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Issuance of Vatican Passports to Trans-Mediterranean Immigrants A Modest Proposal Worthy of the 21st Century?

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Introduction

In this period much is made of the genius of humanity in enabling travel to Mars. However, in the same period, Europe is clearly at a total strategic loss in the face of mass migration across the Mediterranean from Africa -- with all the dangers to human life, and all the poverty and fear driving that process. Over 100,000 are estimated to have arrived in Europe in the first six months of 2015, compared with an estimated 170,100 migrants in 2014, exceeding by far the 42,925 of the previous year.. There is seemingly a lack of new thinking appropriate to this strategic confusion regarding an increasingly problematic situation. This is to be compared to the creativity and expertise deployed in the exploration of outer space, as discussed separately (*Challenges More Difficult for Science than Going to Mars*, 2014).

As a provocation, a previous exercise envisaged the possibility of emulating the pre-emptive [sinking of the Rainbow Warrior](#) of Greenpeace, in a New Zealand harbour by French government agents (without loss of life), as an example of a strategy which could be explored with respect to any vessels suspected of preparing to smuggle people from African harbours (*12 Strategic Questions for Europe Regarding Forced Immigration from Africa -- in the light of the continuing influx and the associated fatalities*, 19 April 2015). Such is the evolution of European values, from what was previously considered scandalous, this now features as a major strategic option for Europe (*Lord Ashdown: destroy migrant smugglers' boats before they leave port*, *The Guardian*, 21 April 2015; *EU draws up plans for military attacks on Libya targets to stop migrant boats*, *The Guardian*, 10 May 2015; *EU Officials Are Considering Bombing Libyan Smuggling Boats*, *Common Dreams*, 21 May 2015).

The articulation of "unasked questions" also queried the role of the primary authority of Christian Europe in safeguarding human life, and in ensuring its reproduction under any circumstances (most notably amongst the impoverished on other continents). This question focused on the current role the Vatican is playing in articulating a resolution to the immigration crisis through use of its own extensive resources and accommodation facilities -- especially given its long-term responsibility for engendering the crisis and sustaining its further development.

Pursuant to that consideration, the following proposal relates to an unexplored possibility open to the Vatican. As a "modest proposal" it is made in the spirit of that famously made by of [Jonathan Swift](#) (*A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People From Being a Burthen to Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Publick*, 1729). Whether it is to be taken as seriously as the pre-emptive sinking of the *Rainbow Warrior* will be interesting for the future to note.

Historical and systemic responsibility of the Catholic Church

There is little question as to the responsibility for humanity on Earth -- long claimed by the Catholic Church and understood to be divinely mandated. Both responsibility and mandate have been variously recognized by European governments over centuries -- a pattern extended to governments on other continents. In respect of this, European history has been witness to a [Holy Roman Empire](#) of which echoes have been seen or anticipated in the European Community and its potential future evolution.

The [Holy See](#) participated actively in international relations long prior to the founding of the [Vatican City State](#) -- significantly enabled by

formal recognition of its territorial independence by the Italian dictator [Benito Mussolini](#) in 1929 through the [Lateran Treaty](#) (see *Foreign relations of the Holy See*). With respect to the Vatican City State, the Holy See has "full ownership, exclusive dominion, and sovereign authority and jurisdiction", and has [long been recognised as a subject of international law](#) and as an active participant in international relations.

Unique diplomatic status has thus been effectively accorded to the "Vatican" within the international community and within international law. The Holy See participates as an observer in AU, Arab League, Council of Europe, OAS, IOM, and in the United Nations and its agencies FAO, ILO, UNCTAD, UNEP, UNESCO, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNWTO, WFP, WHO, WIPO. It participates as a guest in NAM, and as a full member in IAEA, OPCW, OSCE.

Concerns have been expressed regarding this pattern of influence and avoidance of the obligations it implies, notably by the [Center for Research on Population and Security](#) (*Vatican influence on the United Nations, the World Health Organization and other international agencies; Church or State? The Holy See at the United Nations*). Insight is also provided by [Concordat Watch](#) (*How the Vatican evades human rights obligations through Canon Law, diplomatic immunity and other dodges*)

More intriguing are the systemic consequences of the claimed moral and ethical responsibility of the Catholic Church in relation to issues of human reproduction. This responsibility is in unquestionable conformity with the divine mandate accorded by the injunction: *Be fruitful and multiply* (*Genesis 1:28*) -- a doctrine shared by all the [Abrahamic religions](#).

In the many international arenas in which reference has been made to the consequences of unconstrained population growth, the Catholic Church has been remarkably forceful in quashing or reframing initiatives and debate on measures which might be envisaged to remedy resultant difficulties. The pattern was made evident on the occasion of the [International Conference on Population and Development](#), Cairo, 1994). Significantly, little systematic effort has since been made to review these issues together since that event. This is despite the extreme suffering with which such failure may be associated. The fatalities evident in the case of current immigration are but the "tip of the iceberg" in this regard, given the many millions "in the pipeline" over the decades to come, and those whose births are currently enabled to sustain that process.

Emotional blackmail consequent on irresponsible delegation of systemic responsibility

Whilst identifying itself with the divine mandate and the systemic responsibility thereby accorded, the Catholic Church skillfully distances itself from the secular consequences of multiplication of the population. Any unfortunate consequences in terms of starvation, misery and fatality are dissociated from that systemic role. They are held to be the responsibility of the governments and peoples of the world whose actions should necessarily be guided by insight into the divine will, preferably as provided by the Catholic Church.

Strategic challenges of ensuring adequate food, shelter, social security, health, and the like, are then the responsibility of governments informed by their electorates -- inspired by the moral and ethical guidance of the Catholic Church. If it is only too evident from widespread suffering that governments are inadequate to the task -- or to similar tasks in the wealthier countries -- again this is seemingly no cause for consideration of more appropriate strategies to relieve that suffering.

Ensuring evident suffering is thus to be recognized as a device for placing moral pressure on secular authorities, much as beggars in the streets make evident their own suffering as a means of blackmailing passers-by to support them. There is consequently a curious indifference to suffering, presumably held by the Catholic Church to be serving a higher cause (*Indifference to the Suffering of Others: occupying the moral and ethical high ground through doublespeak*, 2013). There is thus a sense in which the Catholic Church specializes in engendering a sense of guilt in others as a consequence of its own policies -- in order to derive resources from them for a higher cause with which it uniquely identifies itself.

From this perspective, there is a case for exploring the possibility of taking the interpretation of the divine mandate even more seriously -- by multiplying to an even higher degree the growth in the population, as argued separately (*Enabling Fruitful Multiplication of Global Population: eliciting massive social consensus by unconstrained reframing of strategic priorities*, 2015). That this possibility has been taken seriously by some is an indication of the strategic challenge of the times.

In this light it needs to be clearly affirmed that the Catholic Church takes no responsibility whatsoever for the suffering which its theological and diplomatic arguments have enabled and continue to enable. As with the wealthy down the ages, the cynicism of this position is disguised by publicizing its charitable initiatives and advocating universal support for them. Characteristic of doublespeak, these are designed to respond to a limited number of selected sufferers -- ignoring the systemic suffering which continues to be fruitfully multiplied by those policies.

Curiously no sense of the need for prudence and precaution is cultivated on the part of the faithful faced with shortage of resources, as may be variously illustrated (*Resource Insights from Plus or Minus 12 People on a Liferaft: thought experiment to highlight global dilemmas in a comprehensible context*, 2014). This is evident from the size of families of the impoverished faithful of Abrahamic religions.

In this respect the Catholic Church has indeed demonstrated its acclaimed leadership role -- especially for other Christian denominations. Ironically the current massive migration of refugees across the Mediterranean could even be explored as a case of strategic [blowback](#), namely an unforeseen systemic response to its population policies. This could be understood as analogous to the process recognized in the case of American global strategy, as variously discussed ([Chalmers Johnson](#), *Blowback: the costs and consequences of American Empire*, 2004; [William Rivers Pitt](#), *The True History of Blowback in One Sentence*, *TruthOut*, 23 October 2014; [Mary Anne Weaver](#), *Blowback*, *The Atlantic*, May 1996).

Modest proposal: issue Vatican passports to all refugees arriving in Europe

Given that the Vatican positions itself within the secular framework of the international community and the pattern of related diplomatic treaties in terms of international law, there is a case for inquiring how its strong advocacy of [human rights](#) could be most appropriately related to those of human responsibilities. In this respect it is appropriate to note that the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) has not as yet been matched by any *Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities*, despite various initiatives in this regard.

For example the [InterAction Council](#) drafted a *Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities*, (proposed in 1997, [amended](#) in 1998) for consideration by the United Nations as a complement to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948). No action has since been taken on the original proposal (available in many languages). In a reaction to it, the UN approved a *Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* (53/144, 9 December 1998).

Clearly the Catholic Church has not used the respect in which it is held to advance any such initiatives, if only in the active debate on the desirability of some such clarification. The argument can be taken further through slight adaptation of the wording of such documents, as discussed separately (*Universal Declaration of Responsibilities of Human Intercourse: a draft proposal*, 2007).

The Catholic Church is nevertheless currently faced with systemic consequences of the secular impact of the guidance it provides -- and considers to be unquestionable. This moral stance is increasingly difficult to defend -- as indicated by the various scandals with which the Church has been intimately associated over the past decade ([Vatican Bank investments](#), [sexual abuse by clergy](#) of parishioners and cover up, systematic [removal of children of indigenous peoples](#) from their families, etc). These have of course become apparent as a result of revelations by those outside the Church -- having long been considered acceptable within it.

In adopting a paternal role with respect to the engendering of ever more children, the arrival of migrants from Africa can then be recognized in secular and systemic terms as a case of "chickens coming home to roost" in a very real sense -- giving special spiritual significance to the right of return. With respect to the divine mandate of the Catholic Church, the appropriate strategic response is clearly framed by the biblical text: **Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."** (*Matthew 19:14*).

However, rather than organizing matters such that others are blackmailed into taking responsibility for the systemic failures of the Catholic Church, there is a case for exploring options in which the Church uses its resources to respond strategically to the challenge it has engendered and which its policies are systematically sustaining for the foreseeable future.

There is therefore every reason, in terms of its secular role and legal opportunities, for passports to be issued by the Vatican to refugee arrivals on behalf of the universal Catholic Church. This would resolve a range of legal problems, now irresponsibly delegated by the Catholic Church to the governments of the Christian countries of Europe variously beholden to it.

Feasibility of issuing Vatican passports

As clarified by *Wikipedia* with respect to the distinction between [Vatican and Holy See passports](#), the term "Vatican passport" can mean either a passport issued by the [Holy See](#) or one issued by the [Vatican City State](#). The latter can issue normal passports for its citizens; the Holy See issues personal, diplomatic and service passports (see *Legal status of the Holy See*).

Again, as noted by *Wikipedia*, of the approximately 800 residents of Vatican City, over 450 have Vatican citizenship. The Vatican City State law on citizenship, residence and access (promulgated on 22 February 2011), classifies citizens in three categories:

- Cardinals resident in Vatican City or in Rome;
- Diplomats of the Holy See;
- Persons residing in Vatican City because of their office or service.

There is clearly little internal obstacle to promulgating a new Vatican law which would extend the third category or introduce a fourth -- designed specifically for refugees. This could be appropriately understood in terms of some notion of "right of return", possibly even in terms of the famed biblical *Parable of the Prodigal Son* (or *Lost Son*), explained as follows by *Wikipedia*:

According to the *Gospel of Luke* (*Luke 15:11-32*), a father gives his two sons his inheritance before he dies. The younger son, after wasting his fortune (the word 'prodigal' means 'wastefully extravagant'), goes hungry during a famine. He then returns home with the intention of begging to be employed and renouncing his kinship to his father. Regardless, the father finds him on the road and immediately welcomes him back as his son and holds a feast to celebrate his return. The older son refuses to participate, stating that in all the time he has worked for the father, he did not even receive a goat to celebrate with his friends. The father reminds the older son that everything the father has is the older son's (his inheritance) but that they should still celebrate the return of the younger son

The parable fruitfully frames discussion as to how "prodigal" and "lost" might be understood in relation to Europe (with its colonial history and responsibilities), and the product of those policies as inspired by Church dogma. Given the parallels with the Pope as Holy Father -- and the children so faithfully fathered by proxy -- the parable usefully clarifies the strategic response which is morally appropriate for the Catholic Church to adopt. Could [canon law](#) reframe incoming refugees as children systemically (and multiply) fathered through surrogate mothers by the Pope in his various incarnations?

Could refugees instigate legal proceedings to substantiate this form of fatherhood, and its current responsibilities -- within the theological framework provided by canon law? Given the Catholic claim to exclusive Papal representation of the fatherhood of God in relation to the

children engendered in terms of this framework, and the requirement that priests be addressed as "father", do those thereby engendered have no legitimate claim (*Call No Man "Father"? Catholic Answers*, 10 August 2004)?

The current challenge could therefore be fruitfully reframed by the Catholic Church in theological terms. It calls for creative reinterpretation of paternity in a context in which spiritual fatherhood has long been stressed -- and deliberately cultivated as a form of address. Fatherhood has been subtly associated with procreation through explicit use of a seminary as a training context for dissemination. Through promotion of chastity, the biology of insemination has been given symbolic form as a spiritual process -- whatever the aberrations in practice through which the point is made otherwise (notably by higher members of the clergy).

Curiously the "genetic" emphasis on "*Be fruitful and multiply*" (*Genesis 1:28*) can indeed be extended to include a "memetic" analogue, as might now be understood by secular society. Dissemination and insemination are then to be reframed in memetic terms -- however this is to be worded in theological language, or is already so understood in terms of implanting memes and conserving memetic lineage. Given current controversy regarding insemination by proxy -- and *in vitro* variants -- the question of artificial memetic insemination merits clarification from this subtler perspective. Especially intriguing is any correspondence to provisions in the biological case for concealment of knowledge of the biological father.

Forms of spiritual fatherhood and paternity have long been acknowledged within and beyond the domain of formal religion (Brian Anderson, *The Responsibility of a Spiritual Father*, *The Bridge*, 26 September 2010; Dan Shaffer, *Spiritual Fathers: restoring the reproductive Church*, Building Brothers, 2006; Kato Mivule, *Are Spiritual Fathers supported by the New Testament*, *Yesu Mulungi: African Christian Perspectives*, 27 September 2011). In terms of canon law, this recognition of paternity could be readily interpreted in terms of the right to a passport -- as is the case in many secular legislations. It could also be understood as consistent with authoritative papal declarations (Francis X. Rocca, *Pope says Catholics must practise 'responsible parenthood'*, *Catholic Herald*, 19 January 2015; Pope John Paul II, *Responsible Parenthood Linked to Moral Maturity*, 5 September 1984). This could lead to recognition of the Catholic Church as the preeminent exponent of "planned parenthood" through its population policies -- prior to the misleading adoption of the term to carry the opposite meaning.

For the Catholic Church this subtler definition is consistent with understandings of a passport to heaven, as has been variously implied by the granting of indulgences (Owen Bourgaize, *Passport to Heaven*, *Sermon Central*, November 2002; Marguerite Farison, *Passport to Heaven*, 1989; Timothy Green Beckley and Diane Tessman, *Your Passport to Heaven*, 1998; Harold W. Decksheimer, *Christianity Your Free Passport To Heaven*, 2011; *Understanding Heaven Passport*, Insight for Living Ministries, 2013). This offers a particular irony in that reaching Europe is legitimately framed as Heaven by many refugees in comparison with the Hell from which they have so laboriously escaped -- a Hell which religious authorities have been so complicit in engendering. The Vatican can of course be readily framed as an Embassy of Heaven on Earth -- even a Gateway to Heaven.

In addition to clothing and immediate care when migrants disembark in Europe, "legal care" could be immediately offered in the form of a Vatican passport. This could well entitle migrants to residency in the Vatican -- appropriately adapted to that end, if only in the spacious [St Peter's Square](#). One or more (inflatable) domes could be readily installed to offer effective shelter within that space, as well as in the grounds of the extensive network of Christian monasteries, convents and related institutes (*Lists of Christian monasteries; Catholic Religious Orders and Communities*). Direct transport to such locations could be arranged from the ports of disembarkation. The strategy could also be framed as a response to dramatically falling numbers in such communities (Gareth Rubin, *Monasteries in drive to recruit more novices*, *The Observer*, 11 January 2009).

Given the numbers expected over the decades to come, the sense of Vatican citizenship could be extended to include residency in the many Catholic religious institutions around Europe (monasteries, convents, churches, and the like). Many countries have long accepted legal notions of residence by passport holders of other countries. The Vatican is clearly able to extend its legal framework to include non-residency when its passport holders reside in other countries of Europe. As with the other [European microstates](#) (Monaco and San Marino), the Vatican is considered as a *de facto* member of the [Schengen Area](#), since it does not have border controls with the Schengen countries, although it has not officially signed documents that make it part of Schengen. This presumably implies that Vatican citizens can reside anywhere within the Schengen zone with a minimum of administration difficulty. A related possibility is already envisaged with respect to abandoned Italian villages (Silvia Marchetti, *6,000 ghost towns: Italy's answer to migrant crisis?* *CNN*, 26 May 2015).

Creativity of this kind could be elaborated further by the Vatican through recognition of the possibility of extending its citizenship arrangements to enable the emergence of what has otherwise been recognized as a form of "virtual nation". This can be associated with widespread recognition of the existence and role of [diasporas](#), as discussed separately (*Affinity, Diaspora, Identity, Reunification, Return: reimagining possibilities of engaging with place and time*, 2013). Such creativity would respond to the psychosocial challenges faced by refugees, and readily neglected in responding to the material needs.

A challenging further step, appropriate to the new thinking required by the 21st century, is consideration of how Catholics everywhere could be more appropriately associated with the secular role of the Vatican and the Holy See. As a form of diaspora, potentially enabled by a form of citizenship, this could help to address the complicity of the Catholic faithful in the strategic policies regarding shortage of resources in relation to population increase. This could include specific forms of taxation ([tithing](#)) to address the consequences of any strategic preferences in this regard -- as is effectively practiced in Germany and other Catholic countries as [church tax](#). With respect to discussion of migrant quotas, such reframing would focus any emerging suggestions regarding [billeting of refugees](#) onto Catholic households -- as supporters of Catholic population policies -- rather than subject the households of non-supporters to the consequences such policies.

Especially creative for the Vatican would be the use of such an extended citizenship initiative to include the currently disenfranchised [Romani people](#) of Catholic faith within the European diaspora community. Prior to the following consideration of a precedent with which the Vatican has been directly associated, it is appropriate to recall the role of the [Nansen passport](#) issued via the League of Nations by its High Commissioner for Refugees and the [Nansen International Office for Refugees](#). The latter was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in

1938. By 1942, the passports were honoured by governments in 52 countries. Approximately 450,000 Nansen passports were provided to stateless people and refugees who needed travel documents but could not obtain one from a national authority. Although "Nansen passports" are no longer issued, existing national and supranational authorities, including the United Nations, issue travel documents for stateless people and refugees, including [certificates of identity](#) (or "alien's passports") and [refugee travel documents](#).

This proposal is more obviously relevant in the case of refugees and migrants who are already of Catholic persuasion, as with many Syrian Christians. It can be readily extended to encompass those who are affiliated with other Christian faiths. The argument can however be further extended in terms of the [Great Commission of Christianity](#) whereby Christian teachings are communicated persuasively to all nations of the world (*Matthew 28:16-20*). This would therefore include those refugees currently of Muslim faith.

The point to be emphasized is that those in dire need may be quite prepared to convert to Catholicism in exchange for assistance and the legitimation offered by a passport. There is a long history of instances of opportunistic conversion to Christianity, most obviously recognized as [forced conversion](#). That of the [Emperor Constantine](#) remains a matter of continuing controversy (Andrew Pierson, *Constantine True Conversion or Political Opportunist*, 2012); *Religious Conversions: the moment of truth*, *The Economist*, 24 July 2008). Such conversion has been most notable in the case of those of Jewish faith -- as a means of avoiding persecution (David Novak, *When Jews Are Christians, First Things*, November 1991; Mark Oppenheimer, *Jewish Converts Offer a Window on Conservative Christianity*, *The New York Times*, 24 May 2013; Elisheva Carlebach, *Divided Souls: Converts from Judaism in Germany, 1500-1750*, 2001).

Highly controversial historical precedent?

It is an historical irony that the seemingly extraordinary possibility of issuing Vatican passports to refugees has a precedent. This can be recognized in continuing debates regarding the degree to which the Catholic Church in some way provided assistance to Nazis in the closing phases of World War II. The facts of the matter and their interpretation remain highly controversial. Popular presentation of the arguments has notably taken the form of several books ([Gerald Steinacher](#), *Nazis on the Run: How Hitler's Henchmen Fleed Justice*, 2012; David Cymet, *History vs. Apologetics: The Holocaust, the Third Reich, and the Catholic Church*, 2011; [John Cornwell](#), *Hitler's Pope: the secret history of Pius XII*, 1999; [David G. Dalin](#), *The Myth of Hitler's Pope: How Pope Pius XII Rescued Jews from the Nazis*, 2005; [Mark Aarons](#) and [John Loftus](#), *Unholy Trinity: The Vatican, The Nazis, and the Swiss Bankers*, 1998).

The details presented as facts have given rise to the belief that the Vatican, under the leadership of [Pope Pius XII](#), knowingly and willingly assisted hunted Nazi war criminals to escape from justice by taking flight overseas, particularly to Latin America. The belief notably includes an understanding that large numbers of Vatican passports were issued to Nazis because nobody in the world would question them. He is recognized for his earlier role in concluding the controversial *Reichskonkordat* (1933) between the Holy See and Nazi Germany. The [canonization of Pope Pius XII](#) has been under consideration since his death in 1958.

With respect to the issuance of Vatican passports, as issued by the Vatican Refugee Organisation (*Pontificia Commissione d'Assistenza ai Profughi*), it has been claimed that these "travel documents" were not full "passports", and were not in themselves enough to gain passage overseas. They could however be used to obtain a displaced person passport from the [International Committee of the Red Cross](#) (ICRC). However enabling this process could be considerably facilitated by a Catholic authority. Particular emphasis has been placed on the role of Bishop [Alois Hudal](#) who had a personal history of Nazi sympathies -- and the extent to which his activities were explicitly or implicitly authorised by the Catholic hierarchy.

The term [ratline](#) has been given to the mechanisms by which thousands of Nazi war criminals fled to the remotest parts of the globe -- a process involving espionage, Nazi priests, and a network of Catholic monasteries and safe houses ([Uki Goni](#), *The Real Odessa: Smuggling the Nazis to Perón's Argentina*, 2003; [Peter Levenda](#), *Ratline: Soviet Spies, Nazi Priests, and the Disappearance of Adolf Hitler*, 2012).

As a matter of history, the topic has been most recently highlighted in an essay by [Kevin Madigan](#) (*How the Catholic Church Sheltered War Criminals*, *Commentary*, December 2011). This has evoked predictable responses by Catholic scholars ([Ronald J. Rychlak](#), *Shoddy Scholarship in the Study of Pope Pius XII*, *Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights*, April 2012; William Doino Jr., *Kevin Madigan's Offenses Against History*, *First Things*, February 2012; Guy Walters, *The Truth About Pius and the Nazi "Ratlines"*, *The Catholic Herald*, August 14, 2009; Michel Garroté, *Le Pape Argentin et l'Evêque Nazi*, *Les Observateurs.ch*, 30 April 2015). The debate has been summarized by the Catholic News Agency (*Claims of papal help for Nazi war criminals "verifiably false"*, 16 April 2012).

Whether articulated by historians or journalists, the controversy is framed from a Catholic perspective as a combination of sloppy work and over-the-top charges, seen as providing a textbook example of how a verifiably false account can be reported as fact in the mainstream media. Unfortunately the pattern of predictable responses is difficult to dissociate from the [typology of cover-ups](#) provided by *Wikipedia*. More unfortunate is the difficulty of dissociating such responses from those made by Catholic authorities with respect to sexual abuse by the Catholic clergy, and the associated pattern of cover-ups with which the Vatican has seemingly been complicit to an unfortunate degree -- as recently highlighted by investigations of the United Nations (*Catholic church leaders prepare for grilling by UN human rights panel*, *The Guardian*, 5 May 2014; *Vatican tries to draw line under clerical sex abuse scandals at UN hearing*, *The Guardian*, 5 May 2014; *UN Committee Against Torture criticises Vatican handling of sex abuse*, *The Guardian*, 22 May 2014; *Committee against Torture, Concluding observations on the initial report of the Holy See*, 17 June 2014).

Holy See / Vatican State as an indicative embodiment of existential uncertainty?

Whether in legal, functional or representational terms, the references above make clear that there is a degree of uncertainty (in any particular context) as to whether the Catholic Church is interacting with the the secular realities of the world as the "Holy See" or as the "Vatican" -- notably in its recent relation with its investigation by the United Nations. This situation bears a strange resemblance to the

issues resolved in fundamental physics in its dependence on the [Uncertainty Principle](#). Simply framed it indicates the constraints on completely defining matter as being best understood as a particle or a wave -- when there is a degree of uncertainty which is both fundamental and essential.

The possibility of an analogue in the psychosocial domain has been articulated by [Garrison Sposito](#) (*Does a generalized Heisenberg principle operate in the social sciences?* *Inquiry*, 12, 1969). Such a possibility can be variously explored (*Being a Waveform of Potential as an Experiential Choice: emergent dynamic qualities of identity and integrity*, 2013; *Being Neither a-Waving Nor a-Parting: cognitive implications of wave-particle duality in the light of science and spirituality*, 2013). In addition to framing refugees in conventional legal terms, they might fruitfully be recognized as "wave-forms" (*Encountering Otherness as a Waveform -- in the light of a wave theory of being*, 2013). There is clearly some irony to such terminology, given the sense in which the challenge they represent is notably framed in terms of incoming "waves" of refugees.

In its literal concreteness, could the "Vatican" then be compared to what is associated with the definitiveness of a "particle" -- in contrast with the far subtler function of a "wave", with which the "Holy See" could be usefully associated? There is of course a further degree of irony to the symbolic significance attached to wave-like gestures of representatives of the Holy See and public responses to them, as may be otherwise argued (*Quantum Wampum Essential to Navigating Ragnarok*, 2014). However this capacity to shift between the two modalities can also be explored in terms of the game-playing with respect to certainty/uncertainty -- made evident in the widely recognized confidence game known under a variety of names (*Find the Lady*, *Three-card Monte*, etc). In practice the Catholic Church is able to represent itself concretely as the "Vatican", but to reframe itself as the "Holy See" whenever convenient, especially in emphasizing matters of faith and spirituality, and the credibility they engender..

This strategic capacity may be regretted, given the ways in which it is exploited to the disadvantage of those holding beliefs distinct from Catholicism. However with respect to the proposal above, through the principled embodiment of such uncertainty, the Catholic Church constitutes an exemplar of how the constraints of concrete reality can be reframed through subtlety.

This frames the manner in which "nation state" can have a "wave-like" dimension -- perhaps characteristic of contrasting references to "cultures". In this sense, the proposal reframes the conventional focus by "states" on citizenship (by contrast with the "statelessness" of refugees), notably through recognition of diasporas as being a form of experiential identity beyond such legal definitions. The modest proposal opens the way to recognizing such forms of collective identity. Given its skills in shifting between legal formality and subtlety, the "Vatican" can creatively adapt these to the massive reality of refugees and to the disenfranchised like the Romani people.

Of particular interest, given the theological underpinnings of the Catholic belief system and its institutional forms, is how manifestations and distinctions are held to exist. This can be dramatically highlighted with respect to current political issues regarding the requisite "concrete proof" for nuclear weapons production in Iran, following that evidenced in the case of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. The concern can however be fruitfully extended (*10 Demands for Concrete Proof by We the Peoples of the World*, 2012).

Re-imagining the dynamic of potential existence

More intriguing, and more provocative, is the question of the "existence" of any collective entity and how such existence is to be understood. This is most fruitfully illustrated by the case of the so-called "[international community](#)", increasingly cited as though it existed, and is capable of pressure and initiatives in relation to other collective entities -- even beyond those of the United Nations. As noted by *Wikipedia*, the term is typically used to imply the existence of a common point of view towards strategic issues in a period in which such consensus is questionable, as separately argued (*The Consensus Delusion*, 2011). Appeals are increasingly made to that community. Its failure to act in response to them may well be deplored by those in need, as evident in a key report of Amnesty International (*The Global Refugee Crisis: a conspiracy of neglect* (June 2015):

The refugee crisis is one of the defining challenges of the 21st century, but the response of the international community has been a shameful failure. We need a radical overhaul of policy and practice to create a coherent and comprehensive global strategy.... The international community has failed to provide [refugees], or the humanitarian agencies supporting refugees with sufficient resources... The current refugee crisis will not be solved unless the international community recognizes that it is a global problem that requires states to significantly step up international cooperation

Of relevance to this argument is that the international community does not "exist". It has no legal basis, if that is the primary criterion -- whether or not *de facto* existence can be claimed or assumed. There is no "concrete proof" of its existence which could be accepted in a conventional legal process or through application of any conventional scientific method. Deplored the failure to act of a "non-existent" entity then merits the most careful consideration. Whether framed in terms of a [duty to rescue](#), or as a failure to provide assistance to a person in need, the capacity to indict the international community for [crimes against humanity](#) through some sort of [class action suit](#) is clearly extremely limited (Christa Rottensteiner, *The Denial of Humanitarian Assistance as a Crime under International Law*, *International Review of the Red Cross*, 835, September 1999). In legal terms any action by the international community might then be considered comparable with an [Act of God](#), recalling an exploration of the possibility of legal action against his religious representatives (*The Man Who Sued God*, 2001).

Such thinking thus frames the question of whether and how the "United States" exists, as this continues to be variously explored (*Does America even exist?* 31 December 2011; *Does America Still Exist?*; Richard Rodriguez, *Does America Still Exist?* Fudan University, 2012), most notably by Stephen Clarkson (*Does North America Exist? Governing the Continent after NAFTA and 9/11*, Woodrow Wilson Center, 2008). The question with respect to the USA is currently of great relevance in the light of the ongoing debate regarding the [right to exist](#) of Palestine -- recognized as it is by the vast majority of countries ([John V. Whitbeck](#), *The State of Palestine Exists*, *The Huffington Post*, 1 September 2013). To what extent can the USA be held to exist, or to have a right to exist? How could concrete proof

be presented in support of that claim?

There is great irony to the fact that current controversy regarding arguments with respect to the existence of God can be understood to be as questionable as those with respect to the existence of the "United States" or "Israel" -- whether framed in scientific, legal, historical or theological terms. Within each of these frames, the issue is the nature of "concrete proof" and the manner in which its status and credibility is determined, as with [fiat currency](#). Hence the concern regarding adherence to so-called "fiat beliefs". The current massive exercise in "[printing money](#)" is therefore of relevance ([ECB launches 1 trillion euro rescue plan to revive euro economy](#), Reuters, 22 January 2015).

The legitimacy which such an extraordinary process has acquired could be seen as now framing the provocative possibility of "printing passports" -- applying the strategic logic of "[quantitative easing](#)" to "refugee easing". Curiously the process bears comparison in functional and existential terms with the credibility of the controversial [sale of indulgences](#) by Church authorities ([From Quantitative Easing \(QE\) to Moral Easing \(ME\): a stimulus package to avert moral bankruptcy?](#) 2010). Ironically an indulgence can be understood as a form of "passport to heaven".

Again, given the fundamental dependence of the Catholic Church on faith and theology, such thinking can be extended to the seemingly abstruse philosophical question of how an individual can be held to exist, whether by collectives or through the experience of the person traumatically challenged by life as a refugee. Such issues become more immediately relevant in a period in which radicalisation is of increasing security concern, as discussed separately ([Radicalisation of Existence and Identity](#), 2015; [Radicalisation versus Demonisation?](#) 2015). This is also of concern with regard to both the infiltration by terrorists of migrating refugees and any willingness to die for an ideal, as argued by [Costica Bradatan](#) ([Dying for Ideas: the dangerous lives of the philosophers](#), 2015).

Consideration of this modest proposal could elicit new insight into the attribution of identity to people through "identity papers" enabling them to "travel" -- and into the sense of identity which is thereby enabled experientially for the individual. Elements of such possibilities are already evident in the nature of the identity of a person with multiple passports and associated entitlements, especially as understood by that person. In that sense the Vatican could also provide passports to people of its choice, most notably any of Catholic faith wherever they dwell. How is identity then to be understood, honoured and respected?

Rather than the simplistic assertion that collective entities either exist or do not (Conditions A and B), it may be more fruitful to imagine two additional conditions (C and D), as argued by [Kinhide Mushakoji](#) ([Global Issues and Interparadigmatic Dialogue; essays on multipolar politics](#), 1988). Thus the international community, as with the United Nations, the United States, and the European Community, both exist **and** do not (Condition C), and neither exist **nor** do not (Condition D). Desperate appeals to them for remedial action need to take this into consideration -- as in the case of analogous appeals to any deity.

It is then meaningful to recognize the extent to which this applies equally to a person required to live coherently in a reality characterized by ambiguity -- especially when vulnerable to fatality. ([Living with Incomprehension and Uncertainty](#), 2012; [Living as an Imaginal Bridge between Worlds: global implications of "betwixt and between" and liminality](#), 2011). A human being may be acknowledged to exist or not, thereby encompassing assertions that a person is a "nonentity", a "nobody" (or "does not exist"), an experience which can be a reality for many, whether momentarily or frequently -- especially when faced with the expectation of nothing. However it thereby also acknowledges that a person may both exist **and** not exist (Condition C), or may neither exist **nor** not exist (Condition D). All four conditions are evident in the case of a refugee, as framed by society and in the experience of that person.

A "Vatican passport" could be creatively conceived to acknowledge the dynamic between these four conditions. As argued, this could then apply to those who are not framed as refugees -- but may well become such in an uncertain future. Just as the claim was widely made that "[I am Charlie Hebdo](#)", it can be claimed that "[I am a refugee](#)", or "[I am stateless](#)" (or may become so). A "Vatican passport" could be understood to "re-cognize" this dynamic. The extent to which such a passport "exists" or "does not exist" in the eyes of the international community is itself thereby reframed.

Any denial of this paradoxical dynamic reality, so appropriate to experience in the 21st Century, could be challenged by the paradigmatic assertion of centuries ago ([E pur si muove](#)) or by that of earlier millennia ([Neti Neti](#)).

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| <p>Produced on the occasion of announcement of the forthcoming Papal Encyclical Laudato Si' (Explosive intervention by Pope Francis set to transform climate change debate, <i>The Observer</i>, 13 June 2015)</p> |
| <p>Announced as the most anticipated papal letter for decades, it calls for an ethical and economic revolution. It is expected to argue that humanity's exploitation of the planet's resources has crossed the Earth's natural boundaries, and that the world faces ruin without a revolution in hearts and minds. In a world much challenged by radicalisation, it is expected to be the most radical statement yet from the outspoken pontiff. It is said to address the root causes of poverty and the threats facing nature, or "creation". By adding a moral dimension to the well-rehearsed scientific arguments, the Pope hopes to raise the ambition of countries above their own self-interest to secure a strong deal in a crucial climate summit in Paris in November 2015 -- as framed in a joint report from the Pontifical Academy of Sciences and the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences (Climate Change and The Common Good: a statement of the problem and the demand for transformative solutions, 2015).</p> |
| <p>In the light of the argument above, it can be fruitfully asked to what extent the Encyclical will recognize that the requisite "revolution in hearts and minds" must necessarily be matched by one in the Vatican itself and amongst the Catholic faithful. Opening St Peter's Square to settlement by refugees (as suggested above) would be an appropriate symbol of this intention and an example to Catholic families worldwide. In its effort to frame the "root causes of poverty and the threats facing nature", it is to be hoped that the addition of the "moral dimension" to the "well-researched scientific arguments" will encompass those relating to unchecked population increase which the Vatican has been so assiduous in encouraging for so long and in treating as of negligible implication for the planet. This was noted in relation to the recent encounter of the Pope with Ban</p> |

Ki-moon to discuss climate change and Mediterranean migration (*Marrying Strategic White Holes with Problematic Black Holes*, 2015)

Laudato Si' on Care of Our Common Home

(Commented excerpts from the Encyclical Letter of Pope Francis, 18 June 2016, are presented separately as *Papal Promotion of Concern for Climate Change and Refugee Care: a means of dissimulating criminal systemic neglect*, 2015)

Addendum

A Stamp to support migrants. Vatican City State, 21 November 2014

Pope criticizes nations that close doors to migrants. Reuters, 17 June 2015

Vatican official says European practice on migrants is contradictory. Catholic Herald, 24 June 2015

Catholic Church's Position On Immigration Reform. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, August 2013

Churches want access for migrants; UN expert urges opening borders. Ecumenical News, 16 June 2015

How Many Immigrants Does Vatican City Take? The Social Contract Press, Summer 1995

Vatican to take in two refugee families as Pope calls for 'every religion' to help, The Guardian, 7 September 2015

Pope opens the Vatican to refugees, calls on Europe's churches to follow suit, Crux, 6 September 2015

In light of the massive refugee crisis in Europe, Pope Francis announced Sunday that he will give **temporary housing** in the Vatican to at least two refugee families and asked that every European parish, monastery, and shrine do the same. The pontiff said the two parish churches contained within the walls of the Vatican city-state, St. Peter's Basilica and St. Anne's, will welcome at least one refugee family each. [*emphasis added*]

The Catholic Church is the Biggest Financial Power on Earth, Humans Are Free, March 2012

Some idea of the real estate and other forms of wealth controlled by the Catholic church may be gathered by the remark of a member of the New York Catholic Conference, namely 'that his church probably ranks second only to the United States Government in total annual purchase....Our assets and real estate holdings must exceed those of Standard Oil, A.T. and T., and U.S. Steel combined. And our roster of dues-paying members must be second only to the tax rolls of the United States Government.... The Catholic church, once all her assets have been put together, is the most formidable stockbroker in the world

(Avro Manhattan, *The Vatican Billions*, 1983; Gerald Posner, *God's Bankers: a history of money and power at the Vatican*, 2015; Stephanie Kirchgaessner, *Vatican hit by new claims of financial mismanagement and lavish spending*, The Guardian, 4 November 2015; Gianluigi Nuzzi, *Merchants in the Temple: inside Pope Francis's secret battle against corruption in the Vatican*, 2015; Emiliano Fittipaldi, *Avarizia*, 2015)

Debate in European institutions regarding migrants is focusing increasingly on what are termed *passeurs* in French, namely people smugglers (*Migrants: l'opération de l'UE contre les passeurs a commencé*, Le Figaro, 22 juin 2015; *Accord de l'UE pour recourir à la force contre les passeurs en Méditerranée*, Le Soir, 14 septembre 2015). Given the strategic advantage of the Vatican, there is clearly an opportunity to associate *passeur* with **passport** issue -- for a fee. Migrants are widely reported to pay *passeurs* generously. The traditional Vatican preoccupation with acquisition of resources could therefore be extended competitively to the sale of passports -- as is the case with some other countries (however this is framed). The Vatican could then become the *passeur extraordinaire* , effectively "smuggling" people into "heaven". This would also be consistent with the earlier sale of indulgences. If bishoprics lack the administrative facilities, consular offices could be opened by the Vatican in trans-Mediterranean countries -- to enable the process -- perhaps further assisted by the Italian underworld with which it has such frequently documented creative relationships (*Pope to meet the Mafia*, Daily Mail, 19 June 2014; *The Pope and The Mafia*, The Passionate Eye, 8 August 2015).

Vatican parish takes in Syrian refugee family. The Guardian, 18 September 2015

Vatican welcomes its first family of refugees following pope's appeal. Catholic News Service, 18 September 2015

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