches to the imagination (philosophical, psychological, logical, literary, artistic, etc.), see Eva T. H. Brann, *The World of the Imagination: Sum and Substance* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

¹⁶ Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imaginary: A Phenomenological Psychology of the Imagination*, trans. Jonathan Webber (London: Routledge, 2004); Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Cornelius Castoriadis, “Radical Imagination and the Social Instituting Imaginary (1994),” in *The Castoriadis Reader*, ed. David Ames Curtis (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 338–349; Kathleen Lennon, *Imagination and the Imaginary* (London: Routledge, 2015), www.doi.org/10.4324/9781315730387.

other people, and ourselves.”¹⁷ Imaginaries, then, are the lenses through which we experience the world. They are the maps allowing us to make sense of what surrounds us and find our place and a sense of direction in our journey.

There are several interesting things about this portrayal:

1. Imaginaries are primarily *thought patterns*: they refer to the conceptual structures that configure our way of understanding ourselves and the world around us.
2. Imaginaries are *affectively laden*: they are not exclusively composed of theories and ideas; they also include our affects and our emotional life.
3. We *experience the world* by means of our imaginaries: they configure our experience of existence in general, but also ground our view of our own bodies, individual and social identities, and cultural practices.

In addition to these more structural descriptions, Lennon’s ideas provide a basis for a more dynamic approach—that is, an engagement with not just the component-parts of our imaginaries, but with their formative and transformative processes. Although she does not fully develop this idea, Lennon explicitly addresses the issue of how “many of the social imaginaries we encounter are damaging,” that is, how they enable or inhibit certain kinds of agency in an undesirable manner.¹⁸ Experiencing sexual difference, or ethnic characteristics, or certain disabilities, for example, can sometimes “condition the possibilities for agency” in negative ways that require attention and demand transformation.¹⁹ This does not only open an immense point of discussion—and a challenge to be addressed—about how imaginaries are assessed and adapted. It also highlights the fact that imaginaries can be transformed. Imaginaries are not immovable monolithic structures but moving and ever-improvable tools. They are not towers to defend, but boats used to travel.²⁰

Perhaps such an approach could also be used to describe other forms of damaging imaginaries, be it the warring or violent imaginaries that PB seeks to transform, or the more spiritually troublesome imaginaries hindering inner peace that the Christian tradition engages. If one were to work on an update of CST to better recognize the role of women in PB, for example; or if a hermeneutical

¹⁷ Lennon, *Imagination and the Imaginary*, 1; Lennon, “Imaginary Bodies and Worlds,” *Inquiry* 47, no. 2 (2004): 113, doi.org/10.1080/00201740410005132.

¹⁸ Lennon, “Imaginary Bodies and Worlds,” 117.

¹⁹ Lennon, “Imaginary Bodies and Worlds,” 118.

²⁰ Judith Wolfe, “Believing in Fictions and Playing at Selfhood,” in *The Hulsean Lectures 2022: The Theological Imagination*, Cambridge University, 2022.

effort were to be made suggesting new ways of interpreting John 14:6 in inter-religious settings, changing demonizing approaches to non-Christians and embracing more humanizing views instead. Both are real examples faced by religious peacebuilders. For these transformations to be effective within Catholic PB circles, the changes that are in order are not necessarily shifts within CST as such, but perhaps in the ways CST is appropriated and reappropriated in different contexts and settings.

The challenge, then, is relevant for Catholic PB, but it requires us to go well beyond its boundaries. It is an invitation to widen our perspective and allow for a revision of our broad understanding of cultural transformation, how it is brought about, and the role local imaginaries and cultures play in it. Authors like John Burton, for example, tend to see cultural differences as shallow-level, less relevant elements, especially when compared to what he considers to be the much more important question of whether institutions satisfy ontological human needs or not.²¹ Others, like I. W. Zartman, reduce said dissimilarities to “differences in style and language.”²² By contrast, and more akin to Kevin Avruch’s approach, Lederach’s elicitive methodology,²³ or Lisa Sowle Cahill’s ideas on integral peace,²⁴ an understanding of the fundamental imaginary-driven structure of PB allows for a richer, more complex form of revision exceeding the reduced, almost hyperopic, and overly abstract vision of those who would focus *exclusively* on the global theories our manuals present.

Social transformations require a rigorous assessment of the affective acquiescence, individual and communal identities, and local cultural practices so closely linked to these ideas. Awareness of both the theoretical and the concrete, of the varied and complex components and movements involved—awareness, ultimately, of the *imaginaries* structuring these experiences and providing meaningful pathways to make sense of them—is required.

SOME CONTRIBUTIONS OF AN IMAGINARY APPROACH TO CATHOLIC PEACEBUILDING

I will now illustrate how greater awareness of our imaginaries, especially when carrying out PB efforts from within the framework of

²¹ Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 394–395.

²² Kevin Avruch, *Culture and Conflict Resolution* (Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace, 1998), 42–55.

²³ Ramsbotham, Woodhouse, and Miall, *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, 275–276.

²⁴ Maria Power and Tobias Winright, *Current Roman Catholic Ethics on War and Peace vis-à-vis the Ukraine-Russia War*, Temple Tracts, vol. 26 (Lancashire, UK: William Temple Foundation, 2023): 20, www.williamtemplefoundation.org.uk/temple-tracts/.

CST, can offer advantages and open beneficial opportunities. A common denominator to these is the fact that social imaginaries constantly return us to human *experience* as the essential and foremost point of interest: they refer us to the world as a place of salience and significance, susceptible to interminable reinterpretations, and to our cognitive and affective responses to it.²⁵ By understanding how human experience is deeply formed and transformed in terms of its fundamentally imaginative structure, various forms of light are shed not only on the people and societies engaged in violence, but also on those who seek peace from within violent scenarios, and even on the peacebuilders—theoreticians and practitioners—coming from without.

Focusing on our imaginaries and experience also reminds us how theologians have a body, history, culture, and those elements are sometimes rendered irrelevant. History has taught us that forgetting this may lead to naïve views on theology where the discourse is crystallized and its historical genesis forgotten; this is not only a methodological inaccuracy, it can also give way to all sorts of intellectual colonialisms.

There are four additional advantages. First, by coming to terms with the imaginaries that mediate and enable our experience, we become aware of the fundamentally *contingent nature* of our maps of the world. This is vital for any reasonable approach to the human condition and our very limited way of grasping the truth about the world,²⁶ but I believe it is particularly important when dwelling on theological grounds. Although the Catholic tradition recognizes the atemporal and universal—*catholic* proper—character of the eternal wisdom revealed by Christ (*Dei Verbum*, no. 13), even the most absolute of truths are always clad in human vestments, and thus, subject to the “weakness, complexity, slowness, perfectibility, and developmental character of human knowledge.”²⁷ The theological matrix that begets both CST and all forms of Catholic PB, then, is ever changing and can always be enhanced.

The second point concerns the cultivation of the virtue of *humility*. The contingent character of human understanding does not only invite us to remember the boundaries and limits to our own discourses; it should also compel Christians to avoid absolute discourses as

²⁵ Lennon, *Imagination and the Imaginary*, 11ff.

²⁶ For a fantastically sensible presentation of human contingency as a cornerstone of any form of philosophy, see Odo Marquard, *In Defense of the Accidental*, trans. Robert M. Wallace (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

²⁷ The quotation is from the commentaries to Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae*, written by the Dominican Fathers of the Province of Spain (*Suma de Teología*, ed. Regentes de Estudios de las Provincias Dominicanas en España [Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2001], 46, note C).

academics and practitioners, and even more so, to evade all forms of theological arrogance and Christian chauvinism. Doing so unlocks endless possibilities of mutual enrichment with other disciplines and those of other creeds or spiritual stances, both in terms of intellectual conversation, but also—and more interestingly—not only in terms of cooperation and joint efforts towards charity and just peace.

A third advantage of cultivating an imaginative approach to Catholic PB: it shields us from allowing undesirable *rationalisms* to slide into theology. Marion has rightfully pointed out the dangers of “conceptual idolatry,” when our intellectual notions and concepts of God replace him, thus eliminating the mystery and aspects of the divine surpassing us. Once that happens, “Thought freezes, and the idolatrous concept of ‘God’ appears, where, more than God, thought judges itself.”²⁸ A very different development of Catholic peacebuilding theories and practices would appear on stage if, instead of canonizing our ideas and downgrading God to a version of him we can handle, we allowed him to surprise and challenge us, in terms of the ineffable and the mysterious but also in terms of the less abstract and much more complex—and beautiful—imaginative character of the experiences and thoughts with which he has endowed us.

Advantage number four: understanding the way our imagination structures the diverse into meaningful wholes, even within theology,²⁹ is necessarily an exercise in *analogical reasoning*. This means “a comparison between two objects, or systems of objects, that highlights respects in which they are thought to be similar,” and analogical reasoning is “any type of thinking that relies upon an analogy.”³⁰ The structure described here allows us to avoid both univocity and equivocity,³¹ but also opens the door to understanding modality and similarities. There is one Catholic faith, but many spiritualities and charisms; one body of Christ and many members (1 Corinthians 12:27). Similarly, there is one real world, but many ways to map it; there is one *imago Dei*, but countless human beings that are its concretions,³² and each desires to be recognized in their dignity, agency, and aspiration for peace.

²⁸ Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being: Hors-Texte*, trans. Thomas A Carlson (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 16.

²⁹ Wolfe, “Believing in Fictions & Playing at Selfhood.”

³⁰ Paul Bartha, “Analogy and Analogical Reasoning,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman, revised January 25, 2019, plato.stanford.edu/entries/reasoning-analogy/.

³¹ For a view of analogical thinking as a *tertium via* between univocity and equivocity, see Aquinas’s *Scriptum super sententiis*, I, d. 35, q. 1, a. 4, co.

³² See Charles Bo, “Plenary Address,” conference session, *Catholic Peacebuilding in Times of Crisis: Hope for a Wounded World*, June 20, 2022, cpn.nd.edu/assets/477544/cardinal_charles_bo_plenary_address.pdf.

FINAL REMARKS

I have sought to explore ways in which contemporary philosophical approaches to human imagination can enrich our understanding of Catholic PB. I have briefly sketched PB and CST, not with the purpose of offering a full account of either of them, but to point out how both can be understood as fundamentally transformative endeavors. Doing so allowed me to highlight the articulation they seek to achieve, and the profoundly imaginative structure underlying their efforts. I have finished by explaining how understanding Catholic peacebuilding as a human experience, and discovering how said experience is strongly structured by our imagination, via our social imaginaries, can render a series of academic, political, and even spiritual advantages for all involved in the difficult but necessary quest for peace in all hearts and nations. **M**

Eduardo Gutiérrez González is a Colombian scholar completing a D.Phil. at Blackfriars Hall, University of Oxford. His research examines ways to bridge academic discussions and socio-political initiatives, including contributing to peacebuilding processes from theological reflection. His dissertation argues that imagination plays a vital role in belief formation and transformation, and that understanding such a role can open a space for religious imagination to promote human flourishing and consilience in communities riven by conflict in Colombia.