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From uncertainty to the faith' qualitative leap

Montúfar Salcedo Carlos Efraín *

Universidad Politécnica Salesiana UPS Ecuador.

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Abstract

Uncertainty refers to that human experience related to ignorance or disagreement about a phenomenon or thing; However, human beings need to submit to uncertainty in order to develop courage, tranquility, certainty and even audacity in their survival. The antipode to uncertainty would be faith, which from theology is the gift of God. Anthropologists equate faith with religion and assert that it is not determined by anything other than itself and, consequently, cannot be reduced to any type of ethnographic explanation. However, faith has an immense capacity to transform the way of being, acting and understanding oneself of human beings. That is, it is an element of profound human transformation with the power to produce factuality. Is the factual power of faith a prize even longed for by human reason?

Keywords: Faith; Uncertainty; Christendom; Power

1. Introduction

Uncertainty as a noun refers to that human experience related to ignorance, lack of information or disagreement about a phenomenon or thing. Its synonyms are doubt, indecision, irresolution, perplexity. Uncertainty is also a common good in times of accelerations that cause deep transformations due to the expansion of knowledge, that is, frequent in this age devoid of universal certainties, creeds, beliefs, doctrines or dogmas.

What then is the attitude that humanity can adopt to face uncertainty, to develop courage, tranquility, certainty and even audacity in its survival?

Paradoxically, in the face of insecurity, anxiety or restlessness, doubt, hesitation, and suspicion, humanity has no other antidote than the exercise of faith, no matter how debatable it may be. Even, because possibly faith is also the opposite of fear.

Faith is usually defined as the firm hope that a person has that something will happen, be or work in a certain way. Security, assertion that something is true (Jarman, 2003). In Christianity, faith is a theological virtue that consists of assent to God's revelation, proposed by the Church. (RAE, 2023). Faith is generally defined as a foundation in a belief, as a conviction that admits the absolute. According to Saint John Paul II, in his encyclical "Fides et ratio" (1998), faith and reason "are like the two wings with which the human spirit rises towards the contemplation of the truth" (par. 1). It is probably in this assertion that we find the complementarity between faith and reason, two wings that allow us to take flight to observe the horizon of our truth. "Faith and reason help each other", corroborates the encyclical.

In this way, in the present analysis, we look for the definitions of faith both from Christian theology and from anthropological science, trying to identify similarities and disagreements; to finally, try to outline the arguments that validate faith as a driving, motivating mechanism that generates factuality, modeling human reality. Faith deciphered

* Corresponding author: Montufar Salcedo, Carlos Efraín <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4707-0837>

as an incorporeal and invisible being that, however, generates materiality, and before which, some authors manifest their prudence as an object of analysis.

2. Statements, analogies, approaches and divergences of faith from anthropology and the christian worldview

2.1. What is the perception of faith from Anthropology?

It could be pointed out that the social sciences in general and Anthropology in particular have shown a certain timidity regarding the analysis of faith. Perhaps inhibited by the assertion of Saint Thomas, who explains that faith from the beginning is a gift of God, coinciding with Ephesians 2, 8-9, which states: "for by grace you are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not by works, so that no one can boast." Anthropological definitions have rather been functionalist in style, that is, they are determined in action, social structure and practical aspects, such as control or social coherence (stability and survival). The interpretations have been less focused on analyzing what is religious and rather have focused on the objective or the why of faith or religious act. Probably, this characteristic is related to the so-called scientific secularism developed in Anthropology. Steward (2001:327) asserts that this science "clings to the ideal of secularism" generating a kind of initial disbelief in the faith justified by the ideal of scientific objectivity.

However, Clifford Geertz takes a position, albeit in a prudent perspective before the different religious beliefs, including faith as a mystical category. For Geertz belief systems are symbolic systems. He stresses the need to distinguish between believing "in the middle of the ritual" and believing as a product of "reflection on such an experience" and, finally, he stresses the need to interpret these expressions as consequences of the prior acceptance of an authority external to the individual (Geertz, 2000). From this point of view, separating faith from theological vision would be almost impossible.

Víctor Turner, for his part, suggests that "religion is not determined by anything other than itself and, consequently, it cannot be reduced to any type of ethnographic explanation" (quoted by Vázquez, 2013, para. 12). Therefore, any academic attempt to explain religious beliefs only ends up destroying "what hurts and threatens their self-sufficiency." He argues that the "inner life" of the anthropologist is key to deciphering "the inner life of others"; but that, for this very reason, the knowledge that can be detached from such a relationship does not belong to the field of Anthropology.

Evans-Pritchard, in his analysis of the religion of the Muer, is categorical in his expression: "at this point the theologian takes the place of the anthropologist", elusively adopting the need for the anthropological instrument for the analysis of religious categories (quoted by Vázquez, 2013 paragraph 12).

There is a variety of definitions and approaches to faith during the history of human civilization. It is not the object of the study, to carry out a corresponding historical analysis, only to cite the statements that have facilitated the coexistence of faith together with the alleged rationality. However, it is pertinent to assert that there was a struggle over the superiority of faith over reason from the Christian worldview, which has progressively allowed a dialogue on equity of values. For this reason, we will not delve into religious thinkers such as Saint Anselm (1033-1109), who considered that reason alone could come closer to heresy than truth, and argued that reason will always need faith. He even promoted the idea that it is not necessary to understand to believe, but rather the opposite, that it is necessary to believe to understand in accordance with the affirmation of Saint Augustine, for whom, it is faith that allows us to see and understand what we previously only believed or worse still, the affirmation that the reason for explaining faith becomes arrogance and sin according to Tertullian (160-220 ad.). (Bellini, 2013:15).

We consider more pertinent for the purpose of this study, the vision of Saint Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274), who sought to formulate a kind of convergent bridge when he affirmed that faith and reason are two different dimensions of the same reality. Faith and reason for Aquinas would be two realities created by God, consequently, without any contradiction. "Reason and faith help each other" (Bellini, 2013:15). Paradoxically, this affirmation of Aquinas would be consistent with that of the previously mentioned anthropologists, who exempt themselves from the analysis of faith, manifesting its relevance to a qualitatively different field such as the field of theology.

For his part, Guillermo Occam (1285-1349), upholds the absolute autonomy of reason and faith. Reason is concerned with the profane and faith and religion are concerned with the sacred. They do not contradict each other since they do not deal with the same thing. These two medieval mystics and thinkers (Thomas and Occam) provide us with a vision of mutual complementarity between faith and reason, and allow us to affirm the importance of the coexistence of these two categories. By not denying or excluding itself, it allows the affirmation of both realities and even agrees to recognize

the need for mutual approximations. The human being is not only a being with reason but also a being made of faith. Faith is usually even the least understood, because it is based on the freedom of the human being to believe or not believe. Even Paul Kurtz affirms: "The freedom of not believing is the first freedom of the human being" (Bellini, 2013:16).

Pope Benedict XVI warns us about the need to discard the dangers of a rationalism erected in the absolute that would run the risk of studying theology in a purely academic way, that is, learning far from the spiritual achievements where it finds its vitality. "Such an approach would be comparable to wanting to learn to swim without water," he adds. As for faith, it is a good of reason: it is part of a rational and embodied approach, also based on the experience of God. It is possible thanks to education in self-improvement, the only path to wisdom (cited by Torri, 2013). For Benedict, faith is a gift from God, but it is also a profoundly free and human act, since it is only possible to believe by the grace of the Holy Spirit. Faith is a going out of oneself, to entrust oneself in the hands of God. It is a yes to God. Consequently, we understand that faith has a different category from reason, which requires the support of logic to confirm its position. Faith, for its part, corresponds to a qualitatively different terrain, conscious, of the human being, who surrenders his uncertainties in the divine "do" of the Our Father. The divergence of faith is in its divine inspiration and its bestowal as a gift from God, while reason is a logical search for coherence, based on evidence. The practice of reason is not a gift, it is a human construction. Faith is instantaneous, global, omnipresent, reason is segmental, progressive, discursive.

John Paul II (1998) for his part, exposes faith as "the fundamental gift that the Holy Spirit grants for supernatural life", clarifying the importance of the sacred as a propitiatory entity. In turn, Pope Francis in the Encyclical Letter *Lumen Fidei* (2013), states: "The new logic of faith is centered on Christ. Faith in Christ saves us because in him life opens radically to a Love that precedes us and transforms us from within. Francis adds a new link to faith and love: is faith possible without love? Apparently without love for Christ and God the Father, faith would be a dream. Well, it is Christian love that pays for surrender in faith. Francisco asserts: "Whoever believes sees; see with a light that illuminates the entire journey, because it comes to us from the risen Christ." However, Francisco is sensitive to the illusory light that would oppose believing to seeking. Those who firmly believe they have found it would no longer need to continue searching for the truth; contrasting the global illumination of faith with the partial light of understanding. Trying to clarify, the encyclical text states that faith as a supernatural gift and virtue has an infinite and global category that has the capacity to illuminate the inside and the outside, surpassing any multiplicity of small lights that reason could establish.

3. Conclusion

3.1. The faith` qualitative leap towards human factuality.

Consequently, one of the statements about faith that the Catholic creed proposes is that of a complementarity. Two facets of the same reality that is not mutually exclusive. A kind of agreement or concordance that allows the recognition of reason as a human entity of search and faith as the gateway to the spiritual encounter with divinity. Reason, a stone by stone construction of the path towards truth and faith, an illumination, a gift not built but given, granted by divinity for knowledge and transformation of being, in truth itself.

Just as the discoveries of reason promote modifications in the habits, beliefs and behaviors of the human being, faith also has an immense capacity to transform the way of being and understanding itself of human beings. That is, both are elements of human transformation. Probably their apparent mutual opposition is due to the fact that both concepts, faith and reason, have an incomparable power to change societies. The power to produce facticity, movement, facts. Even reason could sigh for that potential for instantaneous, sometimes sudden, globalizing change that faith possesses over human behavior. Wasn't the change in behavior of the publican who would become Saint Matthew almost instantaneous? Is the factual power of faith a prize even longed for by human reason?

The qualitative leap of faith can be conceived as a cardinal change of an object or phenomenon, the transformation of an old quality into a new essence. A kind of transformation from the quantitative to the qualitative. However, in the context of this study, the qualitative leap does not refer directly to faith, but to what it is capable of producing or promoting in the behavior of human beings. That is, the qualitative leap of faith is analyzed from the factual perspective, what faith as a noun is capable of producing in the behavior of human beings. This relationship of consequence between faith and human action.

In this regard, we remember that the apostle James taught that "faith without works is dead" (James 2:26), agreeing on the importance between what we believe and what we do.

3.2. What are the works that faith promotes?

Father Bellini (2018:11) referring to faith maintained that: "it would be a mistake to think that it has no repercussions on the tangible". For his part, the philosopher Unamuno maintains that we need to believe and, therefore, we create God, but reason contradicts that belief. Thus, we find a certain agony and anguish in this struggle to believe, which is nothing more than the attempt to reconcile faith and reason. However, faith is creative and creates what we do not see because to believe in God is to want him to exist and that faith that is undoubtedly dead maintains Del Real. There are even authors who warn us about the non-rational or non-objective nature of faith, recognizing serious difficulties to be a subject of study. That is, faith itself represents a juncture between the tangible and intangible, we cannot grasp it as a material element, it is a noun that represents a virtue, a feeling, a gift and therefore promotes behaviors, facts, actions, factual positions. Can we deny the existence of something that has consequences?

Saint Augustine thought that faith does not require justification outside of itself. I believe in order to understand and I understand in order to believe, he argued. That is, faith helps reason and reason helps faith in a symbiosis of mutual accompaniment, which probably summarizes the reality of human feeling, in an exploration of security in the face of its finiteness, a placebo towards immortality.

From this perspective, faith can be perceived as a principle of action and power. Defined this power as the realization of himself as a human being. Or as stated in the Encyclical "Spe salvi" faith is hope. A divine expectation that comes from God. However, from secularism we can also claim that the ability to wait is a power. Faith is the authorization and permission that we give ourselves as humans for our development and achievement of our values. When we strive to achieve worthy goals, and we come to conceive that this effort is illuminated by the certainty of doing good, we are being cultivated by faith, because we show our hope in something that we cannot yet see and that is probably bigger than us as individuals, but it allows us to reaffirm ourselves as beings of love and light in permanent evolution.

Compliance with ethical standards

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