

Become The Being to Be Fully Human an Ontological Conception of Gabriel Marcel with Special Reference to Daughters of Mary Immaculate (Dmi)

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Abstract:

This paper explores the ontological conception of Gabriel Marcel, with a specific focus on its application to the Daughters of Mary Immaculate (DMI). Gabriel Marcel's philosophical framework emphasizes the importance of existential questions and the human experience of Being. By examining Marcel's ideas and their relevance to the DMI, this study aims to shed light on the process of becoming fully human. The paper analyses Marcel's ontological concepts, including his notions of the concrete and the mysterious, as well as the role of intersubjectivity in human existence. Furthermore, it delves into the particular ways in which the DMI embody Marcel's ideas, highlighting their unique experiences and contributions to the pursuit of human authenticity. Through this exploration, the paper ultimately seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of Marcel's ontological conception of The Being. The section also addresses the challenges and rewards of their journey towards becoming fully human.

Keywords: Gabriel Marcel, ontology, Being, human existence, authenticity, Daughters of Mary Immaculate (DMI), concrete, mysterious, intersubjectivity, Spirituality.

Introduction:

The introduction presents an overview of the paper, including the significance of contemplating the nature of being fully human, the connection between divine qualities and human authenticity, and the role of justice in this pursuit.

What does it mean to be Fully Human? This section delves into the concept of full humanity, exploring different perspectives and interpretations. It addresses the significance of self-reflection and introspection in understanding one's authentic self and highlights the importance of inheriting divine qualities.

“This is what the LORD says: **Do what is just and right.** Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place” *Jer.22:3*

The Divine Qualities will lead on the Path to Human Authenticity that which explores the idea of inheriting divine qualities as a means to achieve human authenticity. It examines the process of introversion, self-discovery, and self-transcendence, emphasizing the cultivation of virtues such as love,

compassion, wisdom, and humility. The section discusses how embracing divine qualities enhances one's understanding of oneself and others, fostering a deeper sense of humanity.

Philosophical Insights Of Gabriel Marcel:

Marcel's philosophical ideas have continued to garner attention in the 21st century, primarily due to the enduring significance of his key themes and the pervasive influence of the challenges he identified. Particularly, these themes encompass the notion of the broken world, the predominance of science and technology, and the stifling of spiritual life within the context of contemporary society and culture. These issues resonate widely, reflecting the pressing need to grapple with the human yearning for transcendence while navigating the complexities of our present era. Marcel's insights shed light on these profound concerns and offer valuable perspectives for those seeking to address and navigate these fundamental aspects of human existence.

Marcel held the belief that God constitutes the fundamental mystery of human existence, and that the universe, in its entirety, serves as a manifestation of God's Will. Additionally, Marcel maintained that humans establish a connection with God through their own spirit. While recognizing the inherent limitations of human comprehension in fully grasping the nature of God, Marcel emphasized that individuals can still encounter God through their own spirit, enabling them to experience the divine presence first-hand. This perspective underscores the profound nature of the human-spiritual relationship and highlights the potential for personal encounters with the divine, even in the midst of the inherent mysteries surrounding God's essence.

Marcel's philosophy emphasizes the transformative power of encounters with others, illuminating the longing for Transcendent Being and the profound depths of human existence. Through the exploration of this need for otherness and the reflection trained on mystery, Marcel invites individuals to delve into the rich tapestry of human relationships and the transcendent dimensions of being. Gabriel Marcel emphasized the communal nature of human beings and the significance of authentic interpersonal relationships. It introduces the concept of horizontal transcendence and its role in forming I-Thou relationships.

The I-Thou Relationship:

Authenticity and Mutual Openness Drawing from Gabriel Marcel's insights, the concept of the I-Thou relationship. It examines how the I-Thou relationship views the other person as a unique individual, fostering mutual openness and self-giving. The section discusses the transformative nature of this relationship, characterized by freedom and fraternity.

“The meaningfulness and the authenticity of one’s existence as an ‘I’ is totally conditioned by the generosity with which I make myself available in mutual love, fidelity, faith and disponibility to thou”.

Human as Beings of relatedness and Communion:

In our modern, technocratic, and sophisticated world, there is a growing risk of individuals becoming increasingly self-centered and detached from their communities. The pursuit of individual liberties often leads to a denial of responsibility towards the collective. This article addresses the pressing need to reaffirm the intrinsic relatedness of human beings, highlighting its essential role in fostering meaningful and fulfilling lives. By examining the consequences of excessive individualism and advocating for a

return to communal values, this paper emphasizes the significance of interconnectedness, empathy, and collective responsibility. Through a professional English lens, it seeks to shed light on the importance of embracing human relatedness and communal harmony in the face of prevailing self-defeatist attitudes.

Religious Belief of Gabriel Marcel

Marcel's perspective on religious belief was distinctly existentialist, leading him to distance himself from traditional philosophy of religion. Consequently, he maintained a certain level of scepticism towards endeavors aimed at proving the existence of God or presenting arguments in support of religious beliefs. He regarded such endeavors as a form of primary reflection, acknowledging their value but emphasizing their inherent limitation in terms of facilitating a genuine experience of God. The essence of religious belief, according to Marcel, encompasses an experiential dimension, thus restricting the scope of intellectual discourse.

Marcel's experiential approach to religious belief was firmly rooted in the phenomenological method. He asserted that the profound experiences he extensively elucidated in his work, such as fidelity, hope, disponibilité (availability), and intersubjective relations, encompass commitments and connections that defy conceptual description. Marcel posited that the most plausible explanation for these experiences lies in their devotion to a transcendent reality, which he frequently referred to as an "Absolute thou."

Examining fidelity as an illustrative example, Marcel contended that it entails a particular way of existing in relation to another person. Fidelity, he argued, is "creative" in nature, as it necessitates individuals to remain receptive and open to the other, fostering a continuous process of mutual growth and exploration. These experiences, which Marcel deemed central to religious belief, embody a profound depth that transcends mere intellectual understanding, emphasizing the significance of subjective encounters and encounters with the transcendent.

With regard to the ultimate hope concerning the meaning of human existence, Marcel's observations, as expressed in his work "Homo Viator," are noteworthy.

"The only possible source from which this absolute hope springs must once more be stressed. It appears as a response of the creature to the infinite Being to whom it is conscious of owing everything that it has and upon whom it cannot impose any condition whatsoever."

In light of this context, Marcel put forth the argument that it comes as no surprise that numerous individuals perceive their lives as a gift. Implicit in this notion is the requirement of a gift-giver, which serves as an indirect argument for the existence of a Supreme Being. Marcel's body of work contains several such arguments, demonstrating his inclination to explore and present various lines of reasoning supporting the existence of a higher power.

Theological insights of being fully human and fully alive:

St. Irenaeus of Lyons emphasizes that the fullness of human life, when lived authentically, reflects the glory of God. This implies that our truest selves, with all our strengths, virtues, and capacities, bring honor and magnificence to our Creator. It suggests that our humanity, far from being separate from the divine, is intimately connected to it. Karl Rahner further expands on this idea by stating that being fully human is the fundamental and ongoing task of every Christian. Rahner suggests that the depth of our humanity is permeated by the divine, meaning that our very essence is touched by the presence of God. Thus, to fully realize our humanity is to acknowledge and embrace the divine mystery that dwells within us.

To be human, in the context of these theological insights, encompasses various dimensions. It involves nurturing our physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual well-being. It calls us to cultivate virtues such as love, compassion, justice, and forgiveness. It challenges us to engage with the world around us, contributing to its betterment and promoting human flourishing.

Being fully human means embracing our strengths and weaknesses, our joys and sorrows, and our aspirations and limitations. It entails recognizing the inherent dignity and worth of every human person, valuing the diversity of human experiences, and fostering unity and solidarity among all people.

It is through this relationship that we come to understand ourselves as beloved children of God, called to live in communion with God and one another. It is through this relationship that we draw upon the divine grace and guidance necessary to navigate the complexities of life and to manifest the qualities of a truly human existence.

SOCIETY OF DAUGHTERS OF MARY IMMACULATE (DMI):

The emergence of DMI Society is a remarkable development in contemporary times. Fr.Arul Raj is the Founder of the DMI Society. He is best described as a person with the heart for the poor and a head for the new technologies. To serve the poor in their many faces and to respond to the needs of the times has been his only mission. He sums up his mission in the phrase “at the business of the Father” and likes to be known as one who is “at the business of the Father” and “Marching towards Father’s Kingdom”. DMI [Daughters of Mary Immaculate], has gathered attention for its innovative and impactful contributions in various spheres. Through its visionary leadership and collaborative efforts, the society has made significant strides in areas such as education, technology, sustainability, and social welfare. Its emergence represents a response to the evolving needs and aspirations of individuals and communities, reflecting a commitment to driving positive change and fostering inclusive development.

Realizing God in us:

As the philosophy of Marcel expresses that this world is not problematic when we deeply go into the self which is merged into the Being, the DMI Spirituality is immersed in it through their Immanuel Spirituality which is primarily God being with us in the form of Jesus. DMI Society follows this Jesus who was simple in his life style, generous in his public life and magnanimous in his self oblotion.

Immanuel Spirituality:

Immanuel spirituality centers around the concept of God's presence among us, primarily embodied in Jesus, but also present in other forms. It calls for individuals to embrace their role as "another Immanuel" by internalizing the divine presence. Self-realization, within this framework, involves recognizing that humans have been created in the image of God. The ultimate reality is God, and individuals are merely a reflection of that reality. Living in alignment with this understanding entails embodying the essence of God and adhering to His ways. This way of being constitutes the true manifestation of God being with us.

The Three Pillars of our Spirituality:

The Three Pillars of our Spirituality parallel the lifestyle of the DMI, as outlined in Chapter 3 in their Constitution. These pillars embody the core values that define our spiritual journey.

- i. **We are the Apostles-Simplicity:** We embrace the virtue of simplicity, reflecting the essence of being apostles. By adopting simplicity, we prioritize a humble and unpretentious way of life. This entails letting go of material excesses and focusing on the essentials, allowing us to better serve others and remain aligned with our spiritual purpose.
- ii. **We are the Missionaries-Generosity:** As missionaries, we embody generosity as a guiding principle. Generosity compels us to selflessly share our resources, time, and talents with those in need. It involves extending a helping hand, providing support, and offering compassion to uplift and empower individuals and communities.
- iii. **We are the Prophets-Magnanimity:**
Our role as prophets manifests through magnanimity. This pillar represents our commitment to speaking truth, advocating for justice, and working towards positive social transformation. It calls for a courageous and magnanimous approach, challenging societal norms and striving for a more equitable and compassionate world.

These Three Pillars of our Spirituality serve as the guiding principles that shape our spiritual path. They inspire us to embody spirituality, generosity and magnanimity in our actions thereby fostering a deeper connection with our faith and a more meaningful engagement with the world around us.

The DMI Sisters have consistently demonstrated selfless dedication and unwavering commitment in their service to humanity, particularly during critical moments in recent history. From the devastating Tsunami in 2004 to the floods in Chennai in 2015, the Kerala floods in 2018, Cyclone Gaja in 2019, and the global COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, their tireless efforts have been focused on empowering individuals to become fully human and fully alive. Here are a few examples of instances where we endeavored to restore the dignity and vitality of our fellow human beings.

- a. **Devastating Tsunami-2004:** The DMI Sisters have exemplified selfless dedication and unwavering commitment in their service to humanity during numerous critical moments in recent history. In 2004, during the devastating Tsunami, their tireless efforts and service played a crucial role in providing relief and aid to the affected communities, helping them to rebuild their lives and find hope amidst the destruction.
- b. **Chennai floods 2015:** In 2015, when Chennai faced severe flooding, the DMI Sisters worked tirelessly to extend support and assistance to the affected individuals and families. Their compassionate efforts were instrumental in providing relief, essential supplies, and emotional support, thus helping the affected residents to overcome the challenges they faced.
- c. **Kerala floods 2018:** When Kerala witnessed unprecedented floods, the DMI Sisters once again rose to the occasion, actively engaging in relief operations and rehabilitation efforts. Through their selfless service, they provided much-needed assistance, including shelter, food, medical aid, and emotional support, to those affected by the calamity.
- d. **Cyclone Gaja in 2019:** The Sisters also played a crucial role in responding to the aftermath of Cyclone Gaja in 2019. Their dedication and tireless work in providing relief and rehabilitation support to the affected communities were instrumental in restoring normalcy and aiding in the recovery process.
- e. **Coronavirus (COVID-19):** In the face of the global Coronavirus pandemic in 2020 and 2021, the DMI Sisters demonstrated immense resilience and adaptability by finding innovative ways to assist those in need. Their contributions ranged from providing online spiritual support and adoration to

initiating programs such as the Mary Cecily Free meal, ensuring that individuals had access to essential services during times of lockdowns and restrictions.

Throughout these critical moments, the DMI Sisters strived to make people fully human and fully alive. Their selfless service, compassion, and commitment to the well-being of others have touched countless lives, offering solace, hope, and assistance to those in distress. Their exemplary efforts serve as a beacon of inspiration, reminding us of the transformative power of love and service in times of adversity.

The indelible mark left by the DMI Sisters through their selfless work in times of crisis, natural disasters, and global challenges is truly remarkable. Their service not only addresses the immediate needs of affected individuals, but also extends to communities in South Sudan, Papua New Guinea, and the Central African Republic. The unwavering commitment of our Sisters to serving others truly embodies the essence of our mission, as they wholeheartedly devote their time, skills, and compassion to those in need.

CONCLUSION:

The service of the DMI Sisters echoes the core principle of this Article "Become The Being" - enabling individuals to become fully human and fully alive. Their selfless work during times of adversity and their dedication to serving others exemplify the transformative power of compassion and love. Their impact extends beyond immediate relief efforts, reaching communities around the world and leaving an enduring legacy. The dedication and commitment of the DMI Sisters stand as a shining example, motivating others to embrace the values of service and compassion in their own lives.

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